

Archdiocese of Cardiff



Inspection Report

St Joseph's Catholic High School Newport

Inspection Dates	5 - 8 March 2018
Reporting Inspector	Mr Garry Maher
Accompanying Inspector	Mrs Patricia Pavlovic
Type of School	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-18
Number on roll	1388
Local Authority	Newport City Council
Chair of Governors	Mr Paul Bennett
School Address	Pencarn Way, Tredegar Park Newport NP10 8XH
Tel No.	01633 653110
Email Address	sjhs@newport.gov.uk
Parishes served	All Saints Newport St Gabriel's Newport St Patrick's Newport St Mary's Chepstow
Date of previous inspection	21 - 22 January 2013
Headteacher	Mr Trevor Brown

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

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.

Judgement	What the judgement means
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 Archdiocesan inspectors use and a broad idea of their meaning. It is for guidance only.

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

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Archdiocese of Cardiff Schools website: www.rcadcschools.org

Context

St Joseph's Catholic High School is an English medium voluntary aided mixed 11-18 school. It is a school of the Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff and is maintained by Newport City Council.

There are currently 1388 pupils on roll including 231 pupils in the sixth form. This compares with 1480 pupils at the time of the previous inspection in 2013 which included 320 pupils in the sixth form.

St Joseph's serves the western edge of Newport and draws pupils from a wide catchment area including Newport, Caldicot and Chepstow. Their social and economic circumstances vary with around 36% of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales. Around 11% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals (eFSM).

62% of pupils are baptised Catholics which is in line with other schools in the Archdiocese. An additional 17% of pupils coming from other Christian denominations and 19% coming from other World Religions.

Most pupils speak English as their first language. Around 21% of pupils have special educational needs which is lower than the national average of 25.1%. 3% of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are from a white British background. Around 19% of pupils speak English as an additional language and no pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard.

The leadership team is made up of the headteacher, who has been in the post since September 2014, a deputy headteacher, three assistant headteachers, a business manager and three assistant headteachers seconded to the extended leadership team.

The individual school budget per pupil for St Joseph's in 2017-2018 is £4,082 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the secondary schools in Newport is £5,651 and the minimum is £4,082. St Joseph's RC High School is therefore ninth out of the nine secondary schools in Newport in terms of its school budget per pupil.

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

Excellent

Catholic education at St Joseph's is based on its Mission Statement 'Serving God through working together' and its ethos is firmly rooted in the Gospel. The school provides excellent Catholic education because:

- the governing body is effective and knowledgeable, and supports the school well.
- the headteacher provides clear, focussed leadership and unequivocal determination in the pursuit of excellence.
- teaching in the Religious Education department is consistently good with many excellent features.
- the lay chaplain provides good support for the Religious Education department and makes a significant contribution to the ethos of the whole school.
- the school is a welcoming and inclusive community.
- pupils are extremely proud of their school and its Catholic identity.
- pastoral care is an outstanding feature of the school and supports pupils' well-being effectively.
- relationships within the school are strong and this contributes to the sense of cohesion.

What are the school's prospects for improvement?

Excellent

- the last diocesan inspection in 2013 judged the school to be excellent and this remains the case.
- excellent progress has been made in addressing all recommendations highlighted in the last inspection.
- leadership and governance are highly effective in promoting, monitoring and evaluating both the provision for the Catholic life of the school and Religious Education. They have the full support of staff, parents and pupils.
- the link governor for RE provides good support and challenge within the Religious Education department and for the Catholic life of the school.
- the Religious Education Department improvement plan accurately identifies areas for improvement and is already on the way to addressing them successfully.

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- R1: Embed more rigorous assessment and monitoring to reduce the gap in attainment between boys and girls at both key stage 3 and key stage 4.
- R2: Review the consistency and accuracy of marking across the Religious Education department, ensuring quality feedback which encourages pupils' response and therefore enables pupils at all key stages to progress.
- R3: Continue to develop opportunities for all children to be involved in the prayer life of the school with particular reference to spontaneous prayer during tutor time.

The school itself has already identified these areas and is on the way addressing them successfully.

