

# Diocese of Wrexham

in North Wales



## INSPECTION REPORT

### St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Colwyn Bay

Head Teacher: Mr J Wilkinson

Chair of governors: Dr M Romachney

**Date of Inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**Date of previous Inspection: July 2012**

**Inspectors: Mrs Julie Johnson**

**Mrs Carol Morgan**

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

## **BACKGROUND TO THE SECTION 50 INSPECTION.**

During each inspection, the inspectors follow the diocesan framework for inspection agreed by the Bishop of Wrexham and held by the Diocese of Wrexham. The inspection looks at the school as a Catholic school required to fulfill its statutory requirements under Section 50 of the School's Inspections Act, 2005 and the school's inspection requirements held under the authority of the Bishop of the Diocese, (Code of Canon Law, Book III: 806).

**During each inspection the inspectors will aim to focus on three main questions of the school, as a Catholic school.**

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors will provide an overall judgment on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

**The inspectors will use a four-point scale and judgment.**

**What the judgment means**

Outstanding

Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice

Good

Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement

Adequate

Strengths outweigh areas for improvement

Unsatisfactory

Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

## **Introduction**

The inspection of the school was carried out by two Inspectors from the Diocese of Shrewsbury. They visited six religious education lessons and held meetings with the head teacher, the Religious Education Coordinator, the chair of governors, the parish priest, staff members, and pupils. They observed the school's work and provision, including prayer and collective worship. They looked at a range of evidence, including key documentation such as the school's self-evaluation, school development plan and pupils' work.

## **Information about the school**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is situated in the town of Colwyn Bay. The school serves the parish of St Joseph's in Colwyn Bay.

The Mission statement is "*Grow in Love*".

There are 235 pupils on roll (as at June 2019) including the part time Nursery. 59% of pupils are baptised Catholics, but the school believes that a much smaller percentage (approximately 15%) of pupils are from families who regularly practise their faith. 17% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 20% of pupils have English as an additional language, and half of these are either new to English or at an early stage of learning English. No pupils speak Welsh at home. 20% of pupils have been identified as having additional learning needs. 3% of pupils are Looked After Children.

The Head Teacher was appointed in February 2017, and the school was without a Deputy Head Teacher until September 2018, when the current post holder was appointed. She is also the school's Religious Education Coordinator.

The school is currently working to achieve the Bronze Cymraeg Campus Award, the Healthy School Quality Award and the Nurturing Schools Programme accreditation.

## **Summary of Inspection Findings**

This is a good Catholic school.

The school is good overall in providing and promoting Catholic Education. The school's Mission Statement "*Grow in Love*" clearly permeates all aspects of school life, and is well understood by the pupils. The behaviour and attitude of the pupils are good, and pupils engage well in their learning. They say that they enjoy their lessons in Religious Education.

Links with the parish are strong, and the school makes a considerable contribution to the life of the parish and the wider community. The school's work for local, national and international charities is particularly impressive.

Since the last inspection the school has generally implemented Diocesan recommendations.

Self-evaluation systems are in place and are accurate. Provision for Religious Education and Collective Worship are good. Assessment procedures are consistent, and in line with Diocesan policy.

Given the dedication and commitment shown by the leadership of the school, there is a very good capacity for sustained improvement. The Head Teacher has a clear vision for the school, and he is ably assisted by new Religious Education Coordinator who is already having a significant impact on the Catholic Life of the school, Religious Education and Collective Worship.

Prospects for improvement are very good.

## **Recommendations**

**R1 Develop pupil led Collective Worship at an age appropriate level**

**R2 Challenge pupils further, through feedback, next steps marking and questioning which prompt pupils to deepen their understanding and reflect on how their faith impacts on their daily lives**

**R3 Continue to develop the role of link Governors in monitoring and evaluating the outcomes and provision in Religious Education and the Catholic Life of the School, by engaging in the planned monitoring and evaluation activities, and reporting back to the full Governing Body any implications for the future e.g. the provision of resources, or CPD for staff**

### **What happens next?**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will create an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The Diocese of Wrexham will support and monitor the school's progress.

