

DIOCESE OF MENEVIA



Inspection Report

St. Therese's Catholic Primary School

Inspection dates:	1 st & 2 nd December 2014
Reporting Inspector:	Mr. Patrick Mansfield
Team Inspector:	Mr. Nicholas Atherton
Headteacher:	Mr. Christopher Welsh
Chair of Governors:	Mr. Andrew Wonklyn
Type of school:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Number on roll:	239
School Address:	Southdown Road, Port Talbot SA12 7HL
Tel. No.	01639 882797
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Parish served:	St. Therese's Port Talbot
Appropriate Authority:	Neath/Port Talbot
Date of previous Inspection:	18 th – 20 th November 2008

Canonical inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Menevia 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 is leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on prospects for improvement.

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice or practice 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 diocesan inspectors use and a broad idea of their meaning. It is for guidance only.

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

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the diocesan website:
dioceseofmenevia.org

Context

St. Therese's Catholic Primary School is located in Port Talbot and mainly serves the Catholic population living on the Sandfields Estate in Aberavon; a seaside suburb of the town. The school describes the social and economic backgrounds of the pupils as neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. The ward served by the school is a Communities First Area, is placed 17th out of 67 on the deprivation index for the county and 135th out of 1800 nationally.

St. Therese's caters for pupils aged 3 – 11 years. Currently (December 2014) there are 239 pupils on roll of which 29 are part time and the number on roll has increased annually since the last inspection. There are 118 (49%) baptised Catholic pupils, 16 pupils of other Christian denominations, 3 pupils of other faiths and 57 pupils of no faith. The parents of 45 pupils left this question blank on the PLASC return.

12% of the pupils come from ethnic backgrounds that are not described as White – British with 5% being Polish. 8 (3%) pupils speak Welsh outside the school environment and 14 (6%) have a first language other than English or Welsh.

25% of the pupils are eligible to receive free school meals. Currently, there are 2 pupils looked after by the county but there are no asylum seekers, refugees or traveller pupils on the school roll. The pupils represent the full ability range. 72 (30%) pupils have been identified as having special educational needs but there are no statutory statements.

There have been several changes in staff since the last inspection and a new senior management team was appointed in September 2013. The school currently has a non-teaching headteacher, 8 full time and 1 part time teachers. Of these, 7 are Catholic and 5 hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) while 2 are studying for it currently. 1 Catholic teacher holds the NPQH. There are 15 support staff 4 of whom are part time higher level teaching assistants. Of the support staff, 13 are Catholics and 1 holds the CCRS.

The school's achievements include the Eco Schools Bronze and Silver awards.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

Good

The school's provision for Catholic education is good because:

- The standards of teaching in RE were good.
- There was good use of ICT and literacy skills in the RE lessons.
- Very good use is made of external partnerships and intervention programmes to enhance the pupils' wellbeing.
- The pupils' behaviour is very good and they make a positive contribution to school.

What are the school's prospects for improvement?

Good

The school's prospects for the future are good because:

- The school's discrete development plan for RE has identified some of the areas highlighted in the recommendations.
- There were some examples of very good teaching that can be disseminated to colleagues.
- The current RE co-ordinator has implemented several initiatives in light of the recent diocesan INSET day.
- The senior staff and governors are very supportive of these new developments.

Recommendations and Required Actions

In order to improve further the school should:

- R1. Provide the pupils with more opportunities to extend the length their writing in RE and to rely less on photocopied materials.
- R2. Ensure the recent initiatives, including tracking, target setting and monitoring, are embedded in school practice.
- R3. Provide more differentiated tasks in RE and ensure more consistency in the marking of pupils' work. (Rec.4 RE Inspection 2008)
- R4. Make arrangements for the standards in curriculum RE to be reported formally to governors. (Rec.1 RE Inspection 2008)

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the diocese.

Main Findings

KQ1. How good are outcomes?

Good

In St. Therese's, the quantity and quality of the pupils' work and their attainment in RE range from adequate to good. Most pupils make the progress expected of them given their starting points and some make good progress. However, the quantity and range of tasks provided, coupled in some classes with an over reliance on photocopied resources, contributed to the limited progress of some pupils. Scrutiny of the books revealed that all the pupils were given opportunities to develop their skills in literacy and ICT through their RE work. Generally, however, there were few opportunities provided for the pupils to extend their writing. This aspect has been recognised by the school and it appears as a priority in the RE subject development plan.

The pupils take on responsibilities and participate constructively in the Catholic life of the school beyond routine lessons and activities. They are reflective and inquiring. They understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important for many people. They show interest in the religious life of others and care and respect religious objects in the school. They understand the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year and in the parish community. They are secure in their understanding of Catholic teaching and demonstrate respect for others' beliefs. They show an understanding of the need to forgive, be forgiven and have a good understanding of right and wrong. They are considerate to others, caring to anyone in need and they respond to the needs of people beyond the school. The establishment in the school of a junior branch of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the 'Mini Vinnies', has facilitated these charitable works. The enthusiastic members of this society, and the School Council, were keen to describe their successful assistance of those less fortunate.

The pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in prayer and worship. They have started to prepare and lead their own prayer and worship. All the pupils respond appropriately, reflect in silence and join in community prayers with confidence. The whole school assembly and the key stage acts of collective worship made use of music and drama to enhance the opportunities for engagement and response. Pupils show respect for each other and their behaviour is very good. They have a good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts and are becoming skilled in the use of scripture, religious artefacts, hymns and other forms of prayer. They are at ease when praying with their school community and appreciate what is taking place.

The pupils' original work and commercially produced religious pictures are displayed well in the classrooms and in the corridors. Articles from the UN's 'Rights of the Child' were displayed as were pictures of the Stations of the Cross and the seven sacraments. All the main rooms contain a crucifix and a religious focus while a computer screen displayed an Advent prayer. These and the several large statues in the entrance foyer and corridors provide clear evidence that this is a Catholic school.

KQ2. How good is provision?

Good

The standard of teaching in the lessons observed ranged from adequate to very good and was judged to be good overall. Differentiation in all the lessons was by outcome and support and in a minority of lessons it was by task also. Where teaching was very good, the lesson built on the

pupils' previous knowledge and moved with appropriate pace. Differentiation was through task, outcome and support while the pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills were developed through the work set. Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies were used throughout and the pupils were fully engaged in their work.

The majority of teaching enables the pupils to make good progress as learners. The teachers employ a range of teaching styles and plan activities which enable pupils to work independently and collaboratively. The teachers generally have strong subject knowledge and are becoming more familiar with the new RE scheme 'Come and See'. As a result, in most lessons, the pupils are keen to learn, to concentrate and to achieve well. In all lessons good use was made of technology to maximise learning. The support provided by other adults in the classroom was deployed very effectively to the benefit of the pupils.

The marking of the pupils' work was uniformly positive and usually contained bilingual comments but it did not always point the way forward for the pupils. Some teachers' comments were interactive and their pupils responded in writing to them. The majority of pupils were given the opportunity to evaluate their own work at the end of a topic and in some classes the pupils evaluated a partner's work also. Currently the approach to marking the pupils' work lacks consistency. This was a recommendation from the previous Section 50 Inspection. The pupils' RE work is assessed at the end of each topic against the NBRIA levels of achievement and a portfolio of pupils' work has been created to assist moderation. The school uses the INCERTS software to track the pupils' progress in their Religious Education work. The school has made initial progress on this issue and it appears as a priority in the RE subject development plan. Consequently, the school is beginning to form an accurate picture of pupils' achievement.

The 'Come and See' RE scheme of work is used throughout the school and the required 10% of curriculum time is allocated to the RE curriculum. Consequently, the Bishops' Conference and diocesan requirements are met. The RE curriculum provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth; where appropriate the Welsh dimension is included also.

Prayer and acts of collective worship are central to the life of the whole school community and a key part of every school celebration and meeting. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer. Attendance by parents, carers and others associated with the school is facilitated and encouraged. Parents and carers are invited to join the pupils and staff in prayer at the start of the school day. There is a very good system of pastoral care and guidance in St. Therese's and the pupils are looked after well. The very good provision by external partners enhances the pupils' wellbeing. Pupil voice is heard through the enthusiastic members of the Mini Vinnies and the School Council although there are no opportunities for these groups to report directly to governors.

Currently the resources to support the teaching of RE are few in number particularly for the teaching of other faiths. The recent purchase of the new 'Come and See' RE scheme has been undertaken but supplementary resources are required and this has been identified by the school.

The school's accommodation is of good quality, well maintained and provides a bright and stimulating learning environment. The school is well resourced in technology to support the teaching and learning. Outside the school building there are several well planned playground areas and a sports field. There are colourful, educational displays and posters on the walls of all the playgrounds.

KQ3. How good is leadership and management	Good
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The governing body has the expertise to meet the school's needs and is influential in determining the direction of the Catholic life of the school. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively. Their relationships with staff are constructive and they show determination in challenging and supporting the school. The chair and vice chair of governors know the strengths and areas for development of the school well and understand the challenges it faces. They are visible in the school and parish communities. The governors are informed of the school's progress through the headteacher's reports. Governors engage with parents and carers generally and address any significant concerns they may have. All parents and carers are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the life of the school and are encouraged to attend the school assemblies and Masses.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a deep commitment to the mission of the church by providing a rich, broad and balanced curriculum; with priority given to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the Welsh dimension. They fulfil all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference regarding Catholic schools. Generally they seek to put into practice diocesan guidelines and encourage staff to deepen their understanding of these. Pupils are able to articulate the school's distinctive mission with understanding.

The current co-ordinator recently took responsibility for RE and has made very good progress in a relatively short time. The advice given in a recent diocesan INSET day has been implemented and this will have a positive effect on the school once embedded. There was evidence of monitoring activities undertaken by the co-ordinator and of consequent reports given to the parish priest who is also the RE link governor. The headteacher and RE link governor have given verbal reports to the governors but there is not a formal timetable for written reports to be given to them. Opportunities should be provided for the co-ordinator to present monitoring reports directly to the governors so that they are well informed of the Catholic life of the school and the standards in curriculum RE. This was a recommendation from the previous Section 50 Inspection and it appears as a priority in the school's RE subject development plan.

School leaders have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school and they know the performance of different groups of pupils. The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' well-being. Relationships among the pupils are positive and they are very well behaved.

There is a common sense of belonging in St. Therese's. Leaders respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Pupils from different backgrounds are given opportunities to work together. They are equipped with skills which enable them to take a full and active part in their neighbourhood and to develop relationships with people from different backgrounds. There is good provision to enable pupils to develop an understanding of the role they and others play in society and the world. All parents and carers are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the life of the school.

Appendix 1

27 parents/carers returned the questionnaires.

All the parents who responded were happy with the values and attitudes the school fosters. They were made to feel welcome in school and their suggestions and concerns were taken into account. All reported that they were given a clear understanding of what is taught in RE and how well their children were progressing. All said the school enabled the pupils to achieve a good standard of work in RE and to develop spiritually through prayer and worship.

Nearly all the parents reported that they were happy with the help and guidance available to the pupils. Nearly all had been given a clear understanding of what is taught in personal, social and health education including sex and relationship education.

Appendix 2

Evidence base

- the school's self-evaluation report and other documentation
- meetings with the headteacher, chair of governors and a foundation governor
- meeting with the Religious Education co-ordinator and vice chair of governors who is also the Religious Education link governor
- meeting with parents/carers
- parent/carer questionnaire returns
- lesson observations
- scrutiny of planning
- scrutiny of pupils' work
- scrutiny of displays and prayer foci
- attendance at a whole school assembly and key stage collective worships
- discussions with pupils and the school council
- observation of daily routines

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