

# **Diocese of Wrexham**

**in North Wales**



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **St Mary's Catholic Primary School Holyhead**

Head Teacher: Mrs. F Thomas

Chair of Governors: Mr K Roberts

**Date of Inspection: January 2014**

**Inspectors: Mrs K Ranson**

**Mrs S Williams**

## **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 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 Holyhead and serves the parish of St Mary. The mission statement is "Shine in the Light of Christ." The school draws pupils from a variety of social backgrounds. Currently, the school has 186 pupils on roll aged between 3 and 11 years with 51% of children who are baptised Catholic. 22 % of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is higher than local authority and below national averages 0.5% have English as an additional language and 20% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

## Summary of the inspection findings.

St Mary's is a good catholic school.

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 is outstanding and they are happy and engaged in their learning.

Provision for Religious Education is good. The new Religious Education programme is in place and assessment arrangements have been implemented in line with Diocesan guidance. The leadership of the school including the governing body is active and committed to the Catholic mission and purpose of the school. The Head teacher is motivated and conscientious and consistently communicates her high 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 this and the dedication and commitment shown by the leadership of the school, there is a good capacity for sustained improvement. Prospects for improvement are good

## 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:**

- improving consistency and rigour of moderation across year groups
- ensuring differentiation is by both task and outcome
- whole school use of driver words in 'next steps' when marking to inform pupils learning.
- embedding further the use of the 'driver words' in the classroom,

## **R2 Further develop the school's self evaluation document to ensure it is more evaluative.**

### **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 take on responsibilities and participate constructively in the Catholic Life of the school as expressed in the mission statement "Shine in the Light of Jesus." This is reflected in the good relationships and mutual respect between the staff, parents and children. The Mission Statement is reviewed annually by all within the school community and its impact is evident in the school's ethos and the behaviour of the pupils.

Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. They are considerate to others and caring to anyone in apparent need. They contribute and benefit from the school as part of a cohesive community.

They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community. They are considerate to others. They show signs of responding to the needs of people beyond the school through their fund raising for CAFOD, Operation Christmas Child, Breast Cancer Children in Need, St Luke's Connection, the IF campaign, Thirst for Life campaign and Pantri Pobl. They understand the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year and in the parish community.

Pupils achievement and attainment in Religious Education are good.

Most pupils make progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. They are becoming more religiously literate and their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriately to their age or capacity. Assessments are completed in line with diocesan guidance however, these need to be more rigorous and outcomes moderated regularly. Results of these assessments indicate that positive progress is made by most pupils. They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually and think ethically and theologically.

The pupils enjoyment of their learning is good. they are keen to do well and generally work at a good pace. The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

The Acts of Collective Worship that were observed were good. Acts of Collective Worship are planned and recorded but they need also to be evaluated across the school. Staffs accept responsibility for leading prayer and involve pupils in its delivery through whole school worship. The Church seasons and feasts are well celebrated and themes are consistent with the Catholic character of the school. The pupils reflect in silence, sing joyfully and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. They are at ease when praying with their school community and appreciate what is taking place. Excellent focal points and display boards are evident in each classroom and central areas.

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

The quality of teaching observed ranges from good to outstanding across the school. All teaching is effective in ensuring that pupils are consistently interested in their learning and make progress. The planning of religious education is good. Teachers make effective use of time and a range of questions, teaching styles and activities to sustain pupils' concentration, motivation and application. Greater use of the driver words in teaching and in marking would help the learning objectives. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively.

Good teaching encourages pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm for religious education. Good use is made of time and resources e.g. Interactive Whiteboards, God's and Church's Story, audio and visual media clips. Teachers use a variety of strategies to sustain and motivate pupils e.g. with praise and affirmation, role play, rewards, games and questioning. Teaching Assistants across the school were observed to be very effective in supporting the learning of the pupils.

Assessment systems are in place but the assessment, recording and monitoring of religious education needs to be more rigorous. Marking needs to be more focused on the objectives set and children given next steps to be taken in order to challenge thinking and improve standards further. The use of the driver words in teacher comments will ensure a consistent approach to setting objectives using the language of the level descriptors when marking and assessing pupils work across the school.

The curriculum is good in meeting the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. The school using the Come And See programme recommended by the Diocese 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. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. The religious education curriculum provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The Collective Worship provided is good. Prayer and worship play 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 excellent use of display and reflective focus tables to stimulate pupils' interest in religious education. The subject leader has the knowledge and skills to support and develop the staff and pupils in planning, leading and evaluating worship. The pupils attend weekly Masses in the church and the recently appointed parish priest has begun classroom visits across the school.

## **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 and its development and makes a very good contribution in leading and supporting the staff. School governors take an active interest in the development of the Catholic life of the school. With the school's leadership they demonstrate a commitment to the Church's mission in education with spiritual and moral development a priority. The school's Mission Statement is reviewed regularly and is known by all. A Mission and Purpose committee has been established to review and monitor the Catholic Life of the school and through self evaluation, priorities for further development have been identified which are included within the School Development Plan.

St Mary's Holyhead Section 50 Report

However, further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that the self evaluation document is more reflective and evaluative. There is a link governor for religious education.

The Head teacher has ensured there is good pastoral care, support and guidance at the school through the use of a range of intervention programmes such as Incredible Years, Dina School and Kiva and this is having a positive impact on standards. Staff and pupils have a high regard for the Catholic Life of the school. The creation of a reflective garden to encourage personal, group and class reflection has been identified as an area for further development. Parents and pupils express positive views about the school. The newly appointed subject leader has already begun to monitor pupils work, lessons and Collective Worship across the school.

The introduction of the new scheme of work Come and See is having a positive impact on standards. The school is an Inclusive community and raises funds for a range of charities throughout the year. Through the study of the Universal Church and Other Faiths topics pupils across the school are able to recognise other people's beliefs and needs and develop a sense of the wider world,.

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

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