

Archdiocese of Cardiff

Inspection Report

ST. JOSEPH'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Inspection dates	13 th – 14 th May 2009
Reporting Inspectors	Mr. T. Britton Mrs S. McCool
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Number on roll	189
Local Authority	Cardiff County Council
Chair of Governors	Mr. Billy Adams
School Address	204, North Road, Gabalfa, Cardiff. CF14 3BL
Tel. no.	02920621625
Fax no.	02920521135
E-mail address	schooladmin@stjosephsprm.cardiff.sch.uk
Parishes served	St. Joseph's St. Teilo's Our Lady Lourdes St. Brigid's
Date of previous inspection	June 2003
Head teacher	Mr. Colin Lucas

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

Description of the School

St. Joseph's RC Primary School Cardiff, is a voluntary aided primary school, providing a Catholic education for pupils, mainly resident in St. Joseph's parish, and also for pupils living in the parishes of St. Teilo's, Whitchurch, Our Lady of Lourdes, Gabalfa and St. Brigid's, Crystals. A small number of pupils from other parishes in Cardiff also attend the school. The school was founded originally in 1927, and moved to its present site in 1994.

At the time of the Inspection there were 190 pupils on roll, of whom 144 are of the Catholic faith, 16 are fellow Christians and 30 of other world faiths.

The school states that all of its pupils are drawn from areas which are neither prosperous, nor economically disadvantaged, 11% of pupils are in receipt of free school meals. Although receiving pupils of all abilities 23 (12%) of pupils are currently included on the S.E.N. register.

There are seven full-time teachers and five part-time teachers. Eleven of the teachers are Catholic, eight hold the CCRS and one teacher is currently studying for this qualification. There are five learning support assistants at the school and all are Catholic.

Inspection grades

An overall judgement for each question is made using the following grades:

Grade 1: good with outstanding features

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Grade 4: some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Grade 5: many important shortcomings

Table of grades awarded

Key question	Inspection grade
How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners and why?	1
1. How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school/college?	1
2. How good is the provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school/college?	1
3. How well do learners achieve in religious education?	1
4. How effective are teaching and learning in religious education?	2
5. How well does the religious education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?	1
6. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in religious education?	1

The diocesan reporting inspectors wish to express their sincere thanks to governors, head teacher, staff, pupils and parents and also to the registered Estyn inspector and inspection team for the courtesy and co-operation received during the inspection.

Overall Effectiveness

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners and why?

St. Joseph's is a good Catholic school with several outstanding features. The culture of school improvement is well established at the school and is also all inclusive. The current self-evaluation report and supporting evidence describes good practice and highlights the areas for further development identified by the school.

The school's mission statement displayed around the school and included in school documentation is clearly understood by all in the community. Discussions with adults and children and parental questionnaire returns provide evidence that the mission statement, *"Each and everyday we start anew and remember that ours is a school that loves, cares and respects all"*, is realised. These statements, with a range of supporting policies, form the basis of a positive Catholic ethos.

The quality of teaching of curriculum religious education is consistently good overall and a number of lessons observed demonstrated some outstanding features. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the *Here I Am programme*. They use a range of approaches and work is marked using a range of strategies which enable pupils to know what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.

Senior leaders express a clear direction for the Catholic life of the school to which all subscribe. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an outstanding feature. Children are well behaved, showing respect to their teachers, support staff and each other and they are proud to be St. Joseph's pupils. Links with parents, the parish of St. Joseph's and the local community are good; the parish priest contributes well to the religious life of the school.

Improvement since the last inspection

There were no key issues from the previous inspection. The school has not been complacent since this inspection. It has continued to strive hard to sustain its good practice and has fully embraced new initiatives from the Archdiocese. The current and previous action plans demonstrate a real commitment to ensuring that religious education is at the forefront of school improvement.

The link governor is the parish priest and he regularly attends school to celebrate Mass and speak to the religious education subject leader and the head teacher.

The school also has a clearly structured approach for teaching curriculum religious education which has been devised by the school's subject leader in consultation with the staff. The *Here I Am* programme has been used to devise the teaching and learning structure used in the school and this is effectively used by all members of staff.

