

Diocese of Wrexham

in North Wales



INSPECTION REPORT

St Anne's Catholic Primary School Wrexham

Head Teacher: Mrs C Priest-Jones

Chair of governors: Mr Roy Dolan

Date of Inspection: 4th July 2019

Date of previous Inspection: January 2013

Inspectors: Mrs Carol Morgan

Mrs Roisin Moores

BACKGROUND TO THE SECTION 50 INSPECTION.

During each inspection, the inspectors follow the diocesan framework for inspection agreed by the Bishop of Wrexham and held by the Diocese of Wrexham. The inspection looks at the school as a Catholic school required to fulfill its statutory requirements under Section 50 of the School's Inspections Act, 2005 and the school's inspection requirements held under the authority of the Bishop of the Diocese, (Code of Canon Law, Book III: 806).

During each inspection the inspectors will aim to focus on three main questions of the school, as a Catholic school.

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors will provide an overall judgment on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement

The inspectors will use a four-point scale and judgment.

What the judgment means

Outstanding

Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice

Good

Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement

Adequate

Strengths outweigh areas for improvement

Unsatisfactory

Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

Introduction

The inspection of the school was carried out by two Inspectors from the Diocese of Shrewsbury. They visited six religious education lessons and held meetings with the head teacher, the Religious Education Coordinator, the vice chair of governors, the parish priest, staff members, and pupils. They observed the school's work and provision, including prayer and collective worship. They looked at a range of evidence, including key documentation such as the school's self-evaluation, school development plan and pupils' work.

Information about the school

St Anne's Catholic Primary School is situated in the town of Wrexham. The school serves the parish of St Anne in Wrexham.

The Mission statement is "*Christ's light shines through our learning*".

There are 193 pupils on roll (as at July 2019) including the part time Nursery. 50% of pupils are baptised Catholics, but the school believes that a much smaller percentage of pupils are in families who regularly practise their faith. 20% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 48% of pupils have English as an additional language. 4% of pupils access the Resourced Provision for moderate learning difficulties and 20% of pupils have been identified as having additional learning needs. 12% of pupils are of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

The Head Teacher was appointed in 2015 and the school has two Assistant Heads.

The school has achieved the Green Flag Award.

Summary of Inspection Findings

This is a good Catholic school.

The school is good overall in providing and promoting Catholic Education. The school's Mission Statement "*Christ's light shines through our learning*" is a central part of all that is done and pupils are involved in developing this throughout the school.

The behaviour and attitude of the pupils are good, and pupils engage well in their learning. They say that they enjoy their lessons in Religious Education.

Links with the parish are developing well and the school makes every effort to include members of the parish and wider community in its activities. The school works hard to raise funds for local, national and international charities even though the challenges from its own environment are considerable.

Since the last inspection the school has continued to implement Diocesan recommendations.

Self-evaluation systems are in place and are accurate. Provision for Religious Education and Collective Worship is good. Assessment procedures are consistent, and in line with Diocesan policy.

The leadership of the school demonstrates high levels of commitment and dedication, and the capacity for sustained improvement is good. The Headteacher's vision for the school is shared by senior leaders, governors and Parish Priest, and the Religious Education coordinator is committed to ensuring that standards in the Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship continue to rise.

Recommendations

R1 Continue to plan for developing the use of the prayer room, prayer garden and focal points in order to provide support for the spiritual life of staff and pupils

R2 Develop the use of coaching and mentoring across all areas of Religious Education so that staff are supported in delivering high quality teaching

R3 Ensure that staff are confident in planning and leading Collective Worship so that they can support pupils in planning and leading Collective Worship at an age appropriate level

What happens next?

St Anne's Catholic Primary School will create an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The Diocese of Wrexham will support and monitor the school's progress.

KQ1 How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils are proud of their school and take an active part in developing its Catholic Life. They can articulate the Gospel values and give examples of how they work hard to follow these in the school and in the wider community. They enjoy coming to school and appreciate the nurturing culture where they feel, "There is a lot of support..." and, "You can talk to the adults..." and where there is a 'protective' and 'caring' environment in which they feel safe and where they show care for others. The behaviour in almost all lessons observed was good and this enables lessons to proceed at a good pace. Pupils value that they are asked their opinion on what helps them work well.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of responsibilities such as the School Council, Eco Club, Gardening Club and being Prefects. Older pupils enjoy supporting the younger pupils in activities. Most recently, older pupils have been involved in a Learning Walk alongside governors and senior leaders where they looked at the school environment, particularly in relation to Catholic Life.

