

DIOCESE OF MENEVIA



Inspection Report on the Religious Dimension of the School

Head teacher: Mrs. Sue Roberts

Reporting Inspector: Mrs. Juliet Stack

Accompanying Inspector: Sr. Angela Murray OSU

Inspection dates: 26th – 27th January 2015

Chair of Governors: Mr. Sean Mc Carthy

Type of School: Voluntary Aided Primary

Age range of pupils: 4- 11

Number on roll: 105

Date of previous inspection: June 2009

School Address: Priory Road, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire SA73 2EE

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Parishes served: St. Francis of Assisi.

Local Authority: Pembrokeshire County Council

***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 are 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 practise 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.

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

Copies of this report are available from the school.

Context

St Francis Catholic Primary School is in the town of Milford Haven in Pembrokeshire. The school primarily serves the Catholic children within the parish of St Francis of Assisi. This catchment covers all of Milford Haven and as far east as Neyland.

There are 105 pupils on roll. There are three mixed age classes and two whole year classes. English is the main language spoken in the home. A few pupils speak Welsh at home. A small minority of pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school has identified around 28% of pupils as having additional learning needs and a couple of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A very few pupils have been excluded over the past 12 months. Around 26% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals: a figure that is above the county and national averages.

There have been significant staffing changes to the school since the last inspection. The current Headteacher, who took over as Acting Headteacher in June 2009, has been in post since April 2011. The Deputy Headteacher has been in post since September 2013. Only two of the support staff remains the same; five have been appointed since the last inspection. Only two members of teaching staff were in roll during the previous inspection. Two new teachers were appointed in January 2015 and will only have been in post for three weeks at the time of the inspection. The Chair of Governors was not in post during the previous inspection, but was a Foundation Governor. Five new Foundation Governors have been appointed.

There is a significant amount of social housing in Milford Haven and it remains an area of high social deprivation.

The recent closure of the oil refinery has had a negative impact on the local economy and has affected some of the families of pupils who attend St Francis School.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

Adequate

St Francis School is an adequate school because:

- Effective pastoral care promotes pupils' wellbeing.
- Partnerships with parents are good and they are welcomed to the school.
- Teaching and assessment in Religious Education are judged as adequate.

However

- Recent changes in staffing have limited the effectiveness of the developments in religious education introduced by the Head teacher, who is also the Coordinator for religious education.
- Prayer and worship should be further developed so that it underpins all aspects of school life for both staff and pupils;

What are the school's prospects for improvement?

Good

Prospects for improvement are good due to:

- The vision, drive and enthusiasm of the Head teacher/ RE Coordinator who continues to drive the mission of the school.
- There is sufficient expertise within the school (which is identified within the report) to allow for effective peer coaching and support to occur.

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- R1 To adopt a uniformed consistent approach to the assessment of RE and provision of appropriate tasks to provide challenge and differentiation
- R2 Ensure consistency in teachers planning and revise marking in RE, thus ensuring meaningful marking which will allow next steps for pupils to develop challenge and feedback.
- R3 Develop involvement of pupils in the preparation of Worship and ensure further development in the prayer life of the school.
- R4 To disseminate good practice in the teaching of RE throughout the school

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

Pupil behaviour in many classes is good and conducive to learning. Most pupils are Keen, attentive and respond well to the variety of approaches used by teachers. Almost all pupils achieve standards that are satisfactory, given their capabilities and starting points. Most pupils make adequate progress and gain enough knowledge, skills and understanding at a satisfactory rate. However, progress in Religious Education across the school is variable. The lack of differentiation is evident in the planned activities for pupils. Marking, although positive, offers little advice to enable pupils to move their learning forward. There are few strategies in place for peer and self-assessment but these are not consistent across the school.

The school is assessing pupils termly in line with the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme. Pupil progress is tracked using the local authority's G2 online mark-book which shows clear progression throughout the NBRIA levels. This is monitored by the RE Co-ordinator. However, end of unit assessments are not applied consistently across the school in order to allow pupils an opportunity to evaluate their work.

Many pupils are keen to participate in the Catholic life of the school and benefit from it. Nearly all pupils are aware of the school's mission statement "Together with Jesus we Love and learn' which is displayed in the school. Pupils are developing an understanding of Catholic teaching and the teachings of other religions through the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme. Pupils at St. Francis make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. This is reflected in the links with their parish community. Children are involved in the life of the parish and have many opportunities for developing their spirituality, praying and receiving the sacraments. Weekly parish Mass is attended by two classes on a rolling rota programme. On these occasions the pupils are involved in the reading of scripture, writing of bidding prayers and the offering of the gifts. The annual appointment of Faith Ambassadors allows pupils to be proactive about their faith. They lead Wednesday morning liturgy assemblies and introduce the prayer of the month and the termly Gospel value. They represent the school at parish Masses where they always deliver the welcome, at community events such as the town's remembrance service and present to the governing body at termly

meetings.

The Faith Ambassadors join the Y Llais meetings once a term where they have an input into ways that they would like [to improve the school](#), as well as reflecting on the success of recent initiatives.

A whole school Assembly recalled pupils learning in the 'Come and See' unit this term. However, there is a need to develop pupil involvement in the planning, preparation and organisation of acts of worship as a whole in order to be less teacher led and for it to effectively enhance the spirituality of the school.

There are effective displays around the school. Each class had a prayer foci area and resources. There is a prayer corner in the school hall which provides a focus for whole school worship. Pupils are considerate to others and regularly fund raise in response to the needs of others in the local community and in the wider world. The Welsh dimension is being fostered with a Welsh assembly every Wednesday led by pupils. The Faith Ambassadors join the Y Llais meetings once a term where they have an input into ways that they would like the school to improve, as well as reflecting on the success of recent initiatives.

