

# Archdiocese of Cardiff



## Inspection Report

### St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Ross on Wye

<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>18 - 19 November 2013</b>
<b>Reporting Inspector</b>	<b>Ann Fowler</b>
<b>Type of school</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	<b>4-11</b>
<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Hereford</b>
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Mr P Burbidge</b>
<b>School Address</b>	<b>The Avenue Ross on Wye Herefordshire HR9 5AW</b>
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<b>Parishes served</b>	<b>St Frances of Rome, Ross on Wye The Most Holy Trinity, Ledbury</b>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	<b>6 - 7 July 2009</b>
<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Mr Clive Lambert</b>

## Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archdiocese of Cardiff and Inspection of denominational education under Section 48 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 Archdiocesan 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 Archdiocesan website: [www.rcadc.org](http://www.rcadc.org)

## **Context**

Since the last Section 48 inspection St Joseph's has undergone significant changes. The previous headteacher resigned in 2010. Following the failure to recruit a suitable candidate the governors approached St Mary's Lugwardine (an outstanding Catholic secondary school) with a view to St Joseph's becoming part of a federation with St Mary's. A partnership developed between the two schools and from September 2012 the school has been formally federated with St Mary's. Mr Lambert, the head of St Mary's, is now the head of St Joseph's. The day to day leadership of the school is shared by Mr Lambert and a deputy from St Mary's.

St Joseph's, which is situated on the outskirts of Ross, is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. It serves the parishes of St Frances of Rome, Ross and Most Holy Trinity in Ledbury. In practice however, mainly due to the increasing cost of transport, the majority of the pupils come from St Frances of Rome parish and the immediate local areas. The proportion of Catholics on role is approximately 40%. Most pupils are white British, the remainder representing a range of other ethnicities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement is similar to that seen nationally. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn in a class with some pupils in Year 1. There are three other mixed-age classes in the school.

## Summary

<b>How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?</b>	<b>Good</b>
St Joseph's is a good school because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the teaching is good and pupils are making progress.</li><li>• prayer and worship underpin pupils' spiritual and moral development. This area has been developed since the last inspection.</li><li>• effective pastoral care promotes pupils' wellbeing.</li><li>• relationships with St Mary's enhance the learning opportunities and benefit the pupils' spiritual development.</li><li>• partnerships with parents are good and they value the school.</li><li>• governors and school leaders have a developing vision for curriculum Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school.</li></ul>	
<b>What are the school's prospects for improvement?</b>	<b>Good</b>
The school has experienced a period of transition and challenge. Although the school still faces challenges its prospect for improvement are good because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• it enjoys the support of parents and the numbers on role have increased. The opening of a nursery should help strengthen the numbers on roll although it is too early to judge the full impact of this.</li><li>• school data shows significant improvement in educational outcomes for pupils.</li><li>• the development of the new syllabus together with the assessment process is helping staff to focus on improving outcomes in Religious Education.</li><li>• the leadership is committed to raising standards and developing the Catholicity of the school.</li></ul>	

## **Recommendations and Required Actions**

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

R1: Develop clear outcomes for relationship and sex education and implement a scheme of work which delivers these outcomes.

R2: Within this academic year hold an INSET day on the Catholic life of the school for all staff to strengthen their understanding of distinctiveness.

R3: Leadership and Management need to develop techniques for **formally** assessing the impact of measures on the Catholic life of the school.

R4: Continue to develop the new Religious Education syllabus and ensure that tasks are appropriate and allow pupils to reach the higher levels.

## 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 Archdiocese.

## Main Findings

<b>KQ1. How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The school began teaching the 'Come and See' syllabus in September. Although still in its early stages pupils are becoming more religiously literate. The focus on using the driver words from the levels of attainment is helping to raise standards. A group of Year 1 pupils, for example, were not simply describing the Advent wreath but were able to explain some of the symbolism and a group of Key Stage 2 pupils, when writing acrostic poems for Advent, were able to make links between the prophet Isaiah and our understanding of Advent. Most pupils, in most classes, engage well in the activities and tasks, work at an adequate pace and are keen to do well. Many pupils are demonstrating knowledge, skills and understanding appropriate to their background, age and ability. They can relate their learning to their own lives. The split classes means that the syllabus has to be adapted to meet the needs of pupils and the impact of this has yet to be seen. Some of the responses to tasks are limited and some tasks do not afford pupils the opportunity to reach the higher levels or lack the success criteria that would enable pupils to do this. Assessment procedures and a focus across the school on raising standards has resulted in pupils becoming more confident learners with, at present, a limited but developing ability to assess their own learning. The emphasis on 'marking for next steps' is contributing to more focused feedback which in turn contributes to the pupils' ability to improve their own learning. At present although the school is now collecting the requisite data, it is not yet analysing the progress of significant groups within different cohorts.

