

# Archdiocese of Cardiff



## Inspection Report

### Padre Pio Catholic Primary School, Pontypool

Inspection dates	3 – 4 July 2017.
Reporting Inspector	M. Lyndon Watkins
Accompanying Inspector	Mr Gareth Rein
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	4 - 11yrs
Number on roll	226
Local Authority	Torfaen
Chair of Governors	Mrs Claire Higgins
School Address	Conway Road Pontypool NP4 6HL
Tel. no.	01495 742074
E-mail address	Head.padrepiorc@torfaen.gov.uk
Parishes served	St. Alban's, Pontypool The Sacred Heart and St. Felix, Blaenavon
Date of previous inspection	2 -5 June 2008
Headteacher	Mr Paul Welsh

## **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.

<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.rcadcschools.org](http://www.rcadcschools.org)

## Context

Padre Pio Catholic Primary School is situated in the town of Pontypool, within the Torfaen Local Authority area.

It is a single form entry school, with a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30. It currently has 226 pupils on roll. Of these 44% are baptised Catholics, 38% are of other Christian denominations and 18% have no religious affiliation. There are no pupils of other world religions.

9% of the school's pupils are eligible for free school meals (eFSM). This figure has declined in recent years and it is significantly below the national average of 19%. Some 17% of pupils have Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and 3% have English as an Additional Language (EAL).

The headteacher has been in post since 2006 and the school employs nine teachers, one of whom works part-time; 44% of teachers are Catholic and 22% of them hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS). The school has nine Teaching Assistants (TAs), 33% of whom are Catholic.

During the last financial year, the school was funded at a rate of £3,240 per pupil, placing it 22<sup>nd</sup> in rank order within the LA, out of 26 schools in total.

The priorities identified by the school for the current academic year are:

- to continue to actively promote the Gospel values to the school community.
- to continue to enhance the use of prayer and worship across the school to support and develop pupils' spiritual growth.
- to liaise with neighbouring schools to share best practice.

<b>Summary</b>
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<b>How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Padre Pio is a good Catholic school because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the majority of teaching across the school is good, with some variability evident.</li><li>• the majority of pupils make good progress in Religious Education.</li><li>• the quality of collective worship is good and pupils are gradually becoming active in planning and leading it.</li><li>• the Catholic ethos of the school is strong and pupils are proud of it.</li><li>• pupils' behaviour is very good.</li><li>• the quality of leadership is good.</li></ul> <p>However:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The quality of assessment, overall, is adequate and the feedback received by pupils is in need of improvement.</li><li>• Pupils have the potential to attain at higher levels in Religious Education at the end of both Key Stages than they currently do.</li></ul>	
<b>What are the school's prospects for improvement?</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The prospects for improvement at Padre Pio Catholic Primary School are good because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• leaders are honest and realistic about the school's current strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they are fully cognisant of the need to focus their work on the areas highlighted in the recommendations of this report (see below).</li><li>• the opportunity now exists to finalise a leadership structure for Religious Education, following a period of substantial change. Staff with the necessary skills and commitment to successfully implement the recommendations of this report are available within the school.</li><li>• governors show the necessary levels of commitment to their work and they have the potential to raise the level of challenge which they provide to leaders.</li><li>• staff exhibit the willingness required to act upon the improvement plans, to be produced by leaders, in a positive manner.</li><li>• pupils' attitudes towards learning are good and they will respond positively to increased levels of challenge.</li></ul>	

<b>Recommendations and Required Actions</b>
<p>What does the school need to do to improve further?</p> <p>R1: Address the variability in the quality of teaching across the school, with the aim of making all teaching at least 'good'.</p> <p>R2: Raise the quality of feedback to pupils so that teachers' marking directly facilitates the raising of standards.</p> <p>R3: Develop the planning of learning so that potentially high attaining pupils are challenged appropriately.</p> <p>R4: Raise the level of rigour in Monitoring Evaluation and Review procedures so that they lead directly to the identification of priorities for improvement and therefore make a positive impact on standards.</p>

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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.

<b><u>Main Findings</u></b>
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<b>KQ1. How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of outcomes is good.

