

# Diocese of Wrexham

in North Wales



## INSPECTION REPORT

### St. Mary's Catholic Primary School Newtown, Powys

Head Teacher: Mrs. Barbara Legge

Chair of Governors: Mr. Mike Bacigalupo

Date of Inspection: March 2017

Inspectors: Mrs. Kathryn Ranson

Miss Rachel M. Molyneux

## **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 Diocesan Inspectors. They visited religious education lessons and held meetings with parents, the head teacher, a foundation governor, the subject leader and the parish priest. 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 the pupils' work.

## Context of the School

St Mary's is a small primary school and the only Catholic School in Powys. It is situated in the parish of 'God the Holy Ghost' in Newtown and has strong links with the parish community. The school's mission statement is the phrase "Love one another as I have loved you", (John 13, 34-35). The school draws pupils from a variety of social backgrounds in the area. There are 112 pupils on roll, with 40% of children who are baptised Catholic; 16% of children are eligible for free school meals and 22% of children are viewed by the school as having special learning needs. The school was inspected last in 2011.

## Summary of the inspection findings.

St Mary's is a welcoming and inclusive school. The Catholic ethos and values and are highly visible and are reflected in the outstanding attitudes and relationships of all members of the school community.

The school's Mission Statement is "Love one another as I have loved you." The ethos of the school is well established. It is a happy and positive Catholic school with an emphasis on care and respect for all. The behaviour and attitude of the pupils is outstanding and they are happy and engaged in their learning. The school makes an active contribution to the life of the parish and the wider community.

Since the last inspection the school shows only limited progress against the recommendations that were set. The recommendations from the last inspection have not been met

The school's own judgements about standards and expectations of the pupil's work are not accurate enough or in line with those of the inspection. In religious education the standards of work set and reached varies across the school. Assessment procedures in religious education have been introduced but they lack the rigour to impact on raising standards. The 'I can' statements are not being used and formal assessments need to be annotated using the driver words. The marking of written work is not consistent enough in terms of what pupils can do and what they need to do to improve in religious literacy. There are still too few opportunities for children to extend their writing in religious education. A scrutiny of books shows that there is still a lack of sufficient challenge for many pupils.

The school's self-evaluation document does not offer a clear enough picture of the school's work and progress. It is not sufficiently evaluative and does not reflect enough the views of the governors, staff, pupils and parents. Priorities for the improvement of curriculum religious

education need to be identified from this self-evaluation and so inform the school's development plan. The school's judgements about the standards and expectations of the children's work need to be more accurate.

## Recommendations

In order to make progress, the school needs to:

- R1.** Raise the standards of attainment in religious education further by:
- using the language of the level descriptors when planning and differentiating groups of children;
  - ensuring differentiation is by both task and outcome;
  - ensuring that there is sufficient progression and challenge for all pupils
  - ensuring whole school use of driver words when marking to help pupils know their next steps
- R.2.** Continue to develop and improve the work being done in assessment, monitoring and tracking of children's progress by:
- improving the accuracy and rigour of moderation across the year groups;
- R 3** Continue to develop the role of the leaders, including governors, to ensure that the systems of monitoring that have been established are rigorously implemented in order to impact on standards across the school
- R 4** Develop and embed the self-evaluation process.  
The self-evaluation process must involve everyone so that it is a document that all members own and so ensure that they know what is needed to improve the school. This needs regular reviewing and updating to ensure constant development.

## What happens next?

St. Mary's 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.

## Key Question 1. How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils are reflective and enquiring. Older pupils are ready to express their own views and beliefs orally. They show care and respect for symbols and artefacts within school. They are considerate towards others and they show good examples of responding to people beyond the immediate needs of the school. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. They support and fundraise for numerous charitable causes including CAFOD, Operation Christmas Child and a school that they have good links with in Uganda.

Whilst there are established assessment systems in place, the assessment, recording and monitoring of religious education needs to be more rigorous. The judgements made by the school in terms of the standards of attainment reached by pupils in religious education are inaccurate.

The moderation of pupils' work needs more development so that assessment is consistent across the school. Staff need to develop confidence and competence when levelling work in religious education. More opportunities are required to ensure this, for example, by setting standardisation as a regular item at staff meetings.

During Acts of Worship, pupils at the school act with reverence. They reflect in silence, sing joyfully and join in community prayers appropriately, and with confidence, and everyone is included. No one is expected to act in a manner contrary to their beliefs and pupils show respect for each other. Pupils are at ease when praying with their school community and they appreciate what is taking place.

The pupils' learning and progress are adequate.

## **Key Question 2. The quality of the school's work in providing Catholic education**

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive but low expectations result in a lack of appropriate achievement for most pupils. Some good teaching was observed during the inspection, evidence from the children's books suggests this is not consistent. The judgements made by the school in respect of the quality of teaching and learning in religious education and of the standards reached by the children are not accurate enough. Currently there are no individual tracking systems in place for the monitoring of pupil achievement.

Formal assessment takes place three times a year but this needs to be moderated and annotated using driver words to ensure accuracy. The use of driver words in teacher comments will ensure a consistent approach to setting objectives using the language of the level descriptors when marking pupils work across the school. Marking and dialogue are insufficiently focused on supporting the pupils' progress. There is no evidence of informal assessment and the early learning goals are not used.

The Subject Leader has evidenced detailed planning that follows Diocesan guidelines. This good practice needs to be shared with others in order to raise standards.

Pupils show interest in their work but further improvement is required in order to ensure that pupils achieve their potential.

The school is following the required programme of the Diocese however this is not being adequately followed and results in a lack of entitlement for pupils because national and diocesan requirements are not being met. The organisation and time allocation for religious education needs to be reviewed. The religious education curriculum provides good opportunities for spiritual and moral development and a sense of vocation.

The Collective Worship observed was adequate and follows a routine structure. Staff accept their responsibility for leading prayer and involve pupils in its delivery however there needs to be a greater range and variety of forms of Collective Worship. Collective Worship must be planned and evaluated. Focal points need to be simpler so that they reflect the liturgical themes and the topics from the Come and See Programme to support the prayer life of the pupils and staff.

The provision is adequate.

### **Key Question 3. How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school**

The Head teacher is very committed to developing the Catholic life of the school. The school Mission Statement is known and lived by the school community. The pastoral care, support and guidance at the school are good. Staff and pupils have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school. There is a Mission and Purpose Committee whose task it is to look at the school as a

Catholic school but this needs further development in order to have its proper impact on raising standards.

The school is an Inclusive community and successfully promotes community cohesion through its good links with the parish community and outside agencies. Parish links have been developed. The school raises funds for a range of charities throughout the year.

However, the school's own self-evaluation is inadequate and a lack of focus is preventing the school from identifying its priorities for development. Governors do not currently monitor the standards in religious education and have not been involved in the self-evaluation document. This raises important matters to be addressed by the leadership of the school and the Governing Body.

The lack of clear tracking systems means that religious education is not given the same attention as other core subjects. The head teacher and subject leader need to attend diocesan briefings and training sessions in order to share this professional development with their staff. Resources are very limited and this has an impact on the delivery of the 'Come and See Programme'. The Governors must ensure that there are sufficient funds to purchase resources such as 'God's Story and 'Church's Story' to help raise standards. Governors also need to ensure that religious education is an agenda item at every Governing Body meeting to help to develop a secure knowledge of curriculum religious education. Governors need also to ensure the regular review of school policies and to update them.

The significant shortcomings in curriculum religious education and lack of progress in addressing the recommendations since the last inspection, deem the leadership to be unsatisfactory

Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.