

DIOCESE OF MENEVIA



Inspection Report

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School Llanelli

Inspection dates:	8 th – 9 th May 2012
Reporting Inspector:	Mr. Patrick Mansfield
Headteacher:	Mrs. Patricia Way
Chair of Governors:	Mr. Michael Donovan
Type of school:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Number on roll:	216
School Address:	Havard Road Llanelli SA14 8SD
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E-mail address:	head@stmarys1.ysgolccc.org.uk
Parish(es) served:	Our Lady Queen of Peace, Llanelli Our Lady Star of the Sea, Burry Port Our Lady of the Rosary, Ammanford
Appropriate Authority:	Carmarthen County Council
Date of previous Inspection:	12 th – 13 th October 2005

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. Mary's Catholic Primary School is located in Llanelli and serves the Catholic population living in the town and surrounding rural areas. The school describes the area it serves as a mix of social and economic advantage and disadvantage. The majority of pupils live in private housing but a minority live in rented accommodation.

St. Mary's caters for pupils aged 3 – 11 years. The January '11 PLASC return shows there are 216 pupils on roll and all are full time. There are 181 (84%) baptised Catholic pupils and 35 pupils of other faiths or no faith backgrounds.

In recent years the school has experienced an increase in pupils from other cultures including children from the Filipino, Polish and Traveller communities. 92 pupils (43%) come from homes where more than one language is spoken. A Polish speaking teaching assistant has been employed and the school describes itself as being truly multi ethnic. No pupils speak Welsh outside the school environment.

15% of the pupils are eligible to receive free school meals and there are no pupils looked after by the county. The pupils represent the full ability range. 41 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and 2 benefit from statutory statements.

The school currently has a non-teaching headteacher, 8 teachers and 13 support staff. Of the 8 full time teachers 7 are Catholic and 1 holds the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. Of the 13 support staff 5 are Catholics.

The school's achievements include:

Eco Schools Silver Award

Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme Phase 3

Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark 2

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

Good

St. Mary's is a good school because:

- a high degree of commitment to Catholic education is shown by the school community
- the excellent inclusion of all groups is clearly demonstrated
- the very high standards of pastoral care promote pupil wellbeing
- there is excellent pupil behaviour
- there is evidence of some examples of very good teaching

What are the school's prospects for improvement?

Good

The school's prospects for improvement are good due to:

- the staff being highly committed to the distinctive Catholic nature of the school
- a clear understanding of the way forward in relation to monitoring, assessment and tracking
- evidence of some examples of very good teaching that can be disseminated to colleagues

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

R1. Ensure pace, continuity and progression in teaching and consistency in the quality and quantity of written work across both key stages.

R2. Establish a formal system of monitoring, evaluating and reporting of teaching and learning in Religious Education by staff and governors to facilitate the sharing of some very good practice.

R3. Provide and effectively display good quality resources to support teaching and learning in Religious Education particularly in the formal study of other faiths.

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 quality of the pupils' work and their attainment in RE range from adequate to good. The oldest pupils are keen to do well, generally apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace. They generally endeavour to produce their best work and are often enthusiastic about their learning. The skilful use of artists' impressions of Pentecost facilitates their understanding of the event. The Good News Bible is used as a primary source and, consequently, the oldest pupils are becoming familiar with the use of scripture and bible references. The older pupils make use of the effective and prayerful plenaries provided by their teachers.

Most of the younger pupils make the progress expected, given their starting points, and some make good progress. Most work competently when provided with appropriate tasks. In their Religious Education lesson on Pentecost, some younger pupils interacted well with their teacher and responded enthusiastically through dance.

The quantity and quality of the pupils' written work ranges from adequate to good and in most books there was a variety of written responses. In the best examples the pupils' work included art, individual prayer, ICT work and photographs. However, the presentation of written work would benefit from a consistent approach to the use of pen or pencil within classes throughout the school. The teachers' marking is always positive and affirmed how well the pupils were doing but did not identify consistently how they could move on in their learning.

