



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

A report on

**St David's Catholic Primary School
St David's Lane
Mold
Flintshire
CH7 1LH**

Date of inspection: March 2020

by

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

About St David's Catholic Primary School

St David's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary-aided school in the town of Mold in Flintshire. The school serves the parishes of Mold and Buckley in the Diocese of Wrexham, although it also admits children from non-Catholic families. There are 96 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11 years, including 13 part-time nursery pupils. There are four mixed-age classes in the school.

English is the predominant language for nearly all pupils. A few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. A very few pupils speak Welsh at home. The three-year average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 12%, which is lower than the Wales average of 18%. The school identifies around 18% of pupils as having special educational needs, which is lower than the national average of 21%.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

The present headteacher took up his post in September 2007. The school's previous inspection was in June 2014.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Staff create a happy, caring and inclusive ethos at the school, which fosters a supportive learning environment for pupils. Pupils feel safe in school and know what to do if they are worried or anxious. As a result, most pupils behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They treat other pupils, staff and visitors with respect and take pride in their school.

Teachers provide rich and interesting learning experiences for pupils, which meet most pupils' needs successfully. Most pupils enjoy their learning and participate enthusiastically in lessons. As a result, they make strong progress in developing a wide range of skills that they use successfully in activities across the areas of learning.

The headteacher manages the school effectively. Staff, parents and governors share a common purpose and work well together. Teachers and support staff work well as a team and show a strong commitment to promoting continuous and sustainable improvements. Governors have a sound understanding of the school and use their knowledge purposefully to challenge the school and to hold it to account for standards and the quality of its provision.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Challenge all pupils in key stage 2 to improve and to guide their own learning in order to achieve to the best of their ability
- R2 Sharpen monitoring procedures so that they focus more clearly on pupil outcomes
- R3 Ensure that all processes relating to the provision for pupils with special educational needs are robust and give a clear overview of pupils' progress
- R4 Improve the quality of pupils' extended writing in key stage 2

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning and achieve well.

In the foundation phase, nearly all pupils make strong progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. For example, nursery pupils listen to the story 'What's the Time Mr Wolf?' attentively and respond to instructions in the game 'Mr Blaidd' with enthusiasm. By Year 2, most share their ideas confidently and enjoy discussing their work. Most pupils in key stage 2 communicate clearly and confidently and are keen to give answers or comments when talking about their work. By Year 6, many pupils speak maturely on a range of subjects, for example when discussing how they could persuade local supermarkets to stock more Fairtrade products.

Most pupils in the foundation phase enjoy reading and develop their reading skills well. By Year 2, many are independent, confident and enthusiastic readers. They enjoy books and love sharing them together, finding information to complete tasks, or learning new stories. Most pupils in key stage 2 enjoy reading and discuss the merits of different authors in a mature and thoughtful manner. By Year 6, most read fluently and with good understanding. Many apply higher-order reading skills well, such as skimming and scanning, to locate information, for example, when researching a project about the Blitz. The most able readers use inference and deduction appropriately to support their understanding.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their writing skills successfully. By Year 2, pupils most use varied vocabulary and language, for example when writing descriptions of The Big Bad Wolf for a wanted poster. They write for a range of purposes. For example, following their trip to Rhuddlan Castle, pupils produce interesting and detailed work about the features of castles. Most pupils show a good grasp of punctuation and the spelling of familiar words, and they understand that they can improve their work by including interesting adjectives and punctuation. Most pupils in key stage 2 write confidently for a range of different audiences. For example, many use persuasive language and thoughtful superlatives to write interesting letters to persuade local supermarkets to sell more Fairtrade products. Across the school, pupils use the skills they learn in English to good effect in other subject areas. By Year 6, many pupils produce well-structured writing, for example when writing a biography of Winston Churchill. However, pupils' ability to express their ideas for a wide range of purposes through extended writing is limited.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in developing their spoken Welsh and they use Welsh confidently as part of class routines. They ask and respond to simple questions independently following basic patterns, for example to talk about themselves or to describe the weather. In key stage 2, many pupils respond well to familiar questions, for example when sharing personal information. By Year 6, many read short texts accurately and write well using familiar vocabulary and sentence patterns, for example when writing about the experience of being an evacuee. However, pupils in key stage 2 do not use their oral Welsh language skills confidently enough in other areas of the curriculum and around the school. This limits the progress they make.