## **KQ1 How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils**

Pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic life of the school. They can describe ways in which their faith shapes the school community, and articulate the school's Mission Statement 'Grow in Love' well. They enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn, and as one pupil put it, 'the people in school help us to build a nice community and build our characters'. The behaviour of pupils in all lessons observed was good, and as a result lessons are able to move at a fast pace.

Pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities including Eco Council, School Council, as well as the newly formed Mini Vinnies and the GIFT Team. All stakeholders agree that the GIFT Team is making a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. Interested Y5 and Y6 pupils responded to an advert to be part of the Team, and had to apply in writing and be interviewed by the Head Teacher and Religious Education Coordinator in order to be involved. A Commissioning

Service was held in church for the successful applicants. Not surprisingly, the pupils' commitment to the Team is excellent, and they are rightly proud of their achievements so far. The voluntary lunchtime Prayer Club led by the Team is well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by other pupils. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities for the younger pupils.

It is clear that pupil voice is developing well in the school, and staff are now in a position to take actions based on what they have found out. For instance, some pupils feel that Collective Worship in the school could be made more interesting. Currently, Collective Worship is well led by staff, and so, pupils could be given opportunities to plan and lead Collective Worship themselves, at an age appropriate level.

Pupils make good progress in Religious Education, from their varied starting points. They are becoming religiously literate, and are actively involved in their lessons. Teachers work hard to develop creativity in Religious Education lessons e.g. through the use of drama, art and IT, and this is appreciated by pupils. Continuous provision in Religious Education lessons is particularly strong in the Foundation Phase.

The standards reached by pupils at the end of each Key Stage are good. The school has developed a robust tracking system, which is used consistently across the school, and formal assessments take place termly. The 'I can' statements are regularly used to inform future teaching and learning. The 'driver' words are in use across the school, and these support progress through the levels.

The presentation of work in pupils' books is mostly good, and all work is marked. Pupils have completed a good amount of written recording throughout the year, as well as taken part in a wealth of creative activities which are recorded using QR codes.

Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong, and are able to give and accept forgiveness. They are considerate to others and there are many and varied examples of the school responding to the needs of others beyond the school, for instance Hope House, St David's Hospice, Macmillan Cancer Care, British Heart Foundation, Children in Need, Water Aid and CAFOD. This work has had a positive impact on the pupils' sense of responsibility to support those less fortunate and to support the needs of our wider world.

Pupils show reverence when they are at prayer, and they can reflect in silence. They sing joyfully, and are able to join in traditional prayers with confidence. Different forms and styles of prayer have recently been introduced, and these are having a positive impact on the prayer life of the school, and are valued by pupils. A good number of pupils are regularly involved in voluntary prayer.

Taking all the above aspects into account the school is judged to be good for the outcomes achieved by individuals and groups of learners.

## **KQ2 The quality of the school's work in providing Catholic education**

The quality of teaching across the school is good, and all lessons observed on the day of the Inspection were at least good. Pupils engage well and are enthusiastic about Religious Education.

Teachers use prior learning to make links to new learning, and use open questioning to good effect. It is evident that teachers across the school use a range of practical and imaginative

activities to develop learning, and pupils say that the teachers 'make the lessons really creative so we enjoy them'. Behaviour is good across the school, and this enables lessons to be paced, and for planned work to be completed in the lesson.

Learning is well supported by both Teaching Assistants and other adults. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive. Differentiated activities are often provided to ensure that the needs of all learners are met.

Pupils are used to working in pairs and in collaborative groups, and they are rarely off task, even when working independently. Good use is made of ICT to both enhance and record learning.

Consistent assessment systems are in place and pupils' work is regularly annotated, giving the context, the appropriate 'I can' statements, and also self-assessment, as pupils move through the school.