Pupils develop their levels of religious literacy at an appropriate rate as they move through the school and by the time they leave Padre Pio, they achieve knowledge, understanding and skills that are appropriate to their age and ability. The school's work in this area is good. Many pupils show an awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. In discussion with pupils during the inspection, they were able to articulate clearly the requirement to attend Mass for the recent feast of Saints Peter and Paul and explain the tradition of the Corpus Christi procession in which they took part. Overall, pupils make good progress relative to their starting points. However, this progression is not an even one, as there are some clear differences in evidence across the school with regard to different groups of learners. Addressing this issue will facilitate even more rapid pupil progress. Pupils are involved in the process of developing their learning to a point. They reflect on how well they have done at the conclusion of each topic and they often respond to teachers' marking; however, pupils do not benefit from having sufficient opportunity to develop themselves as learners per se. Most pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and they engage effectively with them.

Pupils' attainment at the conclusion of the key stages is adequate. Evidence suggests that potentially high attaining learners would benefit from experiencing greater levels of challenge and ambition in order to attain at levels beyond those that are expected. The school has adopted an effective system of assessment tracking that is embedding well. It allows staff to identify variance in assessment data and under-performance. Work is now needed on what action needs to be taken when this is the case, and more time is needed in order to identify medium and long term patterns of attainment. Evidence in pupils' books indicates broadly similar standards between Religious Education and English. However, indications for the current academic year are that attainment at higher than expected levels will be achieved in English but not in Religious Education.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is good. Most pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to the school community and their relationships with peers reflects the strong Catholic ethos of the school. They value being part of a flourishing Catholic community. Pupils' behaviour observed during the inspection was very good. They show respect for one another and show great care for their school and the local community. Pupils exhibit a keenness to participate in school activities and take responsibility, for instance by acting as hall monitors and assisting in recycling schemes and the school fruit tuck shop.

The quality of pastoral care at the school is very good. All staff exhibit an interest in the needs and well-being of pupils, and, as a consequence, pupils feel loved and well supported. Parents also confirm that the level of support provided by the school is of high quality and that it is much appreciated. The school develops an appropriate awareness amongst pupils in relation to their personal and social development and to safe attitudes.

The manner in which pupils respond to and participate in the school's prayer and worship life is good. They show reverence and respect during collective worship and they participate well in prayer from our tradition and liturgies. The school has made progress in relation to worship being planned and led by pupils, and this work is becoming embedded across the school. During the inspection, pupils' participation in collective worship through drama was used to good effect. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of liturgical seasons and feasts. Each class is linked with a saint and pupils participate in the veneration of their 'class saint'.

Pupils comment on the positive role played in school life by the parish priest, who is a governor and a regular visitor to the school. They spoke with enthusiasm about the recent Corpus Christi celebration to which members of the parish and local community were invited. Mass is celebrated in the school regularly and pupils are frequent visitors to St Alban's Church.

<b>KQ2. How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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Overall, the quality of provision is good.

The majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good and it contributes to the promotion of purposeful learning and appropriate rates of progress. However, variability is in evidence across the school. Action needs to be taken to facilitate the sharing of good practice. In the best teaching observed during the inspection:

- lessons proceeded at a good pace,
- creative ideas were in evidence,
- teacher-pupil relationships were strong (including the impressive use of a sense of humour),
- pupils were absorbed in their learning and
- their knowledge was significantly increased as a result of the quality of teaching (demonstrated by Year Five pupils who exhibited excellent knowledge of the books of the Bible and many of the patriarchal characters contained within it).

Teachers plan using the materials recommended by the Archdiocese. Planning makes good reference to the 'Come and See' scheme of learning that is used through the school. Again, the quality of planning is variable and the good practice in evidence needs to be shared effectively in order to achieve consistency. The majority of teachers display good levels of subject knowledge, which enable them to engage learners effectively. In Year Six, for example in a Fair-Trade themed lesson, pupils became the key characters in the production and selling of bananas and in so doing they were able to learn purposefully about

the injustices suffered by those in poverty working on the plantation. In Year One, pupils wrote messages to a global neighbour 'far away', which were attached to helium filled balloons and released; this allowed the pupils involved to develop an understanding of the concept that all people across the world are our sisters and brothers. Opportunities for collaborative learning are limited and the development of this area would further benefit the quality of learning provision. Information Technology is consistently used in lessons, mostly to good effect. The quality of resources available to promote effective learning is good and pupils benefit from the spacious school grounds and the modern building. Generally, other adults in classrooms are effectively deployed and they relate well to pupils. The majority of teachers have high expectations for their pupils; these expectations need to be consistently evident in all staff.

