

DIOCESE OF MENEVIA



Inspection Report

St. Joseph's Cathedral Primary School

Inspection dates:	10th – 12th March 2014
Reporting Inspector:	Mr. Patrick Mansfield
Team Inspector:	Mrs Sue Roberts
Interim Headteacher:	Mr. Colin Greenwood
Chair of Governors:	Ms Mary-Clare Pitson
Type of school:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Number on roll:	611
School Address:	Caepistyll Street, Swansea SA12BE
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Parish(es) served:	St. Joseph's Cathedral, Blessed Sacrament, Holy Cross, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Peter's, St. Illtyd's, Sacred Heart
Appropriate Authority:	City and County of Swansea
Date of previous Inspection:	Juniors 6th – 8th November 2007 Infants 15th – 17th November 2009

Canonical inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Menevia and inspection of denominational education under Section 50 of the Education Act 2005

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good is leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on prospects for improvement.

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice or practice that is both consistent and highly effective.
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement.
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement.
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths.

The table below shows the terms that diocesan inspectors use and a broad idea of their meaning. It is for guidance only.

Description	Proportion
Nearly all	With very few exceptions
Most	90% or more
Many	70% or more
The majority	60% or more
Half / around half	Close to 50%
A minority	Below 40%
Few	Below 20%
Very few	Less than 10%

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the diocesan website.
dioceseofmenevia.org

Context

St. Joseph's Cathedral Primary School was formed in 2012 by the amalgamation of the Infant and Junior Schools. The school is housed in five buildings with the main building having 3 floors; one building is across a main road. St. Joseph's is located in the Greenhill area of Swansea and serves the Catholic population living in the central area of the city and the immediate northern suburbs. The school describes the area it serves as a mix of social and economic advantage and disadvantage with some pupils living in the most deprived areas of the city. There is a mix in the levels of deprivation and relative wealth amongst the pupils' families.

St. Joseph's caters for pupils aged 3 – 11 years. There are 611 pupils on roll of whom 71 are part time. There are 443 (73%) baptised Catholic pupils and 168 pupils of other faiths or no faith backgrounds. The school reports that, due to the decision to reduce the size of the school from a three class entry to a two class model, the Foundation Phase has a virtually 100% Catholic pupil population. It is likely that this trend will continue into the junior classes as the model progresses.

The school accommodates pupils from several cultures and 200 (33%) pupils come from homes where more than one language is spoken. No pupils speak Welsh outside the school environment.

85 (14%) pupils are eligible to receive free school meals and one is looked after by the county. There were no exclusions in the last school year and no pupils are removed from religious education or collective worship. The pupils in St. Joseph's represent the full ability range. 155 (25%) pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and 7 (1%) benefit from statutory statements.

In the summer of 2013, three of the school's four senior managers, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, resigned their posts. In addition, the school's RE Co-ordinator took early retirement. This has resulted in a temporary management structure led by a recently retired diocesan headteacher and two temporary RE Co-ordinators. When starting their roles in September 2013, these interim leaders found that crucial school documentation was unavailable to them and these documents had to be created anew.

The school currently has a non-teaching, interim headteacher, 21 full time and 5 part time teachers. Of the 26 teachers, 22 are Catholic but only 6 hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies whilst 2 are in the process of completing it. The course to attain the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies is run annually by the diocese. There are 35 support staff and of these 18 are Catholic. A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up the post at Easter 2014.

The school's achievements include:

Eco Schools Bronze and Silver Awards

First Size of Wales School

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

Good

Although not all three Key Questions were judged to be good, the school is considered to be providing an effective Catholic education because:

- Outcomes were judged to be good.
- Pupils were interested, enthusiastic and well behaved.
- The standard of teaching observed was at least good and sometimes very good.
- The high standards of pastoral care promote pupil wellbeing.
- The school leaders, in the face of many difficulties, have raised both the ethos of Catholicity in the school and the standing of curriculum RE since September 2013.

What are the school's prospects for improvement?

Good

This judgement usually relates to the judgement given to leadership and management which was adequate. However the prospects for improvement are good due to the following important factors:

- The rapid improvement in the standing of curriculum RE since September 2013.
- The efforts made by the staff to adopt the new 'Come and See' scheme of work since January 2014.
- The appointment of a new headteacher who is experienced in disseminating the new scheme.
- The greater involvement of the governors who are now better informed.
- The recent adoption by the governors of a management structure that will give greater prominence to the role of RE Co-ordinator.
- The immediate support of and monitoring by the Diocesan RE Advisor.

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

R1. Fully comply with all the recommendations of the previous diocesan inspection (2008).

R2. Establish a formal system of monitoring, evaluating and reporting in RE by staff and governors which will facilitate the sharing of good practice. (was also 2008 Rec. 4)

R3. Provide good quality resources to support teaching and learning in RE particularly in the formal study of other faiths. (was also 2008 Rec. 1)

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the diocese.