Pupils happily plan and lead Collective Worship for younger pupils. However, they would like more support in planning this so that the message permeates the life of the school. For example, pupils leading Collective Worship could encourage others to live out the Gospel message through a 'Going Forth' challenge such as 'See if you can act as a Good Samaritan for someone today'.

Pupils make good progress in Religious Education lessons from their mainly low starting points. Pupils are developing religious literacy although there is some inconsistency and they enjoy the lessons in which drama, art and ICT are used to make links with other learning. This is particularly strong in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One but was also observed in some Key Stage Two lessons.

At the end of each Key Stage, the standards pupils achieve are usually good. Pupil progress is tracked through the use of 'I can' statements and pupils respond positively to adult, peer and self-review of their work.

In the pupils' books, presentation is mostly good and all work is marked or annotated. Some marking provides good feedback to support further work and some asks questions requiring pupil response, which leads to further understanding.

Pupils are very clear about how the Gospel values support them in 'following in the footsteps of Jesus', and they are able to discuss how they are encouraged to give and receive forgiveness. They know that good behaviour and kindness to others is expected and that if someone struggles to behave well, then they will be helped to think about what they could do to change. Pupils are generous in their support of others in need. They regularly donate items to the local food bank and to the annual Harvest as well as to the shoebox appeal. They have raised funds for 'Race for Life' and the Wrexham Homeless Appeal through non-uniform days, cake sales and sponsored events. Individual classes have supported a range of charities such as Macmillan, Dogs for the Deaf and the Poppy Appeal. In addition, pupils sing at a range of events to support children with severe learning needs and disabilities. Pupils' knowledge of global events and issues is raised through use of CAFOD and Mission Together materials to support teaching and learning.

Pupils were observed to pray with reverence and to listen respectfully during Collective Worship. They sing joyfully and are able to join in traditional prayers with confidence. From Nursery onwards the use of the Welsh language for prayers such as the Sign of the Cross and for songs encourages pupils to develop their language skills and to feel confident in speaking in front of their peers.

Taking all the above aspects into account the school is judged to be good for the outcomes achieved by individuals and groups of learners.

KQ2 The quality of the school's work in providing Catholic education

The quality of teaching seen across the school was good overall with some outstanding practice. The best lessons seen were those where explicit links were made between what was being taught and pupils' experience of Church, liturgy and how we live out our faith. Pupils engage well and enjoy their Religious Education lessons, especially those where they have the opportunity for role play or other creative activities, which they feel help them to remember the story or message. Teachers generally plan for a range of practical and imaginative activities that enable pupils to learn new skills and to embed their learning. Good, open questioning by teachers and other adults enabled most lessons to move at a fast pace and supported the pupils in their learning. In order to maintain and develop quality first teaching, outstanding practitioners could be used to coach and mentor staff to support their planning and delivery so that they gain confidence in teaching Religious Education. Pupils' behaviour across the school is good.

Relationships between adults and pupils are extremely positive. Teachers and support staff support pupils with additional needs in a calm and encouraging manner and learning for all pupils is supported well. Some differentiated activities are planned to ensure the needs of all pupils are met but this varies across the school.

Pupils work well together, both in pairs or small or large groups. They concentrate well and generally complete the tasks set in lessons. A range of ways to enhance and record learning are in use, including ICT.

As well as Diocesan recording sheets, there is a consistent tracking system in place to record formal termly assessments and any informal assessments. 'I can' statements and updated 'driver' words are used to support teaching and learning. The school has been working with attainment levels but is now looking at age related expectations, in line with other curriculum areas. The RE coordinator and the Headteacher work well with other Catholic schools in their cluster and in the diocese and the schools regularly moderate work together.

Marking in pupils' books is generally good and provides feedback, enabling pupils to move on in their learning. However, more consistency across classes would enable pupils to move on at a faster pace or to consider how their faith should be lived out in their daily lives.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and the good lessons observed provided many links to previous topics and to the Catholic Life of the school.

