

Diocese of Wrexham

in North Wales



INSPECTION REPORT

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Wrexham.LL13 7EN**

Head Teacher: Mrs. K Jones

Chair of Governors: Mrs. J Griffiths

Date of Inspection: February 2013

Inspectors: Mrs K Ranson

Mrs S Williams

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. Mary's school is a Catholic primary school situated in Wrexham and serves the parishes of Our Lady of Sorrows (Cathedral), The Holy Family, Coedpoeth, Church of the Sacred Heart, Chirk, Eglwys y Groes, Llangollen, St Francis of Assisi, LLay, Christ the King, Rossett, Our Lady and the Welsh Martyrs, Overton and St Mary, the Virgin, Ruabon.

The Mission Statement is "Learning and Loving, Caring and Sharing, by Nurturing the Wholeness "

The school draws pupils from a variety of social backgrounds. Currently, the school has 386 pupils on roll aged between 3 and 11 years with 93% of children who are baptised Catholic. 8% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. 42% have English as an additional language.

Summary of the Inspection findings.

The school is good overall in providing and promoting Catholic Education.

St Mary's has a Mission Statement and the ethos of the school is well established.

The behaviour and attitude of the pupils are good and they are happy and engaged in their learning.

Since the last inspection the school has maintained good standards in religious education and implemented Diocesan recommendations. Self evaluation systems are in place. Outcomes for pupils are good and good provision is made across the school to accommodate the needs of the pupils for which English is spoken as an additional language. Provision for Religious Education is good. Standards of written work across the school are good and assessment has been implemented in line with Diocesan guidance. The leadership team is motivated and conscientious and consistently communicates its expectations to staff in order to secure improvement. Staff are affirmed and supported. The school makes an active contribution to the life of the parish and the wider community.

Given the dedication and commitment shown by the leadership of the school, there is a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Recommendations

In order to make progress, the school needs to:

R1. Continue to develop the school's 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.

R2 To further develop the Self Evaluation process and link it to the School Improvement Plan:

- to include detailed data analysis of curriculum Religious Education
- to evaluate of the impact of the further improvement strategies identified .

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 Education Service will support and monitor the school's progress.

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

Pupils' achievement and attainment in religious education are good. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Assessment information provides evidence of pupils generally attaining appropriate levels for their age and stage of development in each key stage. Outcomes for EAL pupils and those with additional or special needs are good. Pupils are becoming increasingly religiously literate and their knowledge understanding and skills are developing. Pupils take on responsibilities and participate constructively in the Catholic Life of the school.

Pupils are reflective and inquiring. They understand that religious beliefs and spiritual values are important for many people. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish communities. They show interest in the religious life of others and demonstrate care and respect for religious objects in the school.

Pupils are secure and ready to express their own views and beliefs. They are considerate towards others and caring to anyone in apparent need. They show signs of responding to the needs of people beyond the school.

The pupils enjoyment of their learning is good as demonstrated by their interest enthusiasm and behaviour

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

The quality of teaching observed ranges from adequate to excellent across the school. The excellent practice should be shared across the school. This will ensure that the pace of lessons is appropriate, that pupils make good progress and are interested and engaged in their work. Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and ensure there are differentiated tasks, when planning, so that the work consolidates and builds on their learning. However, there needs to be a more consistent approach when setting objectives using the language of the level descriptors and 'driver words' when planning. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. This is supported by the work of the teaching assistants.

Good use is made of resources. The recent introduction of 'Come and See' topic resource boxes is already having a positive impact on the delivery of religious education. Teachers use a variety of strategies to sustain and motivate pupils including the use of interactive whiteboards, i pads,

video clips, role play, and shared discussion. Pupils are informed of their progress. In Key Stage 2 they are given opportunities to discuss their work. The assessment of pupils work in religious education is good. In Key Stage 2, teachers enable pupils to evaluate their own work and they are beginning to peer assess. Further use of the 'I can' statements across the school would help pupils assess their own knowledge and progress and support teacher assessment. This has already been identified in the school's self evaluation document.

Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Diocesan guidance.

Achievement and effort are celebrated in all areas of school life. Pupils are affirmed, know how well they are doing, and know what they need to do to improve further.

The curriculum is good in meeting the pupils' needs. The school uses the 'Come and See' programme recommended by the Diocese and so 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 10% is allocated to religious education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Planning ensures full coverage of the religious education programme. Imaginative and well planned strategies are deployed to enrich the pupils' learning. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. The religious education curriculum provides opportunities for the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The Collective Worship provided is good. Collective worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Children are enabled to pray formally and informally. The learning environment is positive and vibrant and the school has made very good use of display and reflective focus tables to stimulate the pupils' interest in religious education. Great care is taken to provide excellent facilities and resources for the pupils.

The staff has now developed skills in planning and leading Collective Worship and these skills are now being developed with the children.

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

The Head Teacher is committed to developing the Catholic life of the school and makes a good contribution to the school's success as a Catholic school in leading and supporting staff.

Leaders and managers are good in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school and show a good understanding of, and commitment to, the mission of the Church. This is reflected in the schools own Mission Statement "Learning, Loving, Caring and Sharing by Nurturing the Wholeness " which is reviewed annually by the whole school community. The subject leaders are good in guiding religious education and show a real commitment both inside and outside of the school to the Church's mission.

Governors are good in fulfilling their responsibilities and are fully supportive of the school's distinctive Catholic nature. A Mission and Purpose committee has been established to review and monitor the Catholic life of the school. The school's own self evaluation identifies areas for further development which need to be included within the School Improvement Plan.

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

The parish priest visits the school and appreciates the commitment of the school in nurturing faith and education. He gives full praise for the head teacher and her management of the school.

The children support CAFOD, Operation Christmas Child and numerous local charities. The school has good links with Culture House in Raciborz and as a result the pupils have a well developed sense of the wider world, and an understanding of the needs and beliefs of other people.