What happens next?

The school will submit a Post-Inspection Action Plan to the Director of Religious Education that shows how it will address the recommendations. Submission should be within 45 working days of publication of the report. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the Archdiocese.

MAIN FINDINGS

KQ1 How good are outcomes?

Excellent

Catholic education at St. Joseph's is based on its mission statement 'serving God through learning together'. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and wholeheartedly embrace the many opportunities provided for all to grow in faith and gain a secure understanding of the impact of faith on their lives. They demonstrate a clear understanding and ability to speak with confidence about the school's distinctive Catholic nature and participate reverently in prayer, assemblies and important celebrations during the liturgical year. Pupils treat each other with respect and show concern for everyone and everything around them. Their conduct in lessons is exemplary and they develop an excellent sense of right and wrong. This is reflected in their classroom discussions, written work and interviews with inspectors.

Pupils are aware of their responsibility to help those less fortunate through extensive, planned activities with charities, including CAFOD, 'Maes Erw', Macmillan Cancer Care, Make a Wish Foundation and the United World Schools Foundation to build and support a school in rural Cambodia. Pupils are involved in the student council and appreciate the opportunities to take responsibility and participate in decision making through their elected representatives. Activities

have been developed to support pupils' mental well-being and St Joseph's has been recognised as the first Dementia Friendly school in Wales. Pastoral care is an outstanding feature of the school and is linked clearly to the school's mission statement. All pupils are cared for equally and this reflects the inclusive nature of the school's ethos. Transition arrangements are highly effective and cluster work with partner primary colleagues is a strength of the school. Parents and pupils believe that the opportunities to visit the school when children are in Year 6 are very beneficial. Planned transition activities include joint liturgical services, Mass for new entrants to the school and 'Newport Live' summer school where activities are designed to build self-esteem and resilience. High priority is given to ensuring that children transfer to St Joseph's with confidence.

Nearly all pupils arrive at lessons ready and willing to learn. Nearly all pupils listen attentively and work diligently on a variety of appropriate tasks and clearly enjoy their lessons. The standard of work in exercise books is very good. Books are well presented and contain a range of work, including evidence of independent work, as well as tasks directed by the teacher. There is good evidence of extended writing with key concepts being used appropriately and in context. It is clearly evident from both the lessons and from work in exercise books that learners are growing in religious literacy.

The 'ICONS' scheme is used in the planning and delivery of work at key stage 3 and is supplemented with a variety of additional resources to ensure pupils enjoy their learning and participate in lessons enthusiastically. Pupils are able to reflect on their learning and explore the Faith and how it applies in their daily lives. A variety of differentiated activities, together with appropriate discussion and well-structured questions, enable pupils to effectively develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. Nearly all pupils are fully engaged in their learning and strive to achieve well in all aspects of their work.

Attainment in Religious Education at key stage 3 is good. Outcomes for pupils at Level 6+ demonstrate improvement over recent years with 28% of the cohort achieving Level 7. The outcomes achieved by pupils with English as an additional language at Level 7 is strong. Pupils with additional learning needs achieve well with 77.5% achieving Level 5+, 35% achieving Level 6 and 12.5% achieving Level 7. Attainment of pupils entitled to free school meals is improving when compared to non-free school meals pupils.

Year 11 pupils follow the WJEC Catholicism specification and are entered for Paper 1 and 2. Year 10 pupils follow the new WJEC specification. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to discuss and explore their faith in order to develop a deeper understanding of what their faith means and how it relates to their role in society today. Work at key stage 4 is well presented and includes evidence of independent work. Extended writing tasks are completed well.

Attainment at GCSE is good, with 66% achieving A*-C, 7% below their achievement in English. The percentage of pupils achieving A*-A in Religious Education is 35% and this is an area of strength within the school. 87% of pupils with English as an additional language achieved A*-C at GCSE in 2017. The gap in attainment for pupils entitled to free school meals has reduced to 9% but remains an area for continued monitoring and development.

The difference in attainment in Religious Education of boys compared to girls is significant across the department at both key stage 3 and key stage 4. This has

already been identified by the department as an area for development and strategies have been put in place as part of department improvement planning. This remains a priority for the future.