KQ 2. How Good is Provision?

Adequate

Strengths outweigh areas for improvement. The quality of teaching across the school is variable. In the majority of lessons observed, pupils listened to their teachers and settled quickly to tasks. The majority of lessons had an emphasis on the development of oracy skills through RE. Pupils enjoyed learning and responded to teachers' questioning.

In the Foundation Phase, a range of teaching styles is evident, encouraging the children to express their responses to the tasks set through role-play, writing and work undertaken in the school grounds. Many pupils respond enthusiastically to the tasks set and make appropriate progress. Learning support assistants work diligently to support children's learning. In the majority of lessons observed, pupils were given opportunities to work collaboratively. This was evident in Key Stage 2 where pupils worked together to respond to scriptural extracts with pupils developing the ability to interpret sources and symbols, reflecting and evaluating and engaging with religious ideas. In a very few classes activities resulted in pupils losing concentration and giving poor quality responses and behaviour.

Teachers have a level of specialist expertise which they use in their planning and teaching but planning needs to be more fine-tuned to fully meet the needs of all pupils to differentiate

and engage all abilities not just by outcome. This will enable pupils to develop skills in RE. St. Francis has developed teaching about other faiths, which enables pupils to gain an understanding of other world faiths. The school meets the Bishops' Conference, statutory requirements and local diocesan requirements. Extra-curricular opportunities are varied. The accommodation and resources are of good quality, well maintained and provide a stimulating learning environment.

Assessment for learning strategies are evident in most classes. Marking and oral feedback affirms how well pupils are doing, but it does not identify consistently how pupils can move forward with their learning. Book scrutiny's revealed that marking is inconsistent across the school.

The development of Faith ambassadors allows a minority of pupils to plan, prepare and lead acts of collective worship in class. This initiative is in the early stages of development. The school recognises the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to become better skilled and equipped to plan, prepare and lead their own acts of worship.

KQ3. How good are Leadership and Management?	Good
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St Francis' is a school on a journey of improvement. The school is led by a dedicated head teacher who, together with the governing body, positively promotes the Catholic life of the school. The school's leaders are very committed to the school and its Catholic mission. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical responsibilities. As a core subject, 10% of curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education

The leadership of the school is clearly committed to the Church's mission in education. All members of the school strive to fulfill the aims of the Mission Statement. There is an effective developing Governing Body. All Governors discharge their statutory and canonical responsibilities fully. Catholic principles and values underpin the school's vision. The Religious Education Link Governor provides a good level of support for the development of the spiritual life of the school and curriculum Religious Education. He maintains strong links with the RE Co-ordinator.

The RE Co--ordinator conducts a range of monitoring activities relating to provision and outcome. An accurate portrait of the school has been given in the self- evaluation document. Key areas of development have been built upon and work has been completed to address the eleven recommendations from the previous inspection. However, some

recommendations have not been addressed fully. There is substantial evidence that the school is progressing along with the development of new members of staff. The Inspectors recognise that there have been significant staffing changes and the leadership will need time to share and develop good practice among all staff.

Annual RE reports from the Headteacher are presented at the end of the Summer Term giving an overview of the progress in religious education and the religious life of the school. The establishment of a school based nurture group has enhanced pupil well-being. All parents/carers are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the life of the school.

The Parish priest supports and guides the staff and children in their spiritual development. The Head teacher is committed to the Church's mission in education. She understands and encourages all in the school community to reflect on diocesan guidelines and to put them into practice. Leaders and managers are willing to establish partnerships with other providers: this includes developing new links with the education department at St David's Cathedral who make provision for Catholic primary schools within the county. Pupils have attended a discipleship day which involved prayer, reflection and bible studies. Outside agencies and organisations such as the police, Keep Wales Tidy and Water Aid have all been involved in raising pupils' awareness of local and global issues. They deliver learning programmes to pupils in areas such as substance misuse, eco-awareness and global development. Leaders successfully promote an inclusive vision. Pupils are appropriately encouraged to respect those of other faiths. As part of the RE curriculum, two weeks per year are devoted to the study of other faiths.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

Many parents felt that their child was happy at school.

Many parents felt that their child knows about Spiritual awareness.

A Majority felt that they as parents had opportunities to learn about the Religious Education programme being taught at the school.

A majority agreed that they worked with their child at home on current religious Education topics.

Many felt that the Religious Education programme has helped develop their child's christian faith.

Many felt that they are encouraged to join in whole school RE activities: Assemblies, Masses and festivals.

Many agreed that their child shows a developing sense of moral awareness by behaviour / attitude.

Many parents felt that the school develops this moral sense.

A minority were aware of the school policy for Personal Relationships, including sex education.

Many are happy with the policy on discipline in the school.

Most are aware of the links which exist between the parish and the school.

Many are aware of the safeguarding procedures in the school.

Comments:

My daughter is very happy at St Francis School

I am not aware of the Personal Relationships policy at the school

Giving "each child" their say, has improved the school

Religious Education has benefitted my child in many ways

My child has improved much more at St Francis that she did in her other school: I am delighted we made the change

I feel confident in the teaching and teachers

Appendix 2

Evidence Base

- The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation
- Meetings with the Head teacher and religious education subject leader
- Meetings with representatives of the Governing Body, including the religious education link governor and chair
- A meeting with parents
- Parent/carer questionnaire returns
- Lesson observations
- Scrutiny of planning and assessment
- Scrutiny of pupils' work
- Scrutiny of displays and prayer foci
- Attendance at whole school acts of worship
- Discussions with pupils
- Discussions with teaching staff
- Observation of daily routines

The diocesan inspectors wish to express sincere thanks to the governors, 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.