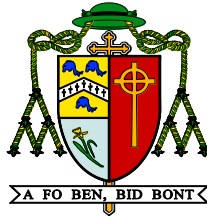


Diocese of Wrexham

in North Wales



INSPECTION REPORT

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Colwyn Bay.LL29 7UU**

Head Teacher: Mrs. S Williams

Chair of Governors: Mr. Sean Ganley

Date of Inspection: July 2012

Inspectors: Mrs K Ranson

Mrs. R Price

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

Excellent

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 all religious education lessons and held meetings with the head teacher, the chair of governors, 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 pupils' work.

Context of the School

St. Joseph's School is a Catholic primary school situated in Colwyn Bay and serves the parishes of St Joseph's and Sacred Heart in Old Colwyn. The mission statement is "Grow in Love". The school draws pupils from a variety of social backgrounds. Currently, the school has 230 pupils on roll aged between 3 and 11 years with 73% of children who are baptised Catholic. 13% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much lower than local authority and national averages. 10% have English as an additional language and 19% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Currently, one pupil is 'looked after' by the local authority. The present head teacher was appointed in September 2001.

Summary of the inspection findings.

St Joseph's is judged to be an excellent Catholic school. The vision shared of Catholic Education is embraced across the whole school community and reinforced through the school's mission statement. The values and Catholic ethos are highly visible and reflected in the exemplary attitudes and relationships between all members of the school community. The head teacher is extremely committed to developing the Catholic life of the school. She makes an outstanding contribution in leading and supporting staff.

Since the last inspection the school has maintained and continued to improve on its previous good performance. The school has embraced all new initiatives to raise standards and provision. The self evaluation process is rigorous, comprehensive and accurate. Outcomes for pupils are good. Pupils are happy and confident learners who thrive in the caring atmosphere created by the school. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are good.

The school is extremely successful in addressing the areas it has identified for improvement. The leadership team is highly motivated and consistently communicates its high expectations to staff to maintain improvement in outcomes and provision. Realistic and challenging plans stem from the accurate analysis obtained through monitoring and is being used effectively to improve outcomes. Staff are encouraged and supported in their ongoing development. School leaders are committed to the ethos and mission of the school and promote high expectations of all pupils spiritually, morally and in all aspects of learning. Governors are justly proud of their school, promote it well and are loyal to it. They carry out their duties in an excellent manner. Parents are very supportive and praising of all the school does. Given the dedication and commitment shown by the leadership of the school,

their culture of improvement, planning and rigorous self-evaluation, there is an excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

Recommendations

In order to make progress, the school needs to:

R1. Continue to develop the schools work on assessment and attainment of religious education by

- embedding further the use of the 'driver words' in the classroom,
- whole school use of driver words in 'next steps' when marking to inform pupils learning.

What happens next?

St Joseph'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

The pupils' achievement in religious education is good. The pupils' attainment in religious education is also good. Pupils make good and some excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. The inspection showed that an analysis of assessment undertaken to date and scrutiny of their work provides evidence of pupils generally attaining a good level for their age and stage of development. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are also good. They are supported very well by their teachers and by effective teaching assistants. Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate as they become familiar with the key words from the topics and can relate their own life experiences to the Christian understanding of the topics. Pupils show they are developing appropriate skills to enable them to reflect spiritually, morally and to know and understand more about religious belief. Some pupils exceed expectations and any underachievement is challenged. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively and this works well. Pupils show they enjoy their learning by their interest, enthusiasm and excellent thoughtful behaviour, which is a strength across the school. Pupils are actively involved in developing and evaluating the Catholic character of the school by showing an excellent commitment to the mission statement. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school community. The culture of the school enables the pupils to forge excellent relationships with their friends and teachers and always strive to do their utmost best. They are helped to learn, grow and pray together. The pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility from their earliest years and some become active members of the school council. Pupils are considerate and caring of others both in school and the wider community. They

support and fundraise for numerous charitable causes including CAFOD, Mission Together and Operation Christmas Child.

The school believes that its programme for personal relationships, "All that I am", has fostered positive attitudes in pupils and in their well being. Pupils take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions and enthusiastically praise and celebrate each other's achievements at their 'Congratulations' assembly. Pupils respond to, and participate exceedingly well in Collective Worship. They are reverent, prayerful and show respect. The pupils' grasp of the liturgy is well developed. Pupils have acquired a range of skills which enable them to prepare and lead celebrations as appropriate. They plan well, selecting appropriate readings, prayers and resources and they enjoy leading and taking part in a variety of settings. The children sing joyfully, reflect purposefully and join in community prayers confidently. They show reverence for and an appreciation to the Word of God in the scriptures.