Main Findings

KQ1. How good are outcomes?

Good

The diocesan recommended RE scheme ‘Come and See’ was introduced to the pupils of St. Joseph’s in January 2014; later than most of the other schools in the diocese. The new scheme has been used in all classes since that time and all classes have completed at least one evaluation booklet. The quantity and range of the pupils’ work in RE has increased generally since the new scheme was introduced in January however there was insufficient RE work in the pupils’ books before the introduction date. The quantity of work produced by the pupils in RE does not resemble the quantity of work in their literacy books. While a direct comparison between these subjects is not expected, the degree of discrepancy observed was too great.

The range of cross curricular skills displayed by the pupils in their RE work is increasing. For example, in addition to their ICT and literacy skills, pupils in some classes used Venn diagrams and line or block graphs to explain their work. The standard of presentation of the pupils’ work in their RE books is acceptable only. This was found also to be the case in their literacy work and is consequently a whole school issue rather than specifically an RE concern.

The pupils in St. Joseph’s are interested in their work in RE and enthusiastic in asking and answering questions. Taking into account their starting levels, most pupils make good progress. Generally they apply themselves well in their lessons when undertaking written, oral, dramatic and musical work. In RE they are gaining knowledge and understanding at a good rate. Key seasons of the church’s year are celebrated and there is progression in their liturgical knowledge. The pupils’ original work and commercially produced religious pictures are displayed well in the classrooms and in the corridors. Articles from the UN’s ‘Rights of the Child’ were printed on many of these displays.

The pupils are well behaved in the classrooms, during assemblies and in the playgrounds. They show a good understanding of right and wrong. The very good level of inclusion for the several cultural groups in the school is one element of the very good overall standard of behaviour displayed by the pupils. There is an obvious racial harmony and parents confirmed that both Catholics and non-Catholics are treated equally. When in assemblies, the pupils enter the halls quietly and reverently and are quick to join in the singing of hymns, to the accompaniment of a very good musician, while other classes join them. They are keen to participate in the communal prayers, they pray slowly and reverently and most bow their heads at the name of Jesus. The pupils were reminded by their teachers about their Lenten journeys and how they would be asked to help those less fortunate in Sierra Leone. Technology was used to display the words of the hymns and the supporting images to the pupils. Currently pupil led worship is underdeveloped in the school and does not extend in all classes to the pupils planning, preparing or organising acts of worship. Pupil led worship is promoted in the ‘Come and See’ RE scheme.

The pupils in St. Joseph’s contribute well to the Catholic life of the school and beyond. They are concerned about the plight of those less fortunate than themselves and are quick to raise money to

contribute to charities; recently for example £1900 was raised for Macmillan Cancer Care. They support keenly the 'Playground Friends' initiative and participate enthusiastically in the well organised school council.

KQ2. How good is provision?	Good
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The 'Come and See' RE scheme of work is used throughout the school and the required 10% of curriculum time is allocated to the RE curriculum. Consequently, the Bishops' Conference and diocesan requirements are now met. The RE curriculum provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth; where appropriate the Welsh dimension is included also.

The standard of teaching in the lessons observed in St. Joseph's was at least good and in some cases very good. A good range of teaching styles was displayed and, in most lessons, Assessment for Learning strategies were used consistently. Differentiation was usually by outcome but in most lessons the support of other adults was effectively deployed also.

The planning by teachers in year groups and a common planning format has led to a good, consistent approach which still allows room for individual delivery of the RE lessons. In the lessons observed, the pupils were encouraged to display their religious knowledge through discussion in pairs and small groups, through music and drama and through their written work. From the youngest age groups, they were encouraged to work independently and to use technology to enhance their learning. The pupils responded very well to this encouragement.

The teachers' marking in the pupils' RE books was uniformly positive but did not always show the way forward for the pupils. Latterly there was evidence of self and peer assessment and also the encouragement of the pupils' ICT, literacy and numeracy skills across the RE curriculum.

The assessment and tracking of pupils' progress in RE is under developed currently so an accurate picture is not held yet on the pupils' achievements. The school has made initial progress on this issue and further developments are planned.

The prayer life in St. Joseph's is good. Teachers and pupils pray together, the staff meet voluntarily each morning to pray and the parents or carers are invited to join in morning prayers in the Foundation 1 & 2 playground. There are opportunities for the pupils to pray formally and informally in their classrooms. Most of the classrooms had prayer or intentions boxes as part of the classrooms' prayer foci and also seasonal, Lenten prayers or promises written by the pupils.

Currently the resources to support the teaching of RE are unsatisfactory particularly for the teaching of other faiths. The recent purchase of the new 'Come and See' RE scheme has been undertaken but supplementary resources are required and this has been identified by the school.

