

Diocese of Wrexham



SECTION 50 INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Flint

Head Teacher: Miss Rachel Molyneux
Chair of Governors: Mr Phillip Leddy

Date of Inspection: 20th and 21st February 2018
Inspectors: Mrs. Cheryl Oliver
Mr. Stuart Plunkett.

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Wrexham and Inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 50 of School Inspections, Education Act 2005

Main Judgement: Overall Effectiveness

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 its prospects for improvement.

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 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.

INSPECTION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School has been carried out in accordance with the Framework and Schedule for Section 50 Inspections (2010) issued by the Diocese of Wrexham and approved by the Bishop. The process of inspection in the Diocese has been developed as an activity of the Church to support schools in both maintaining and developing the quality of Catholic education provided.

The inspection of the school was carried out by two diocesan appointed Inspectors. They visited the Religious Education lessons and held meetings with the Head Teacher, the Chair of Governors, the Parish Priest, members of staff and pupils. They also received the parents' questionnaire. Inspectors observed the school's work and provision, including prayer and collective worship. They looked at a range of evidence, including in particular, the school's own self-evaluation, the school's development plan and the work of the pupils.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL/SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a large Catholic Primary school situated in the parish of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Flint. The school's Mission Statement is, *'We Live, Learn and Grow together in Jesus'*.

St Mary's is a fully-inclusive school and celebrates its diverse community. Pupils who are not from Catholic families are also welcomed to the school. The locality of the school has comparatively high levels of unemployment and around half of the pupils are from families that are economically disadvantaged. In September 2017 there were 258 full time pupils on roll, aged 3 to 11 years and 23 part time pupils in the nursery.

The school is organised into ten full time classes and a morning nursery. In total there are 9 full time teaching staff and 5 part-time teaching staff. There are 8 full time teaching assistants and 7 part time. The number of pupils eligible for FSM is steadily increasing and the current 3 year eFSM average of 13.6% places the school consistently in Band 2 for benchmarking purposes. The school has identified 15% of pupils as having additional learning needs, 5% at School Action and 9% at School Action plus. Two pupils possess a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils at the school come from English speaking homes and no pupils speak Welsh as their first language. Few pupils (6%) are from a minority ethnic background and 26% of pupils have English as an additional language.

In 2017/18 the main priorities for the school as identified in the school's own School Improvement plan were as follows:

- To introduce the new Catholic HRSE (Human Relationships and Sex Education) programme being used in our Diocese to staff, governors, parents and children.
- To continue to work towards achieving target of 96% attendance per pupil.
- To raise standards of writing, spelling, handwriting and presentation of all pupils' work.
- To raise standards in all areas of Cymraeg (oracy, reading and writing).
- To further embed the Digital Competency Framework across the school.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

GOOD

Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a good Catholic school with a strong Catholic ethos which is evident throughout all aspects of school life. Pupils throughout the school are very well behaved with most pupils being well engaged in their learning. The school will benefit further from continuing with the initiatives already identified in their Self Evaluation Report and the recommendations contained in this Inspection Report.

The school follows the common programme for Religious Education 'Come and See'. As a Catholic school the school's outcomes and standards achieved in Religious Education are good with the many strengths of the school outweighing the areas identified for improvement.

PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT

GOOD

Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement.

Since the previous Section 50 inspection the school has made positive progress against all the recommendations identified from this inspection. Having said this some aspects perhaps still need to be further developed and embedded.

Since the previous inspection standards in Religious Education have for the most part steadily improved.

The school's self-evaluation processes clearly identify areas for development and feed in to the Whole School, School Improvement plan.

The school is judged to have good capacity to continue its journey of improvement.

1. HOW GOOD ARE THE OUTCOMES:

GOOD

Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement.

The Catholic life of St. Mary's School is expressed in its Mission Statement: "We live, learn and grow together in Jesus" and this is reflected in the good relationships and mutual respect shown between the staff, parents and pupils. The school is both welcoming and inclusive and recognises the uniqueness and diversity of its school family.