In the foundation phase, nearly all pupils make strong progress in their mathematical development. They have well-developed number skills and a sound grasp of shape and data. They use these skills well, for example when preparing a pictogram and block graph of the food and drink needed for a Christmas party. By Year 2, most pupils have a good understanding of money and apply their skills confidently, for example when role-playing in the fairy-tale estate agent. Most pupils in key stage 2 use an increasing range of written and mental strategies accurately to calculate and they show a good recall of multiplication facts. They build on their understanding of place value to use decimals successfully, for example when converting various units of measurement. By Year 6, most pupils solve multi-step problems successfully, for example when calculating the cost of a family's food ration during the Second World War.

Many pupils make purposeful use of their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support their work across the curriculum. By Year 2, many pupils use a good range of applications on tablet computers to support their learning. For example, they use their word-processing skills well to retell the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. They use simple coding to control a programmable toy. Many pupils in key stage 2 search for information online purposefully and use it effectively to create multimedia presentations on the Mayan civilisation. By Year 6, many pupils use databases and spreadsheets successfully, for example to store information about Fairtrade products.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are confident in the school environment. They show care and respect for one another and for adults. Pupils feel safe in school and know what to do if they are worried or anxious. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Most listen attentively to their teachers and respect other pupils' opinions. Most pupils take pride in their school, treat visitors with respect, show care and concern for each other at lunchtime, and play well together.

Most have positive attitudes towards their learning. They settle quickly in class and are ready to learn promptly. They are hardworking and enthusiastic learners, who work together well, and stay diligently on task for extended periods. From an early age, pupils in the foundation phase become increasingly independent in their learning and demonstrate perseverance when completing tasks in the areas of continuous and enhanced provision. Many demonstrate the confidence to try new experiences enthusiastically and independently. Many pupils in key stage 2 respond readily to the opportunities they are given to decide upon what they want to learn at the beginning of new topics. However, key stage 2 pupils' skills generally rely too much on adults to direct them in their learning.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of being active and living a healthy lifestyle. Many participate enthusiastically and energetically in the range of physical activity the school provides, including sport, dance and gymnastics. This has a positive effect on their fitness and wellbeing. Most pupils have a clear understanding of online safety. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and punctually.

Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities, such as becoming members of the various pupil voice groups in the school, and take their responsibilities seriously. For example, digital leaders play a vital role in helping pupils to understand the importance of staying safe online by leading online safety sessions. Members of the school council speak enthusiastically about their involvement in developing the 'Trim Trail in the school grounds. Criw Cymraeg encourage the use of Welsh across the school by sharing 'Patrwm Cymraeg yr wythnos' and preparing 'Cymraeg pob dydd' prompts for pupils and staff. This has a positive impact on pupils' enthusiasm for the language.

Many pupils are developing well as ethically informed citizens. Many have a good understanding of issues relating to the wider world and how their actions have an impact on the environment. Pupils are proud of their involvement in organising fundraising activities for local and national charities. For example, pupils lead enthusiastically on the development of 'Minnie Vinnies', a junior version of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. This has a positive effect on most pupils' awareness of the needs of others in their community and the wider world.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers and support staff work well together to plan and deliver a wide range of learning experiences that engage most pupils' interest effectively. They know the pupils well and give them effective support while they work and interact with other pupils. This has a positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing. Teachers have up-to-date subject knowledge and use a suitable variety of effective teaching methods that motivate pupils to learn. Support staff work alongside teachers skilfully and contribute effectively to pupils' learning.

In a few classes, where teaching is at its best, imaginative presentations and the pace of lessons are a strong feature of teaching. In these classes, teachers have very high expectations and use open-ended questions very successfully to encourage pupils to think for themselves. As a result, pupils have the confidence to try hard and they undertake tasks enthusiastically and independently. In a few classes, where teaching is less effective, teachers do not always match tasks well enough to the wide range of ability within the class in order to challenge all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. Occasionally, they guide activities too much, which limits opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

The school has recently strengthened its use of assessment for learning strategies. Most teachers share clear learning objectives with pupils. This ensures that many pupils understand what they need to do to be successful. Teachers often give pupils valuable feedback during lessons and encourage them to persevere and reflect further on how to improve their work. However, teachers in key stage 2, do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and to become reflective learners.

The school has embedded the principles of the foundation phase fully. Teachers plan effectively to deliver the statutory requirements of the curriculum and to develop pupils' communication, numeracy and ICT skills through interesting themes. From the outset, teachers provide stimulating tasks and experiences in both the indoor and outdoor areas that engage nearly all pupils' interest effectively. They include pupils'

ideas successfully to ensure an effective balance of activities led by staff and opportunities for pupils to work independently in the learning areas. Teachers in key stage 2 plan for pupils' learning using a thematic approach that provides appropriate coverage of all subjects. They are beginning