The school uses the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme, in line with Diocesan recommendations, which meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The school ensures that 10% curriculum time is dedicated to Religious Education, thereby fulfilling the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

The Religious Education curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for spiritual, moral and cultural development. Pastoral support is a real strength of the school, and the school works hard to meet the needs of its most vulnerable. The school is fully committed to inclusion, and is also working extremely hard to provide a nurturing environment for all pupils and families, particularly the most vulnerable in a difficult and challenging environment. This is fully in keeping with its Mission to ensure that 'Christ's light shines through our learning.'

Collective Worship takes place regularly. Pupils plan and lead Collective Worship independently, at an age appropriate level. However, they would benefit from more adult support with this so that the use of a variety of approaches and styles ensures high quality provision for all. Pupils have access to a prayer room and prayer garden as well as classroom and school focal points for prayer. The school has reviewed this provision and should now plan to enhance this for the benefit of pupils and staff.

The school works hard to include parents in all aspects of school life and this is an ongoing target.

Taking all the above aspects into account, the school is judged to be good for the provision achieved by individuals and groups of learners.

KQ3 How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school

Leaders, governors and managers demonstrate a deep commitment to the Church's mission in Education. The school's Mission Statement 'Christ's light shines through our learning' has been reviewed and the school's response to the challenge to live out the Gospel values is 'amazing' according to Governors. A Mission and Ethos Governor subcommittee has been set up to review and monitor the Catholic life of the school. The involvement of pupils in this work is exemplary and is already having an impact on the school's provision.

The Headteacher is extremely proud of her school and is committed to the continued development of the Catholic Life and character of the school, including developing links with the parish. The Headteacher is supported by two Assistant Heads and staff are committed to their pupils and the families they serve.

The strengths and areas for development for the school are identified accurately and the school is well placed to continue to improve.

Members of the school's governing body both support and challenge the school's Senior Leadership Team, and act as a 'critical friend'. They are kept well informed by the Headteacher and Religious Education Coordinator through reports and attendance at meetings. Link Governors take part in some monitoring and evaluation activities e.g. the Mission and Ethos committee's Learning Walk, and have reported back to the Governing Body any implications or outcomes that need to be considered. This model could be used to monitor other areas, such as Collective Worship. Governors provide the Headteacher with Performance Management targets related to the Catholic Life of the School, which ensures that the highest priority is given to the school's core purpose.

The school's Self-evaluation is accurate, and priorities identified are achievable. All stakeholders contributed to the completion of school's Self Evaluation Record. Priority is given to Religious Education in the School Development Plan and there is a comprehensive Religious Education Action Plan in place, which is regularly monitored and reviewed.

The pastoral care and support provided by the school are excellent and are a strength of the school. Pupils appreciate the love and care shown to them and say that, 'everyone is treated the same,' 'We learn self-confidence,' and that, 'We learn to care for each other.'

Staff and pupils have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school. Staff say they support each other and that they are well supported by the leadership team and the Religious Education Coordinator. They praise the way in which the school nurtures all its pupils and of how secure the children feel during their time in the school. As one member of staff stated, 'St Anne's is a special place to work and I am proud to be a member of staff here.'

Almost all parents speak highly of the school and the overwhelmingly positive comments on the returned parental questionnaires show that parents appreciate the care and encouragement their children receive. As one parent wrote, 'We feel our children are truly cared for and valued for who they are.'

The school continues to invite parents and families to school events and activities as well as members of the parish. Some parishioners and family members support the school through hearing reading or helping with a variety of activities. The Parents' group is active in raising and providing funds for the school.

The parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school and is extremely supportive of the work the school does within a community where there are many challenges. He took part in the Learning Walk with pupils, governors and leaders and is positive about the progress the school is making in developing its Catholic Life.

Pupils attend weekly Mass on a rota basis and are learning more about the liturgy and being part of a worshipping community. The First Holy Communion programme is supported by the school and parish.

Classroom displays generally reflect the current topic in 'Come and See' and displays around the school promote the Gospel values. Further work on linking displays to the church's liturgical year would ensure that staff and pupils develop and enhance their understanding.

The school has excellent links with outside agencies which support its work with children and families.

Taking all of the above into account the school is judged to be good in relation to the Leadership and Management of the school. The definition of which is as a school, St Anne's has '*Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement*'.