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school and are proud of their school. They regard it as a family where everyone helps each other. Pupils show care and respect for all members of the school community. They understand the school mission statement and realise that there is a connection between the words of scripture and their lives. Although not all pupils can formally articulate the distinctiveness of the school as a Catholic school they understand the phrase Gospel values and the school's focus on this helps reinforce that connection between faith and life. They point to the physical attributes of the school, the focal areas and statues as examples of distinctiveness. Although they know about their house saints one curious omission is their lack of understanding of why the school is named after St Joseph and this needs to be addressed. Pupils are content, confident, courteous and helpful to visitors. Older pupils support younger pupils. They are happy to take on responsibilities, for example through

the Eco Club, and are proud of their achievements. They understand the need to care for others and take part in charity work including supporting CAFOD and a project in Peru. In fact they expressed the desire to take on more responsibilities. At present there is no formal system for pupils to be involved in evaluating the distinctive nature of the school. There is no adequate relationship scheme in place and this issue must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Pupils' response to prayer and worship in a variety of settings is good. In the whole school assembly, pupils demonstrated an ability and confidence to be involved in an act of collective worship. Some pupils read, whilst others worked the equipment. They listened attentively and responded to questions asked. In the classroom-based acts of collective worship, pupils' behaviour was good and in this setting pupils are taking the lead on planning and delivering prayer. They make use of the archdiocesan 'Let us Pray' resource which helps them chose their readings/prayers/focal points. They also use an evaluation sheet to help them discuss how effective the prayer has been. Throughout the year they are given the opportunity to celebrate the liturgical seasons of the Church's year and this in turn has a positive impact on their understanding. They are taught and show understanding of the basic prayers of the Church. One younger pupil for example commenting that the most difficult line within the Our Father was 'Thy will be done' because it is easier to do what we want rather than what God wants. They are given opportunities to celebrate the sacramental life of the Church but some pupils still need to develop their understanding of sacraments. The prayer life of the school is developing and making a growing contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

<b>KQ2. How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The majority of teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and make use of the driver words from the levels of attainment in expressing outcomes. Teachers employ a range of teaching styles and plan a variety of activities that enable their pupils to work independently and collectively. Work is differentiated and pupils are encouraged, with appropriate guidance, to select the appropriate level of work for themselves. Occasionally lessons lack pace with pupils spending too long before actually beginning a task. Where pace is brisk pupils are motivated and engaged. Teachers' expectations help to create a climate where most pupils strive to achieve their best. There is, however, a need to clearly identify tasks which will allow pupils to stretch themselves and reach the higher levels. Pupils are provided with informative feedback, both orally and through the marking of their work. Lesson planning is in the early stages of being linked to assessment. Moderation carried out with the high school and the Hereford Catholic primary schools has resulted in staff being increasingly confident in their ability to assess. They have also taken part in recent INSET training on this topic which again has increased staff confidence in their ability to assess and improve feedback for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to develop thinking skills and, through the use of activities such as 'hot seating', developing appropriate questions and paired and group work, they are developing skills in this area. There does, however, need to be a greater emphasis on extended writing and appropriate research for those pupils able to reach level 4 or 5.

The move to provide specialist teaching across Key Stage 2 with the coordinator delivering all lessons helps ensure consistency of expectation. None of the teaching staff possess the CCRS qualification or equivalent. This is an area the school should explore as greater subject knowledge will further increase standards. The new syllabus 'Come and See', which was implemented in September, is yet to be fully embedded and it is too soon to look at the impact of this. Pupils' achievements are regularly recognised and celebrated.

The school provides a range of activities and experiences, within the school and beyond, which contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The extra-curricular clubs are valued by pupils and parents.

The link with St Mary's is highly valued by pupils. Older pupils have the opportunity to travel to St Mary's to be taught by St Mary's staff and join in the life of the school. Pupils themselves state that this has increased their confidence, helps them prepare for the transition to secondary education and feel connected to a larger community. Links with the parishes are still developing. The school attends Mass in the Catholic Church in Ross, and the parish community is offered the opportunity to attend Mass and special assemblies in school. This year the parish and the school held a joint summer fete within the school grounds further strengthening the links. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school. Through the work of the Eco Club, their work for CAFOD and their fundraising for street children in Peru, pupils are taught about their responsibilities to the wider world. The school supports activities within, and forms links to, the local community. Through the RE programme and a variety of activities within the school they are given the opportunities to grow in respect for other cultures.