Capacity to improve

Self-evaluation processes are very well established at St. Joseph's resulting in reports which celebrate strengths and identify areas for further development. The head teacher is clearly devoted to providing the best that can be offered to the pupils of St. Joseph's and he has inspired his team of staff to achieve this. Staff are fully committed and support senior management. Leaders at all levels target available resources effectively to achieve goals and as a result they continue to make improvements. Governors are committed, organised and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. All these factors combine to ensure sustained development and improvement at St. Joseph's.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- ❖ Continue to develop assessment of religious education using the revised NBRIA *Levels of Attainment* for planning lessons, moderating standards of work, and use the tracking of pupils' progress to set class targets;
- ❖ Develop the marking and assessment of pupils' work so that they know what to do to improve;
- ❖ Liaise with the R.E. link governor to enable him to develop a termly cycle of visits to the school;
- ❖ Continue to implement the priorities for development outlined in the religious education self-evaluation report.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL/COLLEGE

Leadership and Management

1. How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school/college?

Good features

Leaders at all levels share the vision and mission of St. Joseph's. The mission statement, made accessible to all learners, is evident in the everyday life of the school. Pupils show their understanding of its significance in the way they help and support each other, formally in the school council, the eco-committee, the fair trade committee and informally through positive relationships in class and at play.

The governing body is organised and well led. There have been a number of new governors recently, including a new chair of governors. They are working well as a team and they have already established an effective working relationship with each other, are fully committed to supporting the staff and pupils and they fully respect the guidance of the very experienced head teacher and his team.

Leaders articulate a strong sense of purpose and provide very clear direction for the academic and spiritual life of the school. The development of moral awareness, promoted in the school, results in very good behaviour and a social responsibility to support local and international charities e.g. The Holy Family school in Muheza. St. Joseph's welcomes pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds into a community where inclusion and diversity are celebrated. The head teacher's personal support for staff, families and the parish of St. Joseph's is outstanding and the quality of care is an outstanding feature of St. Joseph's school.

Leaders focus on promoting high academic standards and the fullest possible development of the whole child. Effective financial and resource management results in learners benefiting from support assistants being deployed to assist both in classes and also working with withdrawal groups. There are very good links with parents, the parish and external agencies which reinforce the high standards of care, guidance and support to ensure learners' safety and wellbeing. The result is that learners flourish and develop values and attitudes which provide them with a very positive approach to learning.

Shortcomings

There are no shortcomings in important areas.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

2. How good is the provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school/college?

Good features

The provision for collective worship is good with outstanding features. Statutory requirements are fulfilled. Prayer and worship are integral to the life of St. Joseph's school. Pupils are given opportunities to interpret God's word in a variety of ways. Pupils respond well to formal prayers said at appropriate times through the day.

A well presented prayer focus in each class reminds pupils of the presence of Jesus in their lives. The use made of them during classroom religious education makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual development and their understanding of the meaning of prayer.

Prayer in Welsh is developing well alongside proficiency in the language. In classrooms and corridors, staff and visitors are reminded of Christ's presence in effective and vibrant displays of work.

Liturgical formation is well planned and shows progression. Mass is celebrated both in the school and also at the parish of St. Joseph's at key times throughout the year. A school Mass celebrating the feast day of St. Joseph was attended as part of the inspection process. The pupils played a full and active part in this Mass, they sang well, read very confidently, showed true reverence and respect and their behaviour was outstanding.

Well planned and executed acts of collective worship make a very good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupil, making an impact on relationships and behaviour. Pupils help to prepare and lead the head teacher's collective worship. This was an outstanding feature observed during the two day inspection. Throughout the head teacher's collective worship, the pupils were evidently engaged by watching their contemporaries portray a bible story and the message was evidently understood by the pupils who were able to articulate with ease, questions posed by the head teacher relating to the theme.

Similarly, the class assembly that was observed during the inspection was an outstanding feature. The assembly had an array of facets including oracy, dance, drama and music, all of which combined together in a seamless fashion. All the Year 2 class were fully involved, independent and participated to a very high standard. It was also well attended by parents who very much valued the opportunity to be present.

Shortcomings

There are no shortcomings in important areas.

Grade: 1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards

3. How well do learners achieve in religious education?

Good features

The head teacher and governors articulate high expectations of pupils. Responses from the parents' meeting and questionnaires indicate high levels of satisfaction. Feedback from the parents' meeting and questionnaires indicate that parents are very happy with standards being achieved at the school. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make at least good progress and some make very good progress.

Pupils are gaining knowledge, understanding and skills at a good rate across the key stage and standards achieved compare favourably with those in English. Throughout the key stage pupils write in a range of styles including prayer, letters, comparisons, personal responses and narratives as well as using drawings to effectively illustrate them.

During the Inspection, pupils worked well on developing their understanding of the current topic; Good News. Foundation Phase pupils spoke confidently in circle time about their sad and happy times. The youngest pupils listened carefully and all pupils joined enthusiastically in the dance. Other pupils listened carefully to the Pentecost story and effective use was made of the learning support assistant to work with a group of pupils on a drama activity. Older pupils in the Foundation Phase were fully able to distinguish between happy and sad news and the pupils' then engaged in a range of tasks linked to the theme of Good News that included the events of Pentecost. Foundation Phase pupils spoke clearly and confidently about their work and were fully aware of the tasks presented to them.

Key Stage 2 pupils wrote beautiful prayers as a response to a lesson on Reconciliation that enabled them to see how sins could be heavy burdens to carry. Pupils also used a range of assessment for learning strategies to explore how they could share Good News that included diamond ranking, loop cards and talking partners. ICT was used to enrich this lesson. ICT was also used by another class in the ICT suite. Pupils confidently used a search engine to explore the "other faiths" theme on Islam. This work was the beginning of a set of ICT work which would culminate in a book being produced on Islam. The oldest Key Stage 2 pupils engaged fully in the task on valuing oneself. The use of the Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning project (S.E.A.L) worked very well and pupils were keen to share thoughts and ideas. The collective worship that ended this lesson was very well planned and organised and pupils were sent forth with a clear understanding of how to be the Good News.

Shortcomings

There are no shortcomings in important areas.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision for religious education

4. How effective are teaching and learning in religious education?

Good features

The quality of teaching overall across the school is good but some outstanding lessons were observed. Teaching uses the structure of the *Here I Am* religious education programme and learners make appropriate or good progress and

demonstrate positive attitudes towards their work. Teachers enjoy good relationships with their pupils, and behaviour is good.

Teachers' good subject knowledge lends confidence to their teaching, which overall is good and some examples of outstanding features were demonstrated in some lessons observed.

In the Foundation Phase, teachers planned effectively, providing a range of support mechanisms to enable children to work independently, in pairs and in groups and adult support from the teacher and learning support assistant was provided where necessary.

In the teaching of the current topic, "Good News", pupils' interest is stimulated by effective use of religious resources and some teachers' use of information communication technology.

Teachers take responsibility for short term planning. Most teachers share the learning outcomes with the pupils. Teachers set pupils a range of differentiated tasks and this was observed in current classroom practice and in the scrutiny of books.

Marking is positive and affirmative but needs to indicate more clearly what pupils must do to improve their work as this is not consistently applied across the school at present. There is evidence that work is levelled and the school is using a tracking system. The school intends to set class/pupil targets based on data collected from the new tracking system being used, in the next academic year.

Parents are given opportunity to discuss their children's progress at Parents' Evenings. They are provided with an end of year report and receive religious education newsletters.

Curricular experiences are enhanced with a range of after school activities. There is an after school club which prepares the pupils for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

Pupils also have opportunities to visit places of educational interest. They celebrate the culture of Wales. Such opportunities help pupils to develop a good understanding of social and cultural life.

Shortcomings

Marking does not usually indicate to pupils how they can improve.

Ensure that more opportunities for ICT are given during religious education lessons so pupils can see how it can enhance their learning in this subject.

Grade: 2

5. How well does the religious education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?

Good features

The curriculum provision at St. Joseph's has many good features. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school had adopted the *Here I Am* religious education programme in accordance with the policy of the Archdiocese of Cardiff and the requirements of the *Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools*. The school meets the recommendations of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to allocate 10% of the teaching time to religious education.

Incidental Welsh is very effectively promoted throughout the school. Pupils make the sign of the cross in Welsh, and say prayers, sing hymns and respond to commands and short questions in Welsh. Pupils throughout the school have gained knowledge of other faiths. Islam and Judaism are studied; following the programme of study in *Here I Am*. Pupils generously support appeals by CAFOD, Mission Together, Shoe box appeal and also fund raising to help build a school for the children of Holy Family School, Tanzania.

Eight of the teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and one is studying for it. All teaching staff and support staff involved in the delivery of the religious education at the school are Catholics.

The school has a very good range of resources to support the religious education curriculum, which are well audited, including Bibles, books to support learning, music, CD ROMs and artefacts.