Pupils are provided with feedback, both orally and through marking. However, these comments do not often give the next steps for learning nor do they challenge pupils to reflect more deeply on the topic, or to think about how their faith impacts on their daily lives, at an age appropriate level.

Teachers have good subject knowledge, and all teachers who are non-Catholics have completed the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. This is to be commended.

The curriculum is meeting the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. The school uses the 'Come And See' programme which is recommended by the Diocese and as such, meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. This ensures complete religious education entitlement for each child and meets National and Diocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum time available, 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

The Religious Education curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for spiritual, moral and cultural development. Pastoral support is a strength of the school, and the school's work in meeting the needs of its most vulnerable pupils should be celebrated. The school is fully committed to inclusion, and is also working extremely hard to provide a nurturing environment for all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. This is fully in keeping with its Mission to 'Grow in Love'.

Collective Worship takes place regularly, and is well modelled by school staff. However, as yet, pupils do not plan or lead Collective Worship independently, at an age appropriate level. Evidence from the Prayer Club suggests that, once they have been given opportunities and supported in learning how to do this, pupils would be able to do this confidently,

Taking all the above aspects into account, the school is judged to be good for the outcomes achieved by individuals and groups of learners.

## **KQ3 How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school**

Leaders, governors and managers demonstrate a deep commitment to the Church's mission in Education. The school's Mission Statement 'Grow in Love' has been reviewed and is 'lived and breathed' in the school, according to Governors. A Mission and Purpose Governor subcommittee has been set up to review and monitor the Catholic life of the school. This will further enhance the school's provision.

The Head Teacher is rightly proud of his school and is committed to the continued development of the Catholic Life and character of the school. He recognises that the appointment of the Deputy Head Teacher has been instrumental in moving the school forward. He knows the strengths and areas for development of the school well, and is determined for the school to be the best that it can be.

Members of the school's governing body both support and challenge the school's Senior Leadership Team, and act as a 'critical friend'. They are kept well informed by the Head Teacher and Religious Education Coordinator. Link Governors take part in a range of monitoring and evaluation activities, for example, Learning Walks, observing Collective Worship and Assemblies, but as yet, do not have a formal mechanism for reporting back to the Governing Body any implications or outcomes that need to be considered. Governors provide the Head Teacher with Performance Management targets related to the Catholic Life of the School, which ensures that the highest priority is given to the school's core purpose.

Self-evaluation activities are planned and carried out regularly, and appropriate priorities are identified, developed and then evaluated. Self-evaluation is accurate, and priorities identified are achievable. All stakeholders contributed to the completion of the school's Self Evaluation Record.

The pastoral care and support provided by the school are excellent and are having a positive impact on the holistic development of each child. All Staff and pupils have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school. Staff say they are 'proud to be on the team' and report that they work together well.

Almost all parents speak highly of the school and appreciate the care and encouragement their children receive. This was confirmed by the large amount of positive comments on the returned parental questionnaires. As one parent wrote, 'I am delighted with the well-rounded faith based education our children receive. This, without doubt, gives them the grounding to understand the world around them and enables them to be more considerate towards others'. Parents also value the invitations to attend school Masses, assemblies and other events. The PTA is active in providing funds for the school and parish, and parish members support the school extremely well. For instance, they regularly hear pupils read or support maths groups in school. Others have taken on significant sponsored events to raise much needed funds for the school.

The parish priest is a frequent visitor to school, and all stakeholders feel that the links with the parish have improved and are strong. The pupils interviewed enjoy visiting church, and value the opportunity to be altar servers. Staff and pupils value the support given by the Faith in Action Group at events in the parish, for instance the First Holy Communion Programme. The new Mini

Vinnies Group is developing strong links with the Parish SVP and is expected to go from strength to strength. The school's website celebrates the school and parish activities very well.

Displays in classrooms reflect the current 'Come and See' topics, and displays in the communal areas clearly celebrate the school's ethos and Mission. The school also successfully promotes community cohesion through its very good links with outside agencies.

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