Prayer and worship are important in the life of the school. Acts of collective worship, in a variety of settings, provide regular opportunities for pupils and staff to pray together. Pupils' successes are recognised and celebrated in Praise Assemblies. The link with St Mary's means that St Joseph's is able to draw on the skills of the lay chaplain. This has involved the children taking part in contemplative prayer workshops and the Year 4 class were able to experience a retreat day at St Mary's. This increased provision has contributed to pupils' developing skills in, and awareness of, the variety of prayer within the Catholic Church. Through use of the archdiocesan 'Let us Pray' resource, teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to plan, prepare, lead and evaluate their own class-based acts of worship. All classrooms have focal areas which reflect either the current topic in Religious Education or the liturgical season. In some cases however these need to be more developed. Posters, murals, artefacts and statues reflect the Catholic character of the school.

<b>KQ3. How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The governing body has been active through a period of change and challenge and is keen to support the school and its position within the local community. Governors are supportive of the head teacher, enjoy constructive relationships with staff and appreciate their achievements. Because the governing body is the governing body of the federation they have nominated specific governors to take responsibility for issues affecting St Joseph's and developed an advisory committee consisting of parents and staff from St Joseph's to draw the governing body's attention to issues directly affecting St Joseph's. A new link governor for Religious Education has recently been appointed. At present procedures for monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life of the school are largely informal and non-systematic. Governors visit St Joseph's, have informal conversation with the Religious Education coordinator and other staff, and are visible to parents. Governors support social and religious events at the school and use these as opportunities to gather views. The governing body must, as a matter of urgency, implement a programme of relationship education within the school and should also consider how they can address more effectively the impact of measures taken to develop the Catholic life of the school.

The head teacher has a clear vision for the life of the school. He leads assemblies and shares his views on faith with the school community. Since the federation steps have been taken which have clearly raised standards. Despite the difficulties in running two schools he has offered a clear lead and encouragement to staff at all levels within the school, and provides a good role model for others to emulate. Staff are proud of their school, are rising to the head's challenge and are committed to its ongoing development. INSET is required to develop further the understanding of the staff with regard to the distinctive nature of the school. This is particularly important as the headteacher is not always on the St Joseph's site. Parents receive newsletters which outline the value the school is focusing on and the charity work the school is doing.

The enthusiastic Religious Education coordinator is discharging her duties effectively. She has introduced archdiocesan initiatives, both in planning and assessment and also prayer and worship, which are making a positive impact on raising standards. She conducts a range of monitoring and evaluation activities relating to provision and outcomes. The link with the high school has enabled cross phase moderation meetings and this has enabled a more accurate vision to be developed.

Leaders and managers promote inclusion of all as a central goal and shared vision. There is a strong sense of belonging to the school family. Relationships between pupils are positive. There are clear and developing links with the local parish. There is a strong sense of belonging in the school and all are welcomed in a spirit of equality. Leaders and managers demonstrate a positive work ethic and a desire to make a difference. There is effective provision for pupils to develop an understanding of their role in society. Pupils are well informed about sustainability and global citizenship through for example their work with the Eco Committee, or trips to other places of worship. The school

has forged good relationships and enjoys a good reputation within the local community. It has contributed to several community projects, for example the shoe box appeal and has forged links with other Christian denominations. The school recognises the primary role of parents as well as the fact that many of the children do not come from Catholic families.

## Appendix 1

### Responses to parent questionnaires

Forty questionnaires were returned. The results can be summarised as follows:

Nearly all parents are happy with the values and attitudes that the school fosters and believe that they are to feel welcome in the school. Most parents believed that the school seeks the views of parents / carers and takes account of their suggestions and concerns, gives a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education and enables their children to achieve a good standard of work in Religious Education. Most parents expressed the view that they are happy with the help and guidance available to their children, they are well-informed about their children's progress in Religious Education and the school enables their children to develop spiritually through prayer and worship. The only significant area of concern was over relationship education where almost half the parents did not believe that the school gives them a clear understanding of what is taught in personal, social and health education, and, where appropriate, sex and relationships education.

Most parents who expressed a view stated that they had chosen the school for its strong family feel, because it is a Catholic school and because it has a strong sense of values. A number of comments referred to the federation with St Mary's and all parents who expressed a view regarded this as a positive thing. The following comment was typical of the responses: *"my first priority was Catholic education then the smaller school,..... The strong pastoral and direct involvement with St Mary's was a strong attraction."*

## Appendix 2

### Evidence Base

- The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation
- Meetings with the head teacher and Religious Education co-ordinator
- Meetings with representatives of the governing body
- Lesson observations
- Scrutiny of planning and assessment material
- Scrutiny of pupils' work
- Scrutiny of prayer foci and displays
- Attendance at whole-school, and class-based acts of worship
- Discussions with pupils, individually and in groups
- Discussions with teaching staff
- Parent questionnaire returns
- Observation of daily routines