Pupil's achievement and attainment in Religious Education are good. Most pupils make good progress relative to their capabilities and starting points, as many pupils, currently 26%, have English as an additional language, and 15% have additional learning needs. The pupils participate well in their learning and they are keen to do well, working at a good pace overall and making appropriate progress. Staff through their planning and the now more consistent use of the driver words in this planning are helping the pupils to progress in their learning. The pupils are also well supported by the many good teaching assistants and support staff employed by the school.

Behaviour in and around the school is very good and this is a strength of the school. The pupils are engaging, courteous and enquiring. They engage readily with adults, and converse easily and comfortably with their teachers and others.

The data provided by the school shows that the outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are good. The school works hard to support pupils who have a diverse range of needs and the one page profile is assisting the school in this process.

The standards of attainment reached by the pupils at the end of their respective key stages are generally good. However, the standards reached in Religious Education when compared to those in English are not as good in terms of the higher levels. This is linked to the expectations in the programme of study and is an area for the school and Diocese to keep under review.

The work set for the pupils is for the most part differentiated by outcome. There is some evidence of teachers differentiating work for pupils by task and this now needs to be more fully addressed across the school. Most pupils take care and pride in their work and the standards of presentation are good.

The school has collated portfolios of levelled work to support whole school assessment procedures and there is some evidence of the tracking of pupil progress. The school now needs to develop these procedures more fully. When marking pupil's work, teachers respond to the work in a supportive way, frequently referring to the driver words of the level descriptor. There is evidence in the pupil's books of both self and peer assessment and the pupils are now becoming more confident in the use and understanding of the 'DIRT' programme adopted by the school.

The feedback provided by the teachers for the pupils now needs to be more consistently used across the school, with the focus on individual target setting and the next steps for improvement. This will help to further raise standards in Religious Education across the school.

The school's prayer life and collective worship observed during the inspection were judged to be good. Regular opportunities are provided for the pupils to pray, worship and celebrate together throughout the school and the liturgical year. The Head teacher led the whole school collective act of worship which focussed on the individual qualities of each child and their uniqueness in the eyes of God.

The school helps to support the pupils in their experience and understanding of the Catholic life of their school through a varied programme of opportunities which include: The Rainbows Programme, The Nurture group, Pantasaph Retreat as well as class and parish Mass. The school is developing a Prayer Garden which is currently under construction in the grounds and St Mary's has also established a link with a village in Nepal.

The pupils are proud of their school and readily take on a variety of roles to support and promote the Christian values and caring ethos of their Catholic community. Representatives include: Prefects, School and Eco Councils and there are plans to introduce Prayer Buddies in the near future. The school is active in supporting a number of charitable organisations which include 79 shoeboxes collected for Operation Christmas Child, CAFOD, Macmillan and carol singing at a local residential home for the elderly residents.

The school enjoys a very good and positive relationship with both the Parish and the Parish Priest. The Parish Priest visits the school regularly and supports the work and further development of the pupils, celebrating Mass in school and in the Parish. Many of the Catechists who deliver the programme for sacramental preparation in Year 3 are former teachers from the school.

The school and the Governors have overseen the introduction of the new Diocesan scheme for Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE), "Journey in Love". This will now be rolled out to the pupils in the summer term and this will help to assist them in developing their knowledge and understanding of human relationships.

The Head teacher provides a positive role model for her staff and her school, showing witness and personal commitment to her strong Catholic faith. She understands that the processes required for continued school improvement are ongoing, and so she sets high expectations for herself, her staff, her Governing Body and the pupils in her care to continue on that journey towards school improvement.

2. HOW GOOD IS PROVISION

GOOD

Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement.

The quality of teaching across the school is good with some aspects that are very good. Nearly all of the teaching observed provided a range of opportunities for pupils which enabled most of them to make good progress as learners. Most teachers plan their work effectively, though much of the differentiation is by outcome and only some by the actual task provided for the children. The pupils are provided with regular opportunities to contribute to their work in the form of 'polishing' time and 'DIRT' time. Nearly all pupils are well motivated, engaged in their learning and show interest in their work.

Additional classroom staff are deployed effectively to provide support for the children to enable them to access the curriculum and so help to enhance their learning and achieve at or very near their full potential.

Pupils are provided with ongoing oral and written feedback. All work in the children's books is marked with teachers using positive comments and Driver Words to both celebrate and to provide an idea of the level at which each pupil is working. The school now needs to further develop this by providing children with next steps for learning on a more regular basis and more consistently from class to class throughout the school. This will help the children to know what they need to do next to further improve their work. This could also possibly be complemented by children having the opportunity to identify their own targets for learning within Religious Education itself and for their own personal development. The school has implemented the diocesan assessment guidelines and these help to build up a 'picture' of the individual pupils' progress.

During the inspection pupils were observed making good use of peer assessment by reading each other's work and self-assessment as part of their classroom 'polishing' time. This now needs to be more consistently implemented throughout the school. The school has also put together portfolios of leveled work to support whole school assessment procedures.

The school uses the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme as advised by the Diocese of Wrexham and this meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education with 10% of curriculum time being devoted to the teaching of Religious Education. The curriculum is well planned and in many cases tailored in order to meet the needs of individuals and groups of learners. Pupils also enjoy and benefit from a number of extra-curricular clubs and activities provided by the school.

The Collective Worship observed during the inspection was good and reflected well the Catholic character of the school. Worship, prayer and music all help to assist in the moral and spiritual development of the pupils. Opportunities are provided for staff and children to pray both formally and informally. The school has recently allocated a space within the school as a special place for prayer and reflection for both staff and pupils.

The headteacher and subject leader possess the necessary skills and expertise to further support and continue to develop the staff in their planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship.

The Welsh language and culture are actively promoted and celebrated both in the classrooms and throughout the school. This was particularly evident from a variety of displays around the school and by the efforts of both staff and pupils to promote the Welsh language and culture through the use of incidental Welsh.

Attractive well maintained displays and the use of focus tables in the classrooms and around the school also help to stimulate and enhance the pupil's experience and engagement with Religious Education and consolidate an awareness and understanding of the Liturgical Year.

The Parish Priest is very supportive of the school and its Catholic mission. The Parish Priest is a regular visitor to the school. Parents and other members of the parish are welcomed to the school on a regular basis and are actively encouraged to join in with the Mass led by the school and various other whole school events.

Taking all of the above into account the school is judged to be good in relation to how it provides for the children in its care. The definition of which is as a school St Mary's has ... *'Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement'....*

3. HOW GOOD ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

GOOD

Many strengths and no important are as requiring significant improvement.

The Headteacher is proud of St Mary's school and is committed to, and passionate for the continued development of the Catholic life and character of the school. The Headteacher leads by example and knows her the school very well. The Headeacher is well supported by an enthusiastic and proactive, forward-looking Governing Body.

The Headteacher knows the strengths of her school and the areas which also require further development in order to move the school forward. The Headteacher works closely with her governing body and keeps them well informed through comprehensive Headteacher reports. Members of the school's governing body support and show a commitment to the work taking place within the school through their role as a 'critical friend' and their active involvement in many aspects of school life.

The school's Mission Statement is reviewed regularly and currently states , *'We Live, Learn and Grow together in Jesus'* this is evidenced and brought to life throughout the school by all members of the school family. School policies are reviewed by the Governing Body on a regular basis. The governing body has an established 'Mission and Purpose Committee' of which all

governors are members. The governing body actively review and monitor the Catholic life of the school. They have recently adopted the Diocesan Human Relationships Education programme 'Journey in Love' and are now working to fully implement this programme across the school. To assist the implementation of this programme the school has made this a target for all staff to work on.

