

## DIOCESE OF MENEVIA



# Inspection Report St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Clydach, Swansea

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| <b>Inspection dates:</b>            | <b>31<sup>st</sup> March &amp; 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014</b>                               |
| <b>Reporting Inspector:</b>         | <b>Mrs Claire Dineen</b>   |
| <b>Accompanying Inspector:</b>      | <b>Sr Angela Murray OSU</b>  |
| <b>Headteacher:</b>                 | <b>Mrs Juliet Stack</b>  |
| <b>Chair of Governors:</b>          | <b>Mr Phillip McCarthy</b>   |
| <b>Type of School:</b>              | <b>Voluntary Aided Primary</b>   |
| <b>Age range of pupils:</b>         | <b>3 - 11</b>  |
| <b>Number on roll:</b>              | <b>236</b>   |
| <b>School Address:</b>              | <b>Pontardawe Road, Clydach, Swansea. SA6 5NX</b>  |
| <b>Tel. No:</b>                     | <b>01792 842494</b>  |
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| <b>Parishes served:</b>             | <b>St. Benedict's, Clydach<br/>Sacred Heart, Ystradgynlais<br/>Sacred Heart, Morriston</b> |
| <b>Local Authority:</b>             | <b>City and County of Swansea</b>  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection:</b> | <b>4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008</b>                                       |

*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 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 Diocesan 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 diocesan website.  
[Dioceseofmenevia.org](http://Dioceseofmenevia.org)

## Context

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Clydach is a Voluntary Aided Primary School situated in the Swansea Valley where pupils are drawn from a wide area including Ystradgynlais in the North to Morriston in the South. The school is surrounded by woodland and its main building is of a relatively modern design with a separate nursery and reception unit. Two classes are housed in a demountable building. The school has a large yard and use of the large adjacent community parkland for sports and other activities. The school provides education for pupils aged three to eleven.

There are 236 pupils on roll from Nursery onwards: 152 (64%) baptised Catholic pupils and 84 (36%) pupils of other faiths or no faith backgrounds. English is the predominant home language of most pupils with very few from Welsh speaking homes. Approximately 52 pupils are from an ethnic minority with 26 pupils receiving support from EMLAS. The school has a full range of abilities with the vast majority of pupils coming from homes in areas which are neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged and the remainder from areas which are relatively prosperous. Around 12 pupils (5%) receive free school meals. There are 25 pupils with some form of special educational needs including 18 on school action and 5 on school action plus . There are two pupils who have a formal statement for SEN and 3 pupils who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority. There are eight straight age classes with eight full time teachers. Together with the Headteacher, there are two part-time teachers, four PPA staff, nine Teacher Assistants, one NNEB member and a full-time school clerk.

The present Headteacher took up her post in January 2013. The new Deputy Headteacher was appointed in June 2013. One .5 teacher became full time and an NQT was appointed to a .5 position.

There have been significant changes to the Governing Body with the appointment of a new Chair in November 2012. Seven new governors have also been appointed since the last inspection including a new parent governor and staff Governor. The school building has

improved since the last inspection with the all buildings being re-wired. A new outside area has been developed for the Year 1 and 2 classes to facilitate outside learning in the Foundation Phase. Windows and PVC panels have been replaced in the main building and the library has been updated and modernised. An outside prayer area including willow dome has been developed for reflection.

The school was last inspected in February 2008 and produced an action plan to improve pupils' standards of achievement and aspects of management.

Pupil numbers have risen steadily. The school now has no mixed classes of pupils.

## Summary

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

St. Joseph's is a good school because:

A high degree of commitment to Catholic education is shown by the whole school Community.

The very high standards of pastoral care promote wellbeing.

Exceptional standards of pupil behaviour.

Evidence of good teaching throughout the school.

Prayer and worship being central to the life of the school.

**Good**

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

The school's prospects for improvement are good due to:

The school producing a very accurate, realistic Self Evaluation Report.

The staff being highly committed to the distinctive nature of the school.

Evidence of good teaching that can be shared with other colleagues.

## Recommendations and Required Actions

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

R1. Pupils to become more actively involved in the organisation and delivery of acts of worship.

R2. More effective use of LSAs within the classroom setting, particularly during lesson introductions.

