

# Archdiocese of Cardiff



## St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Cardiff

Inspection dates	4 -6 December 2017
Reporting Inspector	Mrs J Phillips
Accompanying Inspectors	Mrs S McCool Mr D Blackwell
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Number on roll	206
Local Authority	Cardiff
Chair of Governors	Mr Michael Howells
School Address	204 North Road, Gabalfa Cardiff CF14 3BR
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Parish served	St Joseph's
Date of previous inspection	2-4 June 2009
Headteacher	Mrs A Riordan

**Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archdiocese of Cardiff 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.

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
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 Archdiocesan inspectors use and a broad idea of their meaning. It is for guidance only.

<b>Proportion</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>With very few exceptions</b>	<b>Nearly all</b>
<b>90% or more</b>	<b>Most</b>
<b>70% or more</b>	<b>Many</b>
<b>60% or more</b>	<b>A majority</b>
<b>Close to 50%</b>	<b>Half/around half</b>
<b>Below 40%</b>	<b>A minority</b>
<b>Below 20%</b>	<b>Few</b>
<b>Less than 10%</b>	<b>Very few</b>

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Archdiocesan schools website: [www.rcadcschools.org](http://www.rcadcschools.org)

## Context

St Joseph's RC Primary school is situated in Gabalfa, close to Cardiff City Centre. It provides a Catholic primary education for children between 4 and 11 years of age. 8% of pupils reside outside the school's catchment area.

There are 206 pupils in 8 single aged, mainstream classes, incorporating 2 year 6 classes with 8 full time teachers and 1 part time teacher. A high proportion of children enter the school at Reception age having attended Nursery in a neighbouring school, and 70% of pupils in the school are Catholic, 12% belong to other Christian denominations, 10% follow other world religions and 8% have no religious affiliation.

The current school was built in 1925, however a number of improvements have been made to the school in recent years. These include refurbishment in some indoor areas, re-locating the school office area and establishing an outdoor play area to ensure the school meets the need for 21<sup>st</sup> century education.

The school serves a diverse ethnic community and there are 19 different languages spoken by pupils. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language.

The last inspection was in May 2009. There have been substantive changes in staff since this time. The previous headteacher retired July 2012, the current head teacher took up post in January 2017. In between, the school was led by a seconded head, an acting head, and an executive headteacher in the interim.

Of the 8 full-time teachers and 1 part time teacher, 7 members of staff are Catholic, 6 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and 1 holds the National Professional Qualifications for Headteachers. There are 4 full-time teaching assistants, all of whom are Catholic.

The school achieved their 2<sup>nd</sup> Green Flag, 4<sup>th</sup> Healthy schools award, the highest Fairtrade status Fair Achiever Award, and has achieved the 'Investors in Families' award.

## Summary

### How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

**Adequate**

Catholic education at St Joseph's is adequate because:

- the quality of teaching throughout the school is variable.
- prayer and worship across the school needs to be developed at all levels.
- recent developments and self-evaluation processes are beginning to make an impact on outcomes but are insufficiently embedded in the life of the school.

### What are the school's prospects for improvement?

**Good**

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the motivated, hardworking headteacher communicates high expectations and a clear vision for Catholic education
- governors are committed to developing their role in driving standards forward
- children enjoy Religious Education and outcomes are good
- pupil tracking and data analysis is used effectively to secure improved outcomes
- pupils and parents are supportive and proud of their school as indicated by the significant response of parent questionnaires.

## Recommendations and Required Actions

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop a shared pedagogy of teaching to improve the variation in quality of teaching so that all lessons have pace, challenge and engage all groups of learners.
- Robustly develop prayer and worship to ensure they underpin the Catholic life of the school.
- Continue to develop leadership for staff and pupils to enhance the Catholic life of the school.

## What happens next?

The school will submit a Post-Inspection Action Plan to the Director of Religious Education that shows how it will address the recommendations. Submission should be within 45 working days of publication of the report. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the Archdiocese.

### **Main Findings**

#### **KQ1. How good are outcomes?**

**Good**

St Joseph's is a warm, welcoming and inclusive school and this is reflected in the school's mission statement 'We grow together in God's Love as we pray, learn and play', Dyn ni'n tyfu gyda'n gilydd mewn cariad Duw wrth i ni weddio, dysgu a chwarae', which is prominently displayed throughout the school.

Pupils at St Joseph's display an interest in and have a positive attitude towards Religious Education. Most pupils make expected progress relative to their starting points. They are keen to do well and nearly all pupils work competently when provided with appropriate tasks and guidance. They responded well to this term's topics taking the children into Advent and showed a good understanding of their prior work. Pupils respond conscientiously to tasks, offer thoughtful responses to questions, participate willingly in all activities and are rarely off-task. Behaviour for learning is good and as a result standards overall are good and most pupils make progress and gain knowledge, skills and understanding becoming progressively religiously literate as they move through the school.

A book scrutiny indicated that standards in Religious Education are comparable to those displayed by pupils in English. There were some examples of good quality extended writing at the top end of the school e.g. the calling of Samuel, a manifesto for leading a simple life, a letter from the viewpoint of the Archbishop and in the foundation phase pupils wrote questions for the Prophet Isaiah, made Advent promises and participated in art appreciation tasks. However, the book scrutiny indicated that use of persuasive and empathetic writing, pamphlets, letters, charts, booklets, lists and diagrams and other suggested activities outlined in the Come and See scheme were not widely used to enhance the Religious Education curriculum and provide rich tasks to engage pupils in their learning. Religious Education tasks should support more pupil-led learning and provide opportunities for children to make more independent choices and decisions about their learning.

Pupils are developing an understanding of Catholic teaching and the teachings of other religions through the 'Come and See' programme and visits to the local synagogue. Pupils know about the key celebrations in the Church's liturgical year. They have a sense of belonging to the school community of St. Joseph's. Pupils take on responsibilities through a variety of councils. They show care and respect for visitors and a helpful nature to their friends as demonstrated through their

work on 'Respecting the Rights of the Child' and their links with the 'Problem Busters' group. Care and concern for others is evident in their fundraising activities for various charities, namely CAFOD, Mission Together and the 'Christmas Child' appeal. There are opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities which support their all-round development and each member of staff runs an after-school club. Pupils are developing their responsiveness to the use of the Welsh language and this was evident throughout the school.

Prayer and worship is underdeveloped across the school and all staff and pupils would benefit from engaging in training to support the growth of prayer and collective worship. Class prayer foci in both classrooms and corridors provide important focal points for the development of pupils' faith. They are thoughtful in their theme, display artefacts, pupils' responses, key words and 'God's Word'. Pupils respond well to these displays and these prayer foci reinforce the fact that St Joseph's is a Catholic School. They also further contribute to the ethos of the school and show the importance placed on learning in Religious Education.

The mission statement 'We grow together in God's Love as we pray, learn and play' encompasses strong links between parish, home and school. Regular visits to St Joseph's Church and class Masses help to enhance the Religious Education curriculum and prayer and worship of the school.

Pupils spoke proudly about the 'International Week' recently held at the school and culminated with a whole school food from around the world celebration.

<b>KQ2. How good is provision?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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The quality of teaching in Religious Education throughout the school is variable ranging from excellent to unsatisfactory. Teachers adhered to lessons that were planned in great detail and prepared with an adequate range of resources to support learning. However, this often resulted in adult-guided activities leaving children limited scope for choice and self-directed learning, and led to predictable outcomes. In the best teaching observed during the inspection, lessons proceeded at a good pace, pupils worked independently, taking risks and making decisions about their learning and progress over the lesson was evident. Some good examples included the use of thinking skills activities to promote paired and group learning, the 'Travelling Crib' to take the nativity story into pupil's homes and the use of IT to provide an opportunity for pupils to collaborate in their work and create a book on Advent for foundation phase children. This good practice needs to be disseminated throughout the school.

The use of success criteria is implemented across the school and there is evidence of self-assessment in all books. In the Foundation Phase the children use 'Mr Men' characters to reflect and review their work and in Key Stage 2 pupils self- and peer-assess work in terms a performance scale of Beginning, Developing and Mastered vis-à-vis assessment tasks. Marking in pupils' books is appropriate and teachers provide next step comments to support pupil progress.

Staff moderate work on a regular basis at both school and recently at cluster level and a useful portfolio of work to support teacher assessment has been developed.

The school's Religious Education tracking system enables the leadership team to analyse pupils' performance and progress over time and set accurate targets at individual, group and class level. However, the use and effectiveness of this initiative is in the early stages and needs to be refined and embedded.