The behaviour of the pupils in St. Mary's is excellent. They are able to understand and articulate the ethos of the school. They take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school for their personal support and development. They show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and to be forgiven. They are able to refer to the teachings of Jesus and respect the Catholic tradition of their school. They treat others with respect and know that their behaviour has consequences. They are alert to the needs of others and expect equality for all within the school community. They participate fully in the long standing school council. The excellent level of inclusion for the several cultural groups in the school contributes to the high standard of behaviour and is evidenced by the award achieved in the anti-racism competition. The pupils are considerate to others and respond to the needs of people beyond the school through contribution to and support of many charities.

In the Key Stage Assemblies and in their class rooms, the pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in prayer and worship. They respond appropriately, reflect in silence and join in community prayers with confidence. They are at ease when praying in both English and Welsh and appreciate what is taking place. Assemblies make use of music, drama, hymns and informal prayers but are mainly teacher led; this was recommended as an area for development during the recent diocesan mini inspection. The pupils understand the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year and show a developing understanding of liturgy as they progress through the classes.

KQ2. How good is provision?

Good

not pupil lead:

The quality of teaching in St. Mary's ranges from adequate to very good. Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies, incidental Welsh and a range of teaching methods were used in all the lessons observed. The teachers generally have strong subject knowledge which inspires and challenges most pupils. In the best lessons, with the older children, there was an enthusiastic delivery and a pace that allowed the pupils to begin their tasks quickly and so make progress. In other lessons, where pace was lacking, the extended introductions reduced the time available for the pupils to spend on their work and curtailed the plenary sessions. In a minority of lessons the teacher's expectation of the pupils' capabilities was low.

Learning Support Assistants were effectively deployed in some classes to support literacy within Religious Education. In these lessons, good provision for pupils in need of learning support ensured that they had every opportunity to succeed. A variety of differentiation strategies was observed but in most classes this was by outcome. A system of tracking the pupils' progress in their Religious Education work has been piloted in some classes recently and the school is taking part in the diocesan training for assessment based on the NBRIA guidelines. Consequently, the school is beginning to form an accurate picture of pupils' achievement.

The school's Religious Education scheme of work is 'Here I Am' which is the Diocese of Menevia's recommended scheme and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The RE curriculum provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The topic covered during inspection was 'Holidays and Holy Days' and the pupils' books contained appropriate written work. However, there was not a display relating to the topic in every classroom. In most pupils' exercise books there was evidence of references to other faiths; Hinduism had been studied recently. The school had been borrowing RE resources from their feeder school St. John Lloyd; particularly to support the study of other faiths. More recently the school has started to purchase its own resources, although the RE co-ordinator is not given a subject specific budget. At the time of inspection the RE resources were low in number generally and the manner of their storage unsatisfactory.

Prayer and acts of collective worship are integral to the life of the school. Staff and pupils prayed together on the playground at the start of the school day. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for prayer and some classes had suggestion boxes for topics for individual or whole class prayer. These topics are consistent with the Catholic character of the school and responsive to the diversity among pupils. All the classrooms had a prayer table and religious focus that included rosaries, religious icons, statues and pupils' work or prayers. Staff accept responsibility for leading prayer and involve pupils in its delivery. The school provides many opportunities for the pupils to appreciate the school's Welsh dimension including a recent pilgrimage to St. Non's. Each class and school house is dedicated to a Welsh saint.

Sacramental preparation for the pupils is undertaken by the school in Year 3. This is supported by a parish sister, Sr. Marcella, who prepares the Catholic children attending other schools also. Attendance by parents/carers and others associated with the school is invited for class assemblies and Masses.

The religious life of the school has been enhanced further by the creation of a prayer room to the side of the main school hall. This is a welcoming, carpeted area that makes good use of the available space. The atmosphere created is calm and peaceful and the area itself is well used by staff and pupils. During the inspection, two very good, age appropriate, prayer sessions/meditations were observed in this area.