R3. Staff to explore a range of teaching styles and source a more "open-ended" approach to questioning in order to allow pupils to become more active, independent learners.

## 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

The quality of the pupils' work and their attainment in RE ranges from adequate to good. All pupils are keen to do well. They apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace once set to work. They generally endeavour to produce their best work and are often enthusiastic about their learning. The skilful use of artists' impressions of Holy Week facilitates their understanding of the event. The *Good News Bible* is used as a primary source and, consequently, the oldest pupils are becoming familiar with the use of scripture and bible references. Pupils make use of the effective and prayerful introductions and plenaries provided by their teachers.

Most of the younger pupils make the progress expected of them and make good progress. Most work competently when provided with appropriate tasks. In their Religious Education lesson on Holy Week, the majority of pupils interacted well with their teacher and LSA.

The quantity and quality of the pupils' written work ranges from adequate to good and in most books there was a variety of written responses. In the best examples the pupils' work included art, individual prayer, reflective writing, ICT work and photographs. The teachers' positive marking affirmed how well the pupils were doing, but did not clearly identify consistently how they could move on in their learning.

There is a very high standard of display of the pupils' art and written work in Religious Education. The quality of pupils' art and written work in Religious Education is held in high esteem and is celebrated throughout the school.

The behaviour of the pupils in St. Joseph's is excellent. They are able to understand and articulate the ethos of their school. They take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school for their personal support and development. They show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and to be forgiven. They are able to refer to the teachings of Jesus and respect the Catholic tradition of their school, treating others with respect. They are alert to the needs of others and expect equality for all within the school community. They participate fully in the School Council, Eco Committee and Young Apprentices. The excellent level of inclusion for the several cultural groups in the school contributes to the high standard of behaviour and is evidenced by the Annual Journal. The pupils are considerate to others and respond to the needs of people beyond the school through contribution to and support of an extensive list charities.

In the Assemblies and in their classrooms, pupils act with reverence and respect and are keen to participate in prayer and worship. They respond appropriately, reflect in silence and

join in a wide range of prayers with confidence. They are at ease when praying in both English and Welsh and appreciate what is taking place. Assemblies make use of music, drama, hymns and a range of both formal and informal prayers. These acts of worship are mainly teacher led, not pupil led; this has been identified as an area for development in the school's self evaluation. The pupils understand the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year and show a developing understanding of liturgy as they progress through the classes.

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| <b>KQ 2. How Good is Provision?</b> | <b>Good</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|

The quality of teaching in St. Joseph's ranges from adequate to good. Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies, incidental Welsh and a range of teaching methods were used in all the lessons observed, although this aspect needs to be further developed. All teachers have an in-depth subject knowledge and love of the Catholic faith, having the potential to both inspire and challenge all pupils. In the best lessons, with the older children, there was an enthusiastic delivery and a pace that allowed the pupils to begin their tasks quickly and so make progress. In the majority of other lessons where pace was lacking, the extended introductions reduced the time available for the pupils to spend on their work and curtailed the plenary sessions.

Learning Support Assistants were effectively deployed in most classes to support literacy within Religious Education, however due to the extended introductions in the majority of lessons observed their deployment was less effective for that time. Overall good provision for pupils in need of learning support ensured that they had every opportunity to succeed. A variety of differentiation strategies was observed but in most classes this was by outcome. A system of tracking the pupils' progress in their Religious Education work using NBRIA guidelines is used as a tool for the school to form an accurate picture of pupils' achievement.

The school's Religious Education scheme of work is '*Come and See*' which is the Diocese of Menevia's recommended scheme and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Implementation of this scheme is in its infancy but good progress has been made providing opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has also worked hard at identifying opportunities within the topics to promote Literacy and Numeracy. Activities and written work observed during inspection was appropriate to the age and abilities of pupils. In most pupils' exercise books there was evidence of references to other faiths. A range of high quality resources were available to enhance and enrich delivery of the topic. The school also follows the *All That I Am* syllabus for the year 6 pupils.

Prayer and acts of collective worship are integral to the life of the school. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for prayer. These topics are consistent with the Catholic character of the school and responsive to the diversity among pupils. All the classrooms had a prayer table/corner and religious focus that included religious icons, statues and pupils' work or prayers. Staff accept responsibility for leading prayer and involve pupils in its delivery. The school provides many opportunities for the pupils to appreciate the school's Welsh dimension.