The classrooms and corridors are clean and bright and, with the planned reduction in the number of classes in each year group, more teaching space is becoming available. This additional space is being used creatively as are the large, bright 'break out' areas in the Foundation Phase 1 & 2 building.

The provision of space for outdoor teaching and learning is limited by the constraints of the school site. The playgrounds, including one on the roof of the main building, are limited in area. However, creative use of the available space has resulted in the provision of raised beds for gardening, a dais for acting or storytelling and several well defined areas for the use of play

equipment. The pupils are well supervised by teaching and support staff and the deployment of 'playground friends' facilitates the distribution and collection of equipment. Despite the lack of space, the parents reported no concerns about playtimes and considered there to be a sufficiently wide range of extra-curricular activities.

KQ3. How good is leadership and management

Adequate

The judgements made during inspection are based on the quantity and quality of the evidence provided by the school. On their appointments in September 2013, the interim leaders found that crucial documentation was unavailable and although they were able to provide some evidence of progress since that time, very little predating it could be shown. This lack of evidence undermined the progress made to comply with the recommendations of the previous religious inspection (2008).

Recommendation 1 of the school's 2008 Section 50 Inspection refers to developing the study units for other faiths. There was little evidence provided by staff or seen in the pupils' books to show progress towards this recommendation. All schools have been directed by the diocese to cover Judaism for one week each year and then a choice of one other world religion on rota for another week. More seriously, it was reported by staff that previous leaders had decided that the teaching of other faiths would not be undertaken in St. Joseph's. This decision was not only against the specific advice of the diocese but it also meant the complete rejection by those leaders of a Section 50 recommendation. This situation must be corrected immediately and will remain a recommendation for this inspection so that it may be monitored carefully by diocesan advisors.

Recommendation 4 of the school's 2008 Section 50 Inspection refers to developing a more rigorous monitoring and evaluation system for RE. There was little evidence available to the current leaders to show progress towards this recommendation. While governors discharge their statutory and canonical responsibilities there was no evidence of their involvement in the school other than their attendance at Masses and assemblies. Until very recently, there appeared to be a lack of information supplied to the governors by school leaders. There were no notes of governors' visits to the school provided to the inspection team nor was there evidence of the RE Co-ordinator reporting to the governors on the Catholic life of the school or the monitoring activities undertaken. The current co-ordinators have not had the opportunity to attend diocesan training for co-ordinators and have not monitored the teaching or scrutinised the pupils' books. The implementation of a formal procedure for monitoring, evaluating and reporting in RE will remain a recommendation for this inspection.

The current leaders of St. Joseph's do however demonstrate commitment to the mission of the church and seek to put into practice the diocesan guidelines. Several parents and staff approached the inspection team informally to report that, in this academic year, the ethos of Catholicity in the school has improved and the standing of curriculum RE has risen. Hand written notes on some of the questionnaires returned by parents supported this view. Informal monitoring by the current co-ordinators points to the ready acceptance of the new RE scheme by the staff while the improvement in the quantity and quality of work in RE in the pupils' books is evident since the scheme's introduction in January.

The school participates in a good range of partnership activities in order to promote the pupils' learning and wellbeing. This is much facilitated by the deployment of two Pupil Support Officers who are based in the school and who provide very good support to the staff. The mentoring and nurture of vulnerable or bereaved pupils is undertaken by these trained staff members.

There is a common sense of belonging among the pupils and the staff respect differences, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities. The pupils from different backgrounds are given opportunities to work together and relationships among them are positive. All the parents and carers are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the life of the school.

Appendix 1

234 parents/carers returned the questionnaires.

With very few exceptions, they reported their child was happy in school and that they were encouraged to join in whole school activities. They believed that, through behaviour, their child had shown spiritual and moral awareness and that the school develops that moral sense.

Most parents/carers were happy with the school's policy on discipline and agreed that the school's RE programme helped develop their child's faith. Most were aware of the links between parish and school.

Many agreed there were opportunities to learn about the RE programme taught in the school and had worked at home with their child. Also many were aware of the school's policy on Education for Personal Relationships including sex education.

The majority of parents/carers had been involved in the preparation of their child for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. However, a few parents were not in favour of moving the preparation programme from the school to the parishes.

Appendix 2

Evidence base

- the school's self-evaluation report and other documentation
- meetings with the interim headteacher and temporary Religious Education co-ordinators
- meeting with the Vice Chair and Chair of Governors
- meeting with the parish priest who is also the Religious Education Link Governor
- meeting with parents/carers
- parent/carer questionnaire returns
- lesson observations
- scrutiny of planning
- scrutiny of pupils' work
- scrutiny of displays and prayer foci
- attendance at key stage assemblies
- discussions with pupils and the school council
- observation of daily routines

The diocesan reporting inspector wishes to express sincere thanks to the governors, interim head teacher, staff, pupils and parents and also to the ESTYN registered inspector and inspection team for the courtesy and co-operation received during the inspection.