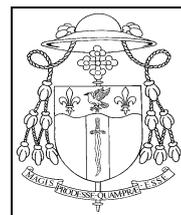


DIOCESE OF MENEVIA



Inspection Report on the Religious Dimension of the School

St Joseph's Junior School, Port Talbot

Inspection dates: October 8th – 10th 2012

Reporting Inspector: Mrs Sue Roberts

Accompanying Inspector: Mrs Juliet Stack

Type of School: Junior

Age range of pupils: 7 - 11

Number on roll: 118

Local Authority: Neath/Port Talbot

Chair of Governors: Canon J. Cefai VG PhD MA

School Address: Nobel Avenue, Port Talbot SA14 6YN

Tel. No: 01639 769743

Email address: stjoseph'sjunior@npted.org

Parishes served: St Joseph's, Port Talbot; St Phillip Evans, Cwmavon; Our Lady of Margam.

Date of previous inspection: 27th November 2006

Headteacher: Mr Michael Daley

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 serves the Catholic community in the Port Talbot area, including the parishes of St Joseph's, St Phillip Evans and Our Lady of Margam. There is a long-standing Catholic community in Port Talbot who have shown a great commitment to Catholic education. This supportive attitude is still very evident today with the parents playing an active part in the life of the school. The catchment area has zones of significant social deprivation and some pupils come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Since the last inspection the Governing Body has three new members, but the Chair and the Vice-Chair remain the same. A new Headteacher was appointed for September 2008, with the new deputy Headteacher being appointed in February 2010. Three full-time teachers have left since the last inspection and the Additional Learning Needs teacher has become a part-time class teacher.

The school caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 years. At the time of inspection, there were 118 pupils on roll. This was made up of 90 Catholic pupils, 15 pupils of other Christian denominations, and 13 of no faith.

There have been minor improvements to the school environment. The flower beds have been made safe and the perimeter fence is secure and strong. The demography of the area has also changed in that free school meals have risen from less than 8% to 19.2%. The percentage of pupils on the SEN register has also risen to a five year high of 36%.

Out of the hundred and eighteen pupils, ninety of them are baptised Catholics. All of the teaching and support staff are Catholics. Out of the six teachers, five of them hold the CCRS and one is currently studying for it. Two of the three support staff are also currently three quarters of the way through the course.

The school is presently working towards its fourth Healthy Schools' award and has achieved the silver Sustainable Schools award.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?	Good
St Joseph's is a good school because: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Catholic ethos permeates all areas of school life;• partnerships with parents, the parish and the local community are good;• prayer and worship, which are central to the life of the school, aid pupil's moral and spiritual development;• governors and school leaders have a clear vision for curriculum religious education and the Catholic life of the school;• effective pastoral care promotes pupils' wellbeing;• good links exist between the Catholic cluster and parishes;• many pupils make good progress.	
What are the school's prospects for improvement?	Good
Prospects for improvement are good due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the good leadership of the Headteacher, ably supported by his religious education co-ordinator;• the support, appreciation and challenge of governors;• good systems of self- review and tracking of progress;• the enthusiasm of leaders and managers to consolidate success and secure further improvement;• self-evaluation systems that improve outcomes for pupils.	

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

R1 - To ensure planning for curriculum religious education is detailed, differentiated and provides sufficient challenge for the more able.

R2 – Ensure that all pupils receive the 10% statutory

R3 - to implement and embed assessment for learning strategies, ensuring consistency across the school.

R4 - Ensure that the school has sufficient evidence of coverage of, and resources for, the other faiths elements of the Here I Am programme.

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

From when they first enter, pupils at St Joseph's School show interest, enjoyment and enthusiasm for religious education. The majority of pupils make good progress. They engage well in a variety of activities, apply themselves diligently, work at a good pace and are keen to do well. The quality of most pupils' recorded work is generally good and in most books there is a range of written responses. In the best examples this includes art and collage, individual psalm writing, ICT work and diary entries. One group of pupils were involved in creating a comic strip based on the current theme of Invitations, using the new i-Pads recently purchased by the school. It was evident however, that not all pupils manage to complete the target of one piece of extended writing every week. Differentiation is mainly by outcome, which does 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. There is limited opportunity for pupils to review and reflect on their own work and that of others, and offer ways on which to make improvements.

In their oral and written responses many pupils use language that reflects the themes and expectations of the Here I Am programme. Pupils can relate their learning to their own lives. A very comprehensive whole school tracking system ensures that the Here I Am assessments, linked to NBRIA Levels of Attainment, are implemented and identify areas for further development in order to raise standards.

Pupils in St Joseph's school make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. This is reflected in the strong sense of belonging to their parish community which was very evident. They show care and respect for the religious artefacts displayed on the prayer foci in their classrooms and on the effective displays around the school. Great reverence was evident during the whole school Mass when pupils entered and left the hall in a dignified manner with their hands together. Prayer posters displayed in central areas and all classrooms provide a reminder about the importance of prayer life in the school. 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. A meditation assembly gave pupils an opportunity to reflect in peace on the Gospel story being told. This is a new concept to the school and is succeeding in giving the pupils a clear, calm and prayerful focus to their day. Pupils are developing a good awareness of a variety of styles and forms of prayer and their liturgical formation is progressing well. During both Mass and assembly times pupils respond appropriately, sing with confidence and enthusiasm and join in collective prayer with suitable reverence. Although there was evidence of the inclusion of multi-lingual prayer during Mass, the opportunities for pupils to include the Welsh language in prayer was limited.