The school and members of the Governing Body monitor the school's progress through classroom observations, book scrutiny work and attendance at School Council meetings. These monitoring activities help the school to measure its own progress against whole school targets and identify further areas for development.

Nearly all pupils and parents express positive views about their school. Some of the comments included in the returned questionnaires from parents stated ...

St Mary's is ...'A Good quality local Catholic school' ...

'I have been to many schools but there is no school that gives me the feeling as when I walk into St Mary's ...full of love'.

'The kindness and care which the teaching staff approach both their teaching and relationships with the children are all based firmly on the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church'.

At St Mary's ...'Each child is special and listened to'.

St Mary's...'is a Catholic school with good standards of education and a caring attitude'.

'It has a very kind and caring ethos. Each of my children has been treated as an individual and valued for who they are'

Many pupils have also been able to express their views through the school's 'pupil voice' initiatives and their School Council representatives. This affords many pupils the opportunity to help decide on how they can play their part in making a difference to their school.

The pastoral support and guidance provided at the school is very good and is having a positive impact on the way pupils feel about themselves, the way they feel valued and cared for along with the general standards being achieved. Staff and governors demonstrate a commitment to the Church's mission in education with the spiritual and moral development of its children being a constant and consistent priority. The school has introduced the 'Person-Centred Thinking' (PCT) initiative to support the above work.

The Headteacher works hard to actively promote and encourage good relationships with the parish served by the school. The parish priest, as a regular visitor shows his support of the Catholic ethos and the work being done by the school.

Through their studies of Other Faiths, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development the pupils are able to recognize and understand better the beliefs and needs of other people from around the world. A recent visit to Nepal to support their work in school is a very good example of this. The school is also active in its support of a number of charitable organisations these have included CAFOD, Mission Together and Operation Christmas Child.

The school supports its parents by keeping them well informed about the work going on in the school and in particular what is happening in Religious Education, through the School Prospectus, Governor's Annual Report to Parents and the school newsletter. The school has also recently updated its web site and actively uses twitter as part of its efforts to keep parents informed electronically.

St Mary's Catholic School is an inclusive 'family' community. It celebrates its areas of strength whilst systematically prioritizing the school's next steps.

Taking all of the above into account, in relation to the Leadership and Management of the school, the school is judged to be good. The definition of this judgement is that St Mary's school has ...'*Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement*'....

RECOMMENDATIONS

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

In deciding recommendations for the school's future development it was felt that the school should:

- continue its work to ensure that all work is more closely differentiated to the level of ability of each pupil. As part of this, differentiation by task should be more regularly and consistently used throughout the school to support and extend the pupil's learning.
- develop further its systems for marking and feedback across the school to focus more closely on providing next steps for learning for the children. This will ensure that all pupils know and understand clearly what they need to do next in order to improve their work. This to be consistently implemented throughout the school.
- further develop its whole school assessment and pupil tracking procedures to evidence pupil progress, inform more closely teacher planning and teaching and the actual learning of the pupils.

In arriving at recommendations to inform the future work and development of the school, inspectors wish to acknowledge the good work already done in these areas but felt that the school would benefit from the continuation of its work in the areas identified to ensure that there is more consistency throughout the school.

Appendix 1.

Evidence Base

The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation

Meetings with the Head teacher and Religious Education Subject Leader

Meetings with the Chair of Governors

Scrutiny of Parental Questionnaires

Class visits and Lesson observations

Scrutiny of planning and assessment

Scrutiny of pupils' work

Scrutiny of displays and prayer/Focus tables

Attendance at class and whole school Collective Worship

Discussions with pupils

Discussions with staff

Observation of daily routines

The Diocesan Inspectors wish to express sincere thanks to the Governors, Head teacher, staff, parish priest, parents and children for the courtesy and co-operation received during the inspection.
