



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Ysgol San Sior

**Church Walks
Llandudno
Conwy
LL30 2HL**

Date of inspection: September 2024

by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol San Sior

Name of provider	Ysgol San Sior
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	Predominantly English with significant use of Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Voluntary Aided Church in Wales Primary School
Number of pupils on roll	234
Pupils of statutory school age	183
Number in nursery classes	28
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 22.9%)	6.2%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 11.1%)	6.0%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	5.5%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	13.7%
Date of headteacher appointment	08/04/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/05/2017
Start date of inspection	30/09/2024

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Summary

Ysgol San Sior is a happy and caring community. The headteacher has shared a clear vision based on 'Calon San Sior' and works purposefully with staff, governors and pupils to ensure a safe and inclusive environment where pupils feel valued and supported. Pupils know that adults in the school care for them and that they can turn to them when they face challenges or have difficulties. As a result, nearly all pupils attend regularly, behave well and work and play together happily.

The school's curriculum broadly meets the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales and is underpinned by the school's strong values and ethos. Teachers and support staff plan engaging learning experiences that help to ensure that many pupils engage positively and make suitable progress with their skills during lessons and over time. Classrooms and outdoor spaces are productive, active learning environments. This ensures that most pupils focus well during lessons and develop positive attitudes to learning. Most teaching is purposeful; however, teachers do not consistently challenge all pupils to develop their independent learning skills well enough.

Over time, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make suitable progress over time. Most pupils make good progress in developing their English literacy and digital skills and use these well to support their learning in other subjects. However, although most pupils make suitable progress in developing their numeracy skills, opportunities to apply these skills across the curriculum are limited. The majority of pupils make limited progress in their Welsh language skills during their time at the school.

The headteacher provides effective and thoughtful leadership, which ensures that the school has a clear strategic direction. He is well supported by a committed team of dedicated and caring staff. Evaluation processes accurately identify areas for improvement, for example the need for teachers to provide pupils with more specific feedback to help them improve their work.

Recommendations

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Ensure that teaching consistently provides appropriate challenge for all pupils to develop as effective independent learners
- R2 Ensure that teachers' feedback supports pupils to improve their work consistently
- R3 Provide a systematic whole-school approach to the development of pupils' Welsh language skills

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main evaluation

The headteacher provides effective and thoughtful leadership, which ensures that the school has a clear strategic direction and promotes a close-knit and inclusive community. He articulates a clear vision based on 'Calon San Sior' and conveys this vision successfully to staff, pupils and governors. This ensures that pupil well-being is at the heart of their work. Together, they have created a positive safeguarding culture and a welcoming, nurturing environment where pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils know that staff will listen and act on any concerns they may have. This leads to mutual support and respect between pupils and adults working at the school. Through regular assemblies and recently introduced 'Community Time', staff foster pupils' personal, moral, and social skills thoughtfully, providing pupils with valuable opportunities to reflect on values and attributes such as respect, kindness and perseverance.

The headteacher has high expectations of himself and others. He is well supported by the leadership team. They model professional values and behaviour that contribute purposefully to effective collaboration amongst staff. This results in a strong team ethos, where dedicated, hardworking staff collaborate effectively. They have established clear expectations of good pupil behaviour, and this has helped staff to ensure that nearly all pupils behave well in classes and in all aspects of school life. They work and play together happily, and are welcoming, courteous and respectful to staff and visitors. The school has effective systems to ensure regular attendance and, as a result, most pupils attend school regularly.

Leaders and staff know the needs of pupils and the local community and are working effectively to meet these needs. They are committed to addressing local and national priorities. Together, they have recently introduced a clear vision for the curriculum that broadly reflects the Curriculum for Wales, takes account of the local area and meets the needs of many pupils appropriately. At its core is a thoughtful and inclusive culture that helps pupils to feel a secure sense of belonging and develop the confidence and skills to engage positively with all learning experiences. The headteacher recognises the need to share good practice more effectively across the school. He ensures that staff have opportunities to collaborate as they plan for the development of pupils' skills and to reflect on the progress that pupils make as they move through the school.

Arrangements for identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with ALN are appropriate. Staff provide meaningful interventions to support those with emotional needs. They involve pupils, parents, and the views of outside agencies to plan interventions and evaluate their impact. Over time, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs and pupils who are adversely affected by poverty and

disadvantage, make suitable progress in developing their skills from their starting points.

Most teachers ensure that learning activities proceed at an appropriate pace and that learners move between activities smoothly and briskly. They use questioning effectively to move pupils' learning on and support pupils' understanding, ensuring that many pupils are appropriately challenged. Effective use of 'pit stops' during activities supports pupils to think critically about their work and to justify their opinions and conclusions. In the few examples, where teachers' feedback is most effective, pupils recognise what they have done well in their work and where they could make improvements. However, this is not consistent across all classes. At times, staff tend to over-direct pupils' learning and activities do not always challenge all pupils to develop their independent learning skills well enough.

Most pupils make good progress in building their literacy skills in English. They develop their speaking skills consistently over time and discuss their work confidently and articulately. Teachers provide good opportunities for younger pupils to develop useful early reading skills and, as a result, most pupils make sound progress. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils read a variety of texts fluently and with good expression and demonstrate a good understanding of what they read. This enables them to apply their reading skills effectively across the curriculum, for example when researching how creatures adapt in the deeper layers of the ocean. Most pupils' writing skills develop well and they write purposefully across a suitable range of genres, for example when writing a biography of a climate change activist. As pupils progress through the school, many show an appropriate understanding of spoken Welsh in familiar situations. They give simple answers during discussions with teachers and each other. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunity for pupils to develop their knowledge of Welsh systematically in lessons. Because of this, the majority of pupils make limited progress in their Welsh speaking skills during their time at school.

Over time, most pupils make suitable progress in developing their numeracy skills and understanding of mathematical concepts. However, teachers do not provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply these skills across the curriculum and in authentic concepts. Pupils' digital skills develop well as they progress through the school. They use digital packages purposefully to support the development of their literacy and numeracy skills and most pupils have an appropriate understanding how to stay safe when working online. This enables most pupils to apply their digital skills purposefully across the curriculum. Teachers plan successfully for the development of pupils' physical skills. Younger pupils, for example, develop their fine motor skills by manipulating and shaping clay to make a model of a hedgehog. Pupils of all ages enjoy physical activities during physical education lessons and, for example, during mental maths sessions and in the forest area.

Arrangements to monitor and evaluate the school's work enable leaders to identify aspects that are most in need of improvement. The headteacher ensures that staff have valuable opportunities to benefit from professional learning activities. These link well to the school's priorities, for example to further improve pupils' reading skills and to ensure that pupils are more physically active during lessons. Staff also work closely with colleagues from local schools to share aspects of good practice, for example in the use of formative assessment. There are a few classes where this is

embedded but it is too early to evaluate the impact on pupils' learning across the age range.

The governing body is well informed, effective and committed to supporting the school. Members understand the school's context, its strengths, and priorities for improvement well. They receive regular updates from school leaders regarding progress towards identified areas for improvement and individual members visit school to carry out learning walks and listen to learners. This enables them to challenge leaders sensibly as critical friends and hold the school to account for its performance.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for site security do not give any cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publications Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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