Pupils' spiritual and moral understanding is an outstanding feature. Prayer and reflection in classroom religious education, together with the planned programme for collective worship, 'circle time' and the after-school sacramental programme, underpin the spiritual and moral development of pupils. This is clearly visible in the way pupils respond to issues in their school community and in line with their age, to the wider community. Their exemplary behaviour and consideration to one another and adults, also supports this judgement.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop responsibility. In all classes they are given responsibilities to effectively develop their personal and interpersonal skills. The school council, eco-committee and fair trade committee are well established and they are able to articulate very comprehensively how they can affect positive change at the school as a result of their roles. Extra-curricular provision is outstanding. There is an extensive range of clubs including rugby, football, tag rugby, netball, recorder, gym, choir, a sacramental programme club and a games club. All of these contribute to the pupils' sporting, creative, personal, social, spiritual and moral development.

Shortcomings

There are no shortcomings in important areas.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management of religious education

6. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in religious education?

Good features

Leaders are committed to implementing the vision, mission and objectives of the school. An effective management structure is proactive in raising standards for all pupils. The head teacher and religious education subject leader have a clear sense of the educational mission of the Church and the role St. Joseph's school has in contributing to this. Together, the head teacher and his staff, communicate a sense of spiritual purpose to the pupils, parents and the governing body

All staff are given training in religious education in-house by the religious education subject leader. Teaching staff attend training provided by the archdiocese. This ensures awareness of current trends and policies in religious education.

There is very good provision of resources for religious education and they are easily accessible by pupils and staff. The *Here I Am* religious education programme and support materials is the main form of delivery of religious education and there is also additional resource material made available for the study of other faiths and all aspects of spiritual and moral development.

The budget allocation is in line with core subjects and therefore ensures that religious education is very well resourced. Very good use is made of human resources in religious education; teaching assistants are effectively deployed and PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) time is carefully planned.

All aspects of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school are kept under review. The process of quality assurance ensures that policies are consistently applied and any weaknesses are promptly addressed.

Of the seven full time teachers and five part time teachers, eight hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and one is currently studying for this qualification.

All teachers are experienced in teaching *Here I Am* and respond well to changes and developments to further raise standards. All learning support assistants are Catholic and they ably support pupils both in class and during withdrawal sessions.

All staff at St. Joseph's work hard to create a lively, creative and stimulating environment which reflects the mission statement of the school and celebrates pupils' work.

The dedication and commitment of the Catholic leadership in the school are key factors in St. Joseph's achievement.

Shortcomings

There are no shortcomings in important areas.

Grade: 1

The School's Response to the Inspection

The governors welcome the Section 50 and Canonical Inspection report.

We are happy to see that the very high standard of education offered by the school is acknowledged. The Inspection also recognises the cheerful atmosphere of learning enjoyed by the pupils, and the background of a truly Catholic atmosphere and ethos that pervades the school.

The inspector comments favourably on the close relationship between teachers and pupils and the effective partnership between school, home and parish.

The governors will continue to encourage and support the staff in every way, for the ongoing development of the school.

The governing body thank the inspectors for the creative way in which the inspection was conducted.

The recommendations will form the basis of the Post Inspection Action Plan and a copy will be sent to parents. Progress will be reported in the annual governors' report to parents.

Evidence Base for the Inspection

- ❖ The school's self-evaluation report including evidence cited in report
- ❖ Religious education improvement plans and progress reports
- ❖ The school's response to the pre-inspection commentary
- ❖ Pre-inspection meetings with the head teacher, staff, governors and parents
- ❖ Pre-inspection attendance at the St. Joseph's Mass at the school
- ❖ Attendance at Estyn's team meetings
- ❖ Discussions with head teacher and school RE link governor
- ❖ Discussion with RE subject leader
- ❖ Attendance at the head teacher's collective worship
- ❖ Attendance at class collective worship
- ❖ Attendance at the Year 2 assembly
- ❖ Lesson observations – all classes
- ❖ Scrutiny of planning and ongoing teacher evaluation
- ❖ Scrutiny of assessment records, RE policy, other relevant policies and portfolios
- ❖ Scrutiny of pupils' religious education books and English books
- ❖ Scrutiny of religious education whole class books and photographic evidence
- ❖ Observation of displays and prayer areas
- ❖ ICT in religious education and inclusion of Welsh dimension
- ❖ Evidence of other faiths studied
- ❖ Continuing professional development in religious education
- ❖ Audit of resources
- ❖ Documentation relating to the wider work of the school

- ❖ Discussions with pupils – school council, eco-committee and fair trade committee
- ❖ Parents' questionnaire returns