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

The quality of teaching is almost without exception very effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged in their work and make good progress. Teachers take into account pupils' previous learning and plan a wide range of learning tasks so that the work builds on and extends their knowledge and understanding. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs and collaboratively in small groups. Staff assisting in the classroom are effective in their support. There is full use made of learning resources including interactive white boards, God's and Church's Story, audio and visual media etc. Imaginative and well planned visual, auditory and kinaesthetic strategies are deployed to enrich pupils learning e.g. ICT, role play, recording, composition of prayers, painting, making books etc. Effort and achievement are recognised, rewarded and celebrated. Pupils are affirmed and know how well they are doing. Teachers use developmental marking and indicate what pupils have to do to improve further and as identified in the self evaluation document this needs to become established across the whole school and embedded into standard practice. The learning environment is positive and vibrant and each classroom has an appropriate religious education learning focal point. Great care is taken to provide excellent facilities and resources for the pupils.

The assessment of pupils' work in religious education is good. Teachers use assessment to identify and tackle underachievement and are now using the information gleaned in future planning to ensure that given tasks are pitched at the correct levels. Formal assessment tasks are undertaken and recorded appropriately. Work is moderated across the school and evidence is kept. Assessment information is collated and shared with staff and governors. Progress is tracked and all pupils have religious education targets. The school's reports on progress and achievement in religious education include what their children have studied.

The school makes clear that religious education is at the heart of the curriculum. It follows the 'Here I Am' programme and meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education and the Bishops' Conference requirement of curriculum time. There is a consistent approach across the school so that every child receives their entitlement and with appropriate levels of the programme followed in different classes.

Good planning includes the use of termly letters sent to parents with information about what is being taught in religious education, and how they can support their children's learning. Parent's views and opinions are sought by questionnaire and valued by the leadership team. The school implements new curricular initiatives as appropriate. The religious education curriculum provides excellent opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The quality of provision for prayer and collective worship is excellent. Teachers and pupils plan well and the head teacher and subject leader ensure it is monitored effectively. Provision for collective worship has a high profile at St Joseph's. Resources, including the use of ICT, are provided to enhance worship and are kept up to date. The school's policy is excellent and with clear guidelines for its implementation.

Collective worship reflects the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the background of the pupils. Teachers have been given in-service training in planning and delivering prayer and collective worship and use their skills well to engage the children and provide joyful celebrations. Collective worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Parents are invited in regularly to join in school celebrations, though space is sometimes limited. .

There is a very active Parents and Teachers Association which raises funds for the good of the school.

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

The head teacher is extremely committed to developing the Catholic life of the school. She makes an outstanding contribution in leading and supporting staff. Leaders and managers are excellent in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school and show an excellent understanding of and commitment to the mission of the Church. All those who form part of the school community have been involved in the development and review of the mission statement. Its aims and objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life and opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school e.g. charity work and in raising awareness of those in need. There is a deep commitment and drive for improvement demonstrated by the head teacher and the leadership team. Ongoing self evaluation ensures that continuous improvements are made in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. The school's own self evaluation shows evidence of the schools monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. It is a rigorous document, comprehensive and accurate. This reflects well the mirror for the school to celebrate the strengths and priorities for school development and these have timescales and clear lines of accountability. A range of opportunities for spiritual and moral development are provided for all staff including through collective worship, in-service training and opportunities to join in 'Before you Begin' celebrations at the beginning of each new topic.

Leaders and managers are skilled in the way they use monitoring data to evaluate the schools performance, celebrate and plan future improvements. There is a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme in place which ensures lesson observations, monitoring of planning, book trawls and moderation of assessments are undertaken. Collective Worship is also planned recorded and evaluated. Reports are regularly produced and delivered to the Governing Body curriculum committee.

Excellent documentation guides and directs all staff in their delivery of the subject. The head teacher and subject leader attend Diocesan briefings and training sessions.

Governors at St Joseph's are well informed and discharge their responsibilities in an excellent manner. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school. They set challenging targets and are constantly striving to improve the learning environment and provision. They are involved in monitoring and improvement planning and are committed to the Catholic life of the school. There is a Mission and Purpose Committee and members of the governing body visit the school regularly. Members of the Governing Body have attended training sessions to enable them to fully develop their roles effectively. Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects the religious diversity within the school community. There are positive relationships at every level leading to a welcoming, happy and caring learning environment for staff and pupils. Leaders and managers facilitate pupils' involvement in service to the immediate neighbourhood served by the school and the wider community. The use of the Religious Education Programme *Here I Am* provides excellent support to community cohesion. During 'World Faith Week' pupils had the opportunity to look at Judaism and Islam.

Partnership and School Community

St. Joseph's School is a very welcoming and inclusive school and its strong Catholic ethos ensures that every pupil is valued and fully integrated into the school community. Gospel values are explicit and reflected in the school's happy and caring environment

There are good links with the parish. The school has good links with the parish community. The Parish Priest is a visitor and he appreciates the commitment of the school in nurturing the faith. He is fulsome in his praise of the head teacher and management of the school. Pupils show a readiness to embrace and celebrate through participation in liturgical events in school and their own parish.

Parents speak very well of the school and acknowledge the care and encouragement their children receive. Pupils enjoy coming to school, they feel safe and know what to do if they are worried about anything. They like their teachers, learn to be confident and know staff care about them.