KQ 2. How Good is Provision?	Good
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In St Joseph's School teachers employ a range of teaching styles and plan a variety of activities that enable their pupils to work independently and collectively. Around half of the lessons observed were good. Generally, positive pupil teacher relationships and a range of questioning styles encourage good levels of pupil motivation and concentration. Most teachers gave clear expectations in order to help to create a climate where most pupils strive to achieve their best. In a minority of classes, pupils would have benefitted from having greater support in order to help them achieve the learning objective. Pupils are provided with informative feedback, both orally and through the marking of their work. However, opportunities for the development of Assessment for Learning strategies within the classroom were limited. Pupils lack the skills to be able to challenge each-other, and themselves, in order to take their learning to the next level.

There is a well embedded pupil tracking system in place in school which presents an accurate view of each pupil's current performance and progress over time. This is monitored well by the Headteacher who ensures that its effective use informs planning and is linked to current Religious Education assessments. The "I can" statements have recently started to be used directly with the pupils, and this will continue to be developed by linking them more to initial planning by teaching staff. Through cluster and in-house moderation exercises, teachers are developing accuracy in applying NBRIA Levels of Attainment. Portfolios of moderated and levelled work are detailed and well presented.

The school's Religious Education scheme of work is the Diocese of Menevia's recommended scheme 'Here I Am', but they were also part of a recent pilot of 'Come and See', the Diocesan future replacement of this. This was well received by staff and feedback provided to the Diocesan Director. 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. At present only one other world faith is taught during the academic year.

Prayer and worship are very important to the life of the school. Acts of collective worship, in both the school and Parish Church, provide regular opportunities for pupils and adults to pray together. Both the meditation assembly and whole school Mass were very well supported by parents and governors. Themes are consistent with the Catholic character of the school, reflect Here I Am topics and are relevant to the lives of the pupils. The pupils are very involved in the preparation of assemblies and Masses during Holy Week.

The school's accommodation is clean, well maintained and provides a stimulating learning environment. All classrooms have displays that reflect the current Here I Am topic, 'Invitations', and previous topic work was displayed in corridors. Prayer focus areas display a mixture of children's work, crucifixes, books, rosaries and icons. There is an adequate range of resources to support learning although the purchase of further good

quality materials would greatly enhance the teaching and learning in RE, particularly for the teaching of other faiths.

KQ3. How good are Leadership and Management?

Good

The leadership of the school is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. All members of the school strive to fulfil the aims of the Mission Statement. There is a very effective governing body at St Joseph's 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 a frequent visitor to the school, and provides a good level of support for the development of the spiritual life of the school and curriculum religious education. The governors set and monitor improvement strategies and are involved in the recruitment of all teaching staff. They are well organised, supportive of school leaders and appreciate the work of the staff. The governors provide both rigorous challenge and support for the school leaders and keep themselves abreast of current educational trends. They are suitably proud of the school's recent achievement in the Emerging Technologies project.

All teaching staff hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and two Learning Support Assistants are currently committed to studying for the qualification. This is an outstanding element of the school. Planning in Religious Education tackles 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. Leaders conduct self-evaluation reviews in RE and the co-ordinator provides a very detailed termly report for the governing body on the progress achieved, areas for development and the sharing of parish and diocesan celebrations . This is regarded as excellent practice.

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 Masses. Their response to this is very positive and there is a strong sense of community cohesion. This is a real strength of the school. Partnerships with the parishes are excellent. The Parish priest supports and guides the staff and children in their spiritual development. There is very good support for the parishes the school serves through sacramental preparation and celebration. 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 Headteacher is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. He understands and encourages all in the school community to reflect on diocesan guidelines and to put them into practice. Leaders and managers have successfully established a range of partnerships with other providers. Good links exist with the receiving Catholic secondary school. 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.

Responses to parent questionnaires

59 parents/carers returned the questionnaires.

All parents are happy with the values and attitudes that the school promotes. One parent commented: "The school delivers on its mission statement in all areas of the curriculum." They also agree that the school gives a clear understanding of what is taught in religious education and that their children are enabled to achieve a good standard of work.

All parents state that they are made to feel welcome in the school and that their concerns and suggestions are considered. They also feel that they are kept well informed about their children's progress in religious education and are happy with the help and guidance available. All parents believe that the school gives them a clear understanding of what is taught in personal and social education and, where appropriate, in sex and relationships education. All parents also 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. 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 very strong.

Parents describe the Headteacher as one who, "stretches the boundaries for all, whilst remaining understanding and allowing the school to grow to its potential."

Evidence Base

- The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation
- Meetings with the Headteacher 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.