

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Joseph's Catholic Infant School

URN: 401019

Carried out on behalf of the Title. Most Rev Mark O'Toole, Bishop of Menevia on:

29 - 30 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

2

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

2

Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

✓

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

✓

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The head teacher is a passionate, effective leader who strives for excellence in Catholic education.
- Leaders and governors prioritise their guardianship of the school's mission, ensuring it is well understood by pupils and staff.
- The school is a joyful community, evident in the excellent relationships at all levels.
- Teachers clearly communicate the value of religious education to their pupils.
- There is a strong effective partnership between school, home and parish which contributes well to pupils' spiritual formation.

What the school needs to improve:

- Use the implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory* to review and evaluate the current religious education curriculum in time for 2025.
- Refine and further develop collective worship at classroom level to include more reverent moments and encourage awe and wonder.
- For staff and pupils to use the driver words to identify next step progression in religious education.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

At St Joseph's Catholic Infant school there is a warm and lived sense of community with Christ at its heart and a joyful, holistic approach to school life which values each person as a unique child of God. Pupils speak enthusiastically about being a pupil at St Joseph's. They are proud of and have a good understanding of what is special about their Catholic school. Pupils stated, 'We look after one another and live like Jesus'.

Pupils contribute to developing the Catholic character of the school through the Missio group. Through fundraising, pupils support a wide range of charities and despite being so young they are fully involved in this aspect of school life. They feel confident in approaching leaders with fundraising ideas. Most recently, they instigated a 'Strava walk five hundred miles' fundraising day, to support Peruvian Missionary Work and Cafod.

Throughout the school, pupils, relevant to their age, demonstrate a clear understanding of Gospel values and a developing understanding of Catholic Social Teaching. They spoke about helping those in need, protecting the earth so that everyone can enjoy it and following the teachings and example of Jesus. Pupils readily talk about the liturgical events they experience including how they have celebrated the feast of St Peter and Paul, other feasts, and the sacrament of Holy Communion.

During the inspection pupils joined in the celebration of Mass and prayer with some opportunities for reflection, nurturing good spiritual development. By the end of Year 2, pupils recognised the virtues being focused on during the term and articulated how the virtues curriculum helps them to make good choices and become the best they can be.

Chaplaincy plays an important role in the faith and pastoral mission of St Joseph's and

cultivates and contributes to the authentic Catholic ethos. Chaplaincy provision is highly valued. The head teacher and religious education leader are instrumental in ensuring that the Church's mission in education is lived and breathed by all connected with the school.

The mission statement is a clear statement of the mission of the Church and is regularly revisited. It is central to the life of the school, embedded across the curriculum and has been reviewed to include a child friendly version which is yet to be internalised by pupils.

Staff members work hard to support both pupils and their families, especially those in need. The school has a good pastoral programme in place to support vulnerable pupils and families.

The school environment reflects its mission and identity through aesthetically pleasing displays, classroom prayer foci and indoor and outdoor reflective prayer spaces which are used well. Continuous provision for religious education is very good and enriches pupils' learning.

Staff are excellent role models; they are very well supported and feel valued. Their on-going training and development is seen as a high priority. All teachers and some support staff hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification. Staff are actively involved in shaping and supporting the Catholic life and mission of the school and participate and support school and church activities.

The dedicated and effective head teacher is held in high regard by her governors who work with her to promote the Catholic life and mission of the school. She keeps them updated of developments in religious education through detailed head teacher reports. The school has a full range of policies and governors are aware of the current school priority for collective worship. The school development plan would be a more robust document if it also included targets for Catholic life and mission and religious education to support the continuous improvement and development of religious education. The committed and supportive governors spoke proudly about the work of the Missio group, the monthly family Masses and the charity work carried out in the school. The provision for relationships, sex and health education R(S)HE is carefully planned using diocesan approved materials and is rooted in the teaching of the Church.

The popular visits to the school from parish priests reflect the very strong links between school, parishes and home. The school engages well with parents and carers to the great benefit of all its pupils and families including those attending a pre-nursery provision for child development.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

2

Pupils are well supported to become religiously literate, from the very youngest pupils in nursery who were able to talk about how God made the world and how we must share it with others, to the pupils in Year 2 who understood true treasures as family, neighbours and all creation. In the lessons observed pupils could answer questions asked by teachers, apply themselves to tasks and discuss their learning. Pupils behave well, show good concentration and their achievements are celebrated by their peers. Scrutiny of pupils' books showed good coverage of the curriculum and that pupils made good progress through their infant years. Marking was positive and celebrated achievement but there was little evidence of next step learning.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about religious education. They confidently deliver *Come and See* lessons and learning opportunities. Pupils use 'Respond' booklets at the end of each topic and these are used to assess pupil progress. The school has a portfolio of pupils work to aid teacher assessment.