The extent to which Religious Education and the wider life of the school meets the needs of pupils is good and developing. The 'Come and See' scheme fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and local Diocesan requirements, and 10% of teaching time is dedicated to Religious Education.

The range of extra-curricular clubs provided at the school enhances learning provision. However, the school does not benefit from a whole school 'faith-based' club or pupil group to enhance the Religious Education provision within the school. Children have opportunities to participate in sports events, class Masses, charity events and fundraising, all serving to raise awareness of their role in society. Pupils' views are sought through questionnaires, 'listening to learners' are acted upon when appropriate and children are able to clearly articulate the Children's Article of the month, for which the school uses pertinent articles reflecting the beatitudes and connecting them to the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Most pupils appreciate the importance of prayer and worship and they know and understand a range of traditional prayers. The school recognises the importance of helping pupils to develop bilingually and pupils' ability to say prayers in Welsh is developing.

The school grounds are used effectively by some children in the Foundation Phase to develop spirituality. Making stables, mud pictures and Advent wreaths formed part of outdoor learning lessons and use of the outdoor Grotto enables the children to appreciate the awe and wonder of God's world. The class prayer corners were attractive, reflected the liturgical year and 'Come and See' topic and housed newly developed school prayer books. The school has recently introduced the Jesuit 'Examen' at the end of the school day to develop prayerful reflection and help all to see God's hand at work in their daily lives.

Collective worship at all levels is currently under-developed and has been identified as a focus in the school improvement plan. It would be beneficial to all staff to engage in Archdiocesan training and view best practice in other schools to develop this important aspect.

<b>KQ3. How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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St Joseph's is a school on a journey of improvement and the foundations established by the work of the previous Catholic executive headteacher and current staff appointments secure the school's future. The school is led by a dedicated headteacher who, together with the governing body and Religious Education Co-ordinator positively promotes the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher displays great commitment to her role and she has the knowledge and vision to develop the school as a Catholic learning community with the support of all staff. She was appointed in January 2017 and is ambitious for the life and the work of the school. With the support of the Senior Leadership Team, the Religious Education co-ordinator, governors and staff the detailed monitoring programme implemented will make an impact on pupil outcomes and the quality of provision.

The composition of the governing body has undergone many changes since the last inspection. Led by an experienced and knowledgeable chair of governors, the governing body has fully engaged in training for their roles and they are keen to support the school and its position within the local community. Plans are in place for the Religious Education link governor to deepen his knowledge and understanding of the Religious Education curriculum and the standards achieved. The governing body has a clear understanding of its role in supporting and challenging the headteacher and senior leadership team to achieve further improvements.

The school has very good partnerships with Corpus Christi and effective transition arrangements are in place. A range of partnership activities which include links with a local supermarket chain and the Red Cross Society, promote learning and wellbeing.

There is a common sense of belonging at St Joseph's. The school is committed to the Rights Respecting agenda which recognises success in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of the school. Through the various committees and clubs the pupils are beginning to understand the role they have as leaders in the school and wider world and the Eco Committee have an action plan to monitor and conserve energy use in the school.

The inclusion of all pupils is a central goal and shared vision of the school. Community cohesion is a strength of the school. There is a strong sense of belonging and all are welcomed. Leaders and managers respect difference, value the diversity of the cultural and ethnic background of pupils and ensure equal opportunities for all.

Parents are welcomed into school for assemblies and join the children for class Sunday Masses in the local parish church led by the parish priest who is a regular visitor to the school.



## **Appendix 1**

### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Parental/Carers' Questionnaires.

68 questionnaires were received and these were highly positive in nature.

Common references were made to:

- The school's good reputation and caring ethos.
- The importance of it being a Catholic school and that Christ is at the centre of all they do.
- Family connections to the school.
- The school is very inclusive and open to other 'faiths'.
- The school provides a foundation for life and was described as a second home for the child and family
- It is a welcoming school where staff treat pupils as individuals and not just a number.
- The school gives them a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Evidence Base**

- Pre-inspection team consultation.
- The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation.
- Meetings with the headteacher and staff.
- Meetings with representatives of the governing body.
- Discussions with the parish priest.
- A meeting with parents.
- Lesson observations.
- Scrutiny of planning and assessment.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Scrutiny of prayer foci and displays.
- Attendance at phase and class based acts of worship.
- Discussions with pupils.
- Discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Parent questionnaire returns.
- Observation of daily routines.