Sacramental preparation for the pupils is undertaken by the school in Year 3. This is supported by the parish priest.

The religious life of the school has been enhanced further by the creation of a prayer area within the school together with a prayer garden in the grounds: both areas make effective use of the available space. The atmosphere created is both calm and peaceful, providing opportunities for personal prayer and reflection; allowing further opportunities for both pupils and staff to foster a personal relationship with God.

There is a very good system of pastoral care and guidance in St. Joseph's and the pupils are looked after very well. The introduction of the *Rainbows programme* has been welcomed, supporting many pupils and their families in their loss. Pupil voice is heard by the enthusiastic members of the School Council and Eco Committee. Pupils were very proud of their role and the impact their decisions have had on the school. There is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available to pupils, this is very much enjoyed. The school works closely with its feeder comprehensive schools in facilitating transition arrangements. Frequent references were made to events and activities undertaken jointly by pupils of the schools.

The school's accommodation is clean and well maintained. Outside the school buildings there are several playground / garden areas that are well utilised throughout the school day.

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| KQ3. How good are Leadership and Management? |
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|             |
|-------------|
| <b>Good</b> |
|-------------|

Governors fully understand and are able to articulate the mission of the school and they make a highly significant contribution to its Catholic life. They 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 of governors knows the strengths and areas for development of the school well and understands the challenges it faces. They are visible in the school and parish communities. Governors engage with parents/carers generally and address any significant concerns they may have. They have established a rota system of visits to speak to the subject co-ordinators.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a deep commitment to the mission of the church by providing a rich, broad and balanced curriculum, with high 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, seeking to put into practice diocesan guidelines. Pupils are able to articulate the school's distinctive mission with understanding. The school's Mission Statement "Together in Christ – Living, Learning, Growing" is a living vibrant celebration of the school's work and is embraced by all stakeholders. It is displayed prominently throughout the building and the entrance foyer overtly demonstrates the distinctive nature of a Catholic school. In addition to this, very good links exist between the school and the parish priest who is a regular visitor, giving considerable support to the school.



Self-evaluation reviews are undertaken by the leaders in RE and staff and governors have contributed to the school's Self Evaluation Report. Monitoring takes place of the planning, resources and pupils' work, however the good practice identified in some classes has not been shared with other staff members.

The inclusion of all pupils is a central goal and shared vision of the school. Within the school there is concern, respect and hospitality towards others. Pupils' friendship bonds cross cultural, faith, social and economic boundaries and there is a common sense of belonging. There is good provision to enable pupils to develop an understanding of the role and ensure equal opportunities for all. Pupils from different backgrounds are given opportunities to work together and relationships among them are positive.

The Headteacher, who is also the Religious Education subject leader, has made many favourable changes since her appointment; these changes have had an invaluable impact on the school. This coupled with the strong school's ethos of teamwork and the very good support of the clergy, governors, parents and parish means that the school has the capacity to improve further.

## Appendix 1

### **93 (40%) parents / carers returned the questionnaires distributed.**

All of the parents / carers who returned the questionnaires said they were made to feel welcome in the school, that they were encouraged to become a part of the school by participating in a range of religious activities both within the school and parish and that their children were happy in school. Parents / carers felt that the school enabled their children to develop spiritually through prayer and worship.

Most said that the school gave them a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education .

Parents / carers are evidently extremely proud of their school stating:

"St. Joseph's is a lovely small and friendly school."

"School provides a community where parents and children are valued."

"School shows support for all."

"A fantastic, loving and supportive school."

## Appendix 2

### **Evidence Base**

- The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation
- Meetings with the Head teacher / Religious Education subject leader
- Meetings with the Chair of Governors and Parish Priest who is also the Religious Education Link Governor and chair
- A meeting with parents
- Parent/carer questionnaire returns
- Lesson observations
- Scrutiny of planning and assessment
- Scrutiny of pupils' work
- Scrutiny of displays and prayer foci
- Attendance at whole school acts of worship
- Discussions with pupils (School Council & Eco Committee)
- Discussions with all staff
- Observation of daily routines

***The diocesan inspectors wish 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.***