The quality of the school's assessment procedures is adequate. The tracking system used shows potential to make a positive impact on standards. It needs further time to become properly embedded. The analysis that can be conducted with reference to data has the potential to create meaningful priorities and targets for future School Development Planning. The quality of marking is adequate; it is positive in nature and completed regularly and at times pupils respond to teachers' comments, but the feedback provided doesn't allow pupils to improve the quality of their learning as a consequence. The school makes use of 'I Can' statements at the conclusion of each topic; these encourage pupils to reflect on their learning. Some Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies are in use across the school. However, those observed during the inspection had limited impact on the quality of learning.

The Bishops' Conference and Archdiocesan requirements are met. Teachers provide a range of stimulating experiences and activities, which help most pupils to succeed in their learning. Opportunities for pupils to learn from religion, reflect on meaning and relate faith to daily life are well developed. These contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The school makes appropriate use of the 'Come and See' programme to plan and prepare for the needs of most pupils; however, teachers do not enhance the curriculum sufficiently to challenge more able learners. Suitable opportunities are planned for pupils to appreciate the school's Welsh dimension, but the use of the Welsh language is inconsistent. Well maintained accommodation provides a stimulating learning environment.

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school, with a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer. There are regular opportunities for pupils and adults to pray together and, increasingly, prayer is led by pupils. Effective use of the 'Gweddïwn' materials (a resource aimed at encouraging pupils to plan and lead worship) has contributed to the raising of standards in this area, although the school recognises the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to become better skilled and equipped to do this. Collective worship themes are consistent with the Catholic character of the school. The provision of adult-led worship would be further enhanced by a greater emphasis on the proclamation of the Gospel.



All classrooms and the corridor have areas of reflective display and the prayer room provides a sacred space within the school. Attendance at Mass and other liturgical celebrations by parents, governors and parishioners is encouraged.

<b>KQ3. How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of leadership and management is good.

The governing body shows an admirable commitment to the school and to its role within it. Members play a positive part in creating the strong sense of community that can be felt in the school and some of them are regular visitors. They fulfil all of their statutory and canonical responsibilities. They take part in discussions about priorities for the school. Their work could be further developed if they were to challenge leaders more robustly in relation to academic standards and to the quality of teaching.

The headteacher has served the school for an extended period of time. His work exhibits a high level of care for both pupils and staff and he clearly wants the best for all at the school. There has been some significant changes recently with regard to the leadership of Religious Education. This has had some negative consequences. However, it is clear that the necessary expertise is readily available within the school to provide leadership of a high standard and to be able to act upon the recommendations included in this report effectively.

Overall, the manner in which leaders promote, monitor, evaluate and review (MER) the Catholic life of the school is good. Collective worship is observed by leaders and feedback given to staff which identifies areas for development. In addition, leaders also seek out feedback from pupils and parents which is collated and analysed appropriately. Leaders provide appropriate training for staff; during the current year, for example, Christian Meditation has been successfully developed across the school as a direct result of In-Service Training (INSET).

Leaders work to promote and MER the provision for Religious Education is good. Teachers' planning is evaluated effectively. Lessons are observed and feedback is given to all staff. During the current academic year the school development plan does not contain academic areas for development in Religious Education following an analysis of data; this area could profitably be further developed in co-operation with governors, allowing the planning of future improvement to become more fully rounded. The work of leaders would be further enhanced by an analysis of the performance of groups of learners such as boys, girls and those eFSM for example.

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 which is articulated by pupils, staff members, parents and governors. Relationships between pupils are positive. 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.

The school's partnership work is good. Pupils are well informed about sustainability and global citizenship through their work in Religious Education lessons and through charity fundraising activities. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their fundraising for CAFOD, Mission Together and for a school in Nigeria. This work is further enhanced by the activities of the Eco Committee and through school trips. The school has forged good relationships and enjoys a good reputation within the local community. 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**

Parental Questionnaires:

Inspectors received 27 questionnaires from parents, all of which were positive in nature.

Common comments referred to:

- the strong Catholic ethos of the school.
- the strong sense of community.
- good standards.
- good leadership.
- the welcoming approach of staff.
- long-standing family links with the school.

## **Appendix 2**

Evidence Base:

- Pre-inspection team consultation.
- Self-Evaluation documents.
- School Improvement Plan.
- Lesson observations in seven classes.
- Observations of collective acts of worship.
- Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks.
- The school environment.
- Foci for prayer and reflection.
- Discussions with staff.
- Interviews with the headteacher, the curriculum leader, the link governor and the governing body.
- Meeting with parents.
- Meeting with a representative group of pupils.
- Parental questionnaires.
- A range of portfolios provided.