Attainment at AS level is good, with 72% of pupils achieving A-C and 92% of pupils achieving A-E. Although A Level results dipped slightly in 2017, the three-year trend of results prior to that was consistently above 70%.

KQ2 How good is provision?

Excellent

Overall, teaching is consistently good with many excellent features across the Religious Education department, promoting purposeful learning and high levels of achievement across all key stages. Lessons are well planned and resourced with a strong focus on challenging pupils through effective questioning techniques. Teachers plan effectively to ensure that pupils of all abilities are challenged appropriately and are able to achieve well. This, combined with teachers' thorough specialist knowledge, enables pupils to give thoughtful and reasoned responses. Pupils clearly enjoy Religious Education and make good progress due to their teachers' ongoing commitment to improving their learning and the pastoral support they provide.

All teachers mark work regularly and most teachers provide comments which enable pupils to improve their work. Marking focuses appropriately on the accuracy of pupils' written work, for example, teachers identify errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, a few pupils do not consistently follow up on the advice given by their teachers to correct their spelling, particularly at key stage 3. At key stage 4 many pupils respond to the teachers' comments on how to improve by developing their ideas further. However, this needs to be applied consistently by all teachers in the department to reflect the very best practice seen.

Planning for the development of skills is detailed and evidence in books is good. There are opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and the work of other pupils. However, this needs to be developed to ensure that all pupils are able to achieve, particularly boys at key stage 4. Questioning is used skilfully in nearly all lessons to effectively probe pupils' understanding of the topic being taught, thereby allowing pupils to use higher order thinking skills to more fully develop their knowledge of religious concepts. As a result, pupils are able to achieve the higher levels at key stage 3. Pupils' written work at key stage 4 and key stage 5 is detailed, demonstrating depth of knowledge and understanding.

Tracking is in place and is embedded across key stage 4 and is developing at key stage 3. It is used effectively to monitor progress against targets which allows for early identification of pupils who are under-performing so that intervention is both timely and appropriate. The accuracy of assessment is developing and most teachers use WWW (what went well) and EBI (even better if) to encourage pupils to reflect more widely on the topic being taught. Assessment, however, needs to be consistent across the department and more focussed in order to identify different groups of pupils and ensure they achieve their full potential.

Religious Education is currently taught by six full-time and one part-time specialist RE teachers. Religious Education staff are well qualified and make good use of their learning environment by ensuring rooms are well presented and displays support and enhance the learning. The school follows the Archdiocesan guidelines in terms of its programmes of study. The 'ICONS' scheme is delivered

at key stage 3 and the WJEC syllabi are followed at key stage 4. Pupils receive 10% curriculum time for Religious Education at both key stage 3 and key stage 4 and pupils in the sixth-form receive 5% curriculum time for general RE. This meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in full. The Religious Education department is well resourced and receives an equitable share of the school's capitation, although this is slightly below that received for other core subject areas.

The chaplaincy team consists of members of the RE department who are ably supported by members of staff from across the school. The work of the 'Youth Chaplaincy Team' is good and they are fully involved in the planning and preparation for assemblies and acts of worship throughout the liturgical year. The team encourages all pupils to be involved and pupils lead assemblies and participate in voluntary prayer and tutor period prayer both reverently and confidently. The support provided by the school lay chaplain is valued by pupils and plays an important role in developing pupils' understanding of their faith. The chaplain provides very good support for the Religious Education department and makes a significant contribution to the ethos of the whole school. The Chapel is situated in the centre of the school, is a sacred space, and is a focus for pupils especially in times of need.

The year group assemblies observed were delivered well and pupils participated willingly in prayer. Form assemblies were also good, with form tutors being provided with a theme which was applied consistently across the school and enabled excellent opportunities for reflection and discussion. However, the opportunity for spontaneous prayer is limited and the school has already identified this as an area to be developed.