Staff are confident in delivering lessons which engage and enthuse pupils; for instance, younger pupils enacted a wedding in an area that was set up as a Church and pupils used sign language competently when singing hymns.

The provision of good quality resources supports classroom and outdoor teaching and learning in religious education. A range of information technology (IT) programmes were used confidently to support learning, for example to brainstorm ideas, to record responses to work and share with parents. Staff use IT journals competently to organise, store and retain

evidence of pupils' work. Teachers recognise the impact religious education has on moral and spiritual development. The use of a dedicated, creative and expressive religious education experience and reflection clearly provides a good opportunity to nurture and develop this. Additional classroom helpers are used effectively to optimise learning for most pupils and their positive contribution enhances lessons.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum for religious education fully meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory* regarding the allocation of time for religious education and the resources given to its delivery. Religious education has a high priority in the school and has parity with other core subjects. There is a regular moderation and monitoring programme for evaluating learning in the school.

The headteacher has a clear vision for teaching and learning and her experience and expertise secures and underpins the good standards within the school. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher share the role of religious education leader and work well together to regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of religious education. They have a good knowledge of strengths and areas for development within the school that should be outlined more fully in the School Development Plan (SDP). Continuing professional development is provided within the school, through partnership with link governors, other schools and with the diocese.

The chair of the governing body and link governors for religious education are dedicated and committed to the school and are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of religious education through a variety of activities such as learning walks, book scrutiny and target setting. They are very supportive of the school and look forward to developing this aspect of the role to enhance school development.

Parents feel confident in the school's delivery of religious education and are well-informed about its content through parent consultations, regular newsletters, assemblies, and home school IT links. Surveys were overwhelmingly positive; many highlighted the family generational link to the school and that it was special, and a happy and caring school.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of the daily rhythm of life at St Joseph's Catholic Infant School. Whole school and class acts of collective worship have a significant impact on all members of this very welcoming community. Pupils are taught to show reverence and respect when praying and they are given a range of experiences reflecting the richness of Catholic tradition.

Pupils experience a variety of prayer and reflection which nurtures good spiritual development. They are taught how to pray and can recite and sign traditional prayers confidently and enthusiastically. They write psalms to share with their peers. Missio members spoke about their prayer partners and how they learn and share prayers together and visit the prayer tree to celebrate their prayer partnership. Pupils readily spoke about the liturgical events they experience, such as how they have celebrated different feasts, especially the feast of St Peter and St Paul and their class saints. Pupils planned liturgies in classrooms following the 'gather, listen, respond and go forth' model. They used their planning boards, actions, gestures, and responses to introduce each of the four parts. This routine is embedded in their practice. By the end of Year 2 pupils were able to show their understanding of virtues education and articulated how the virtues curriculum helps them make good choices and become the best they can be.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy follows the diocesan model and is easily accessible on the school's website. Useful prompts for the preparation of prayer and liturgy are displayed in all classes, and pupils and staff clearly use these when organising prayer and liturgy. Pupils have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and even at this young age, pupils can talk about other faiths and demonstrate respect for different

cultures.

The school environment reflects its mission and identity through aesthetically pleasing displays, classroom prayer foci and indoor and outdoor reflective prayer spaces. These areas additionally support the growth of prayer and spirituality at an individual level, allowing time and space for contemplations and reflection. The completion of a new sensory garden will further enhance prayer and liturgy.

All staff plan and lead prayer thoughtfully and reflectively; they are good models for the pupils. Scripture is used well throughout the school. Passages used in worship are always well selected and seasonally relevant, which helps pupils to engage. Music and singing are integral to prayer and liturgy and as a result, pupils' prayer times are joyful.

Chaplaincy plays an important role in prayer and liturgy. The parish priest, who is the link religious education governor, is a regular visitor to the school and leads worship. He has plans to develop this area with staff to include more pupil participation. Parents join pupils for school and class worship and for a monthly family Mass which is well attended.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are visible leaders of collective worship within the school and drive this area of school development forward. They are to be commended for what they have achieved to date. They are positive role models for both staff and pupils and lead good quality prayer and worship through clear guidance and use of diocesan resources to plan and prepare the liturgy. They have ensured all staff receive appropriate training and development through working with other local schools, delivering in-house and attending diocesan training. Leaders and governors monitor and evaluate prayer and liturgy through visits and observations; consequently, they know the school's strengths and areas for development.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St. Joseph's Infant School
School unique reference number (URN)	401019
Full postal address of the school	Water Street, Aberavon SA126LF
School phone number	01639882579
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Julie Beaumont-Rees
Chair of governing board	Miss Teresa Welsh
School Website	https://st-josephs-catholic-infant-school1.j2bloggy.com/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not applicable
Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3-7 years
Trustees	Diocese of Menevia
Gender of pupils	Male and Female
Date of last denominational inspection	8-12 July 2013
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Jacqueline Phillips	Lead inspector
Sheelagh McCool	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	Lead/team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement