

DIOCESE OF MENEVIA



Inspection Report on the Religious Dimension of the School

Head teacher: Ms J. Beaumont Rees

Reporting Inspector: Mrs Juliet Stack

Accompanying Inspector: Sr. Angela Murray OSU

Inspection dates: Monday 8th Friday 12th July 2013

Chair of Governors: Rev. Deacon Jim Caddock

Type of School: Infant School

Age range of pupils: 3- 7

Number on roll: 143

Date of previous inspection: May 2007

School Address: Water Street Port Talbot SA12 6LE

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Parishes served: St. Joseph's Port Talbot, Our Lady of Margam, Our Lady of the Assumption Briton Ferry

Local Authority: Neath Port Talbot

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 Joseph's Roman Catholic (RC) Infant School serves the Catholic community of Port Talbot, including the parishes of St Joseph's, Port Talbot, Our Lady of Margam and Our Lady of the Assumption, Briton Ferry. The school is situated within a 'Community First' zone in an area that is recognised as one of social deprivation. Baseline assessments upon entry indicate that pupils' attainment is around the Neath Port Talbot local education authority average. The school caters for pupils aged from 3-7 and there are currently 143 on roll. Most pupils are from English-speaking homes and Welsh is taught as a second language. The school has a relatively large number of Filipino pupils.

Share of EAL pupils by language acquisition is higher for both New to English (25%) than LA(15%) and for Early Acquisition(6q3%) than LA(24%).

Approximately 18% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals (FSM).

Currently, there are 27 pupils (29% of pupils Reception-Year 2) on the special educational needs (SEN) register. The school was last inspected in May 2007.

There have been significant changes to the Governing Body within the last year. Three Foundation Governors resigned including the RE Link Governor. A new Chair was appointed in November 2012 who has also been appointed as the RE Link Governor. The school building has been enhanced dramatically. New windows, flat roof and entrance doors have greatly improved the environment, together with new flooring and a rolling programme of improved lighting. These changes meet with Health and Safety Regulations as well as improving the learning environment. An outside classroom and covered entrances, willow walk, learning huts and prayer garden offer improved opportunities.

Since September 2007, the Deputy Head teacher from the local Catholic Junior School was seconded as Acting Head teacher to lead the infant school. In 2010 the Acting Head teacher was appointed Head teacher. There have been some changes in staffing with one TLR holder leaving the school in July 2012, One .5 teacher has become full time and following the retirement of a long serving member of staff, another permanent member of staff has been appointed. Two full time TLRs are now in place.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

Good

St Joseph's is a good school because:

- Catholic ethos permeates all areas of school life;
- the Head teacher communicates very high expectations to all staff;
- the quality of teaching in religious education is generally good;
- most pupils make good progress;
- effective pastoral support promotes pupils' wellbeing;
- partnerships with parents, the parish and the local community are good.

What are the school's prospects for improvement?

Good

Prospects for improvement are good due to:

- Leadership of the Head teacher who continues to drive the mission of the school.
- Developing links with governors who promote the school.
- Conscientious and hardworking staff who strive to further develop school.

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- R1 To develop opportunities to build upon and extend learning in RE in all classes. (including provision for MAT)
- R2 To develop the role of the R.E Link Governor and the involvement of Governors in self-evaluation.
- R3 To focus on opportunities for the development of spontaneous prayer and worship and distribute leadership of this to all staff.
- R4 To implement the new 'Come and See' Diocesan Scheme and for this to be embedded within 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

Pupils at St Joseph's Infant School show enjoyment for religious education. The majority of pupils make good progress. They engage well in a variety of activities and work independently at a good pace and are keen to do well. The quality of most pupils' recorded work is generally good although there is an over reliance on worksheets. The topic of Neighbours was being taught in all classes. The school has a tracking system in place for RE NBRIA (National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisors) levels are used with SIMS (Reception ,Year 1&2) to track pupil performance. All pupils are assessed throughout the year and at the end of each 'Here I Am' topic.

Pupils in St Joseph's school 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. Assemblies, Masses, staff meetings, special occasions and charity work. The school attends Mass weekly, and has a monthly First Holy Communion Mass, a monthly Family Mass, Feast day celebrations as well as supporting future and past pupils in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

Children participate in Parish occasions such as The Deanery Mass and The Christmas Carol Service. During Family Masses the children display their work which is linked to the theme of the Mass. The pupils participate in a very wide variety of prayer and worship including those from the tradition of the Church.

The children have also produced their own prayers including a school prayer understanding the variety of prayer styles.

There are effective displays around the school. Each class had a prayer foci area and resources. Children participated in whole school collective worship through singing and answering questions and taking part in readings. There was a clear theme and message which was Neighbours. They are considerate to others and regularly fund raise in response to the needs of others in the local community and in the wider world. Pupils learn about the life of St. David during Eisteddfod celebrations and the feasts of six Welsh martyrs are celebrated with Masses. Learners make a very positive contribution to the school community. There is an active school council in place, which represents all pupils.

KQ 2. How Good is Provision?**Good**

In St Joseph's RC Infants School teachers employ a range of teaching styles and plan very well to enable their pupils to work independently and collectively. All of the lessons observed were good. There were positive pupil teacher relationships and a range of questioning styles including AFL strategies which encouraged good levels of pupil motivation and concentration. New technology is used effectively and was evident in all RE lessons observed enhancing the teaching and learning experiences of the children. All teachers gave clear expectations in order to help to create a climate where pupils strive to achieve their best. There was effective deployment of teaching assistants across all classes. The school's teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to standards. They work in close partnership with teachers and they have developed good relationships with pupils. From a very early age AFL strategies are employed. IT is an integral part of each lesson with the use of i-pads and whiteboards and Apple TV. Some class books showed an over reliance on worksheets which did not always meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those who are more able and talented, for whom it was felt that there was insufficient challenge. Every class used WALT and WILF during each lesson. In Nursery a doll of Jesus was used to engage children effectively and during the lesson small groups completed a meditation/ reflection on God's world using King David and Psalm 18. Teaching assistants were constantly involved and assessed during lessons. The bright and engaging outside areas were used effectively during lessons. Work was effectively shared with classes at the end of the lessons. In Reception/ Year 1 an independent learning challenge allowed pupils to use i-pads to take photos of how we can celebrate being neighbours to make into an i-movie. The lesson had begun with the senior leaders of the neighbouring Junior school talking to the children about what it meant for them to be good neighbours. The Year 2 class talked confidently about Fair trade goods writing cards to persuade their parents to buy Fair Trade goods and consequently about neighbours in a wider sense. They also took part in a role play becoming a politician trying to promote Jesus' message of love for one another. A pupil tracking system is in place in the school. Portfolios of moderated work are well presented. The school's Religious Education scheme of work is the current Diocese of Menevia's recommended scheme 'Here I Am'. The school is actively seeking to introduce the new Diocesan Scheme of 'Come and See'. Teachers use the planning resources as laid out in the scheme, but can miss opportunities to enhance pupils' skill development. Planning needs to be purposefully differentiated, providing further challenge for the more able children in the class to ensure that all pupils' needs are consistently met. Pupils are regularly assessed using the 'Here I Am' end of topic sheets. Re Co-ordinators meet to discuss and level work to ensure consistency in teacher assessment within and across schools.

Prayer and worship are very important to the life of the school. There is a strong link with the parish community and links with the wider community. The Celebratory Leaving Mass for Year 2 pupils bore witness to the community involvement of parents and parish which the school actively develops. The pupils read and sang joyfully and there was a well developed engagement with the children and the Parish Priest. The school's Mission statement is attractively displayed in the entrance. All classrooms have displays that reflect the RE curriculum. They are bright and stimulating environments for children to work in.

There is a good range of resources to support learning. The school supports charitable works worldwide and has a special link with Fr. Giovanni to support his work in Peru. The requirement of the Bishop's Conference and local Diocesan requirements are met. The school devotes 10% of the overall teaching time to RE as a core subject.

KQ3. How good are Leadership and Management?	Good
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The leadership of the school is clearly committed to the Church's mission in education. All members of the school strive to fulfil the aims of the Mission Statement. There is an effective governing body at St Joseph's Infants School. All governors discharge their statutory and canonical responsibilities fully. Catholic principles and values underpin the school's vision. The Religious Education Link Governor is recently appointed and is also the Chair of Governors and provides a good level of support for the development of the spiritual life of the school and curriculum Religious Education. He attends liturgy meetings to plan worship and guides school prayer meetings. The Religious Education Link Governor appreciates the enormity of his role and is keen to develop it further. Governors meet regularly to monitor and review progress of the School Development Plan. Governors ensure the adequacy and suitability of staff by following Diocesan and Local Authority guidelines on the employment of staff.

Planning in Religious Education addresses key areas of development and builds on areas of strength. Most pupils achieve well and they have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school. Religious Education is monitored regularly by the Headteacher and termly reports given to the Governing Body.

All parents/carers are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the life of the school and encouraged to attend the school assemblies and Class Masses and Family Masses. The Parish priest supports and guides the staff and children in their spiritual development. The First Holy Communion preparation is managed in partnership with the priests of the parishes. Chaplain, Head teacher & teachers work together to provide a comprehensive program of preparation for pupils and parents involving weekly meetings for Year2 pupils, monthly meetings for parents and monthly celebratory masses for candidates and families. There is also a Parents course for First Holy Communion. The Staff provide positive role models in nurturing the pupils in a knowledge and love of the Catholic faith. This has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils are very respectful, considerate and caring of each other. Pupils' behaviour is very good.

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. Whilst appreciating the leadership role of the Head teacher nevertheless new initiatives need to be embedded before embarking on further developments. This would allow staff time to engage and display their professional abilities to the full. The pupils are developing an understanding of the role they and others play in society and the world. They

are involved in supporting local, national and international charities. The pupils benefit from these activities which contribute to their good learning and well-being.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

49 parents/carers returned the questionnaires.

All parents are happy with the values and attitudes that the school promotes. One parent commented: "I am a Catholic and wanted my child to benefit from the strong moral environment in which they are learning. The school also has an excellent reputation." Most parents felt that they are made welcome in the school. Many parents felt the school seeks the views of parents/ carers and take account of their suggestions and concerns. Most parents believe the school gives a clear understanding of what is taught in religious education.

Many parents felt that they are informed about their children's progress in religious education. Most are happy with the help and guidance available to their children. Most parents believe that the school could give them a clearer understanding of what is taught in personal and social education and, where appropriate, in sex and relationships education. Many parents agree that the school enables their children to develop spiritually through prayer and worship.

Parents/carers are clearly proud of their school. They state that they chose St. Joseph's for the good standard of Catholic education, high moral values and caring ethos and because historically their family has attended the school. They said the school has a very good reputation where they feel their children can develop academically, socially and spiritually. All parents regard its standing in the local community as being strong. The distinctiveness of the school was described as being the school and its values are rooted in the teachings of Christ. The children are taught to love, respect and care for each other and the wider community. They receive an education which develops them spiritually and morally as well as academically.

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.