The school is a truly inclusive community and pupils with additional learning needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported extremely well, which is an outstanding feature of the school. The sense of community cohesion adds a richness to the community as a whole. The belief in the school as an extension of the family is central to the work at St Joseph's and excellent relationships exist between staff, pupils and parents. Good links exist with parishes, and local clergy make themselves available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and to celebrate voluntary Mass at various times throughout the year.

Q3 How good are Leadership and Management?

Excellent

Governors, senior leaders and staff are fully committed to raising standards and work together as a highly effective team to ensure the promotion of the school's Catholic life is at the centre of its strategic direction. The headteacher provides clear, focussed leadership and unequivocal determination in the pursuit of excellence in promoting the Catholic mission of the school and high academic standards overall. The chair of governors is in regular contact with the headteacher and is extremely knowledgeable about the school.

Governors are very supportive, of the Catholic nature of the school; this is a high priority. Religious Education is treated as a core subject and governors are

actively involved in discussing standards and evaluating their role in promoting excellence. The RE link governor has strong links with the Religious Education department and meets teachers on a regular basis to discuss issues for improvement. Governors are well informed and know the overall strengths and areas for development. The governing body holds members of the Religious Education department to account effectively which will ensure continued improvement.

The school is a truly cohesive community which reflects the Gospel, and pupils feel valued for everything they achieve. There is a strong sense of belonging and all pupils are welcomed in a spirit of equality, inclusiveness and respect. This is a strength of the school.

Leaders and managers develop excellent partnerships to promote learning and pupils' wellbeing. Links with local parishes and partner primary schools are an excellent feature. The school works closely with Archdiocesan officers; with staff regularly attending Diocesan meetings. They staff are encouraged to participate in Diocesan training including the CCRS, CAREC and MA in Catholic Leadership and Management courses. The Head of Religious Education provides detailed support for non-specialist teachers in delivering prayer which is meaningful and reflects the nature of the school. Good partnerships exist to enable sixth form pupils to access courses from other schools whilst providing opportunities for pupils from other schools to access courses at St Joseph's.

The Head of Religious Education leads a well-qualified team of specialist teachers. Her attention to detail is exemplary and self-evaluation processes are detailed and robust. Department improvement planning accurately identifies areas for development and reflects the aspiration that teachers have for all pupils at the school. The tracking of pupil progress against targets is a strength and allows for early intervention and support when pupils attainment falls below that expected.

Nearly all parents who responded to the Questionnaire agreed that they are completely happy with their child's Religious Education and with the Catholic life of the school. Parents and carers feel valued and listened to and appreciate the way that issues or concerns are dealt with. Parents also commented on the outstanding pastoral care their children receive, the strong sense of community and the inclusive way of learning which enables children of all abilities to thrive. Parents also highlighted that standards were promoted throughout the school and that the relationship between culture and the Gospel were clearly evident in everything the school strives to achieve.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

- 40 parents/carers completed the parent questionnaire.
- Nearly all parents/carers are happy with the values and attitudes that the school fosters and are made to feel welcome in the school.
- Nearly all also believed that the school sought their views and concerns and took them into account.
- Most parents and carers believed that the school gave them a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education and nearly all agreed that the school enabled their children to achieve a good standard of work in Religious Education. All parents were also happy with the help and guidance available to their children and all believed that the school enabled their children to develop spiritually through prayer and worship.
- Most parents and carers believed that the school kept them well informed about their children's progress in Religious Education.
- Parents and carers stated that they chose St Joseph's RC High School because of its strong sense of community and the inclusive way of learning which enables all children to succeed.
- Pastoral care is outstanding with children always coming first.
- Parents also highlighted that St Joseph's RC High School respected each child as an individual, that standards were upheld and promoted throughout the school and the relationship between culture and the Gospel were clearly evident.

Appendix 2

Evidence base

- The school's self-evaluation report and school improvement plan.
- Meetings with the headteacher, head of Religious Education, assistant headteacher responsible for well-being, heads of year and ALN co-ordinator.
- Meeting with the chair of governors and other governors.
- Lesson observations.
- Scrutiny of planning and assessment.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Attendance at school assemblies.
- Attendance at tutor time.
- Discussions with pupils.
- Parent questionnaire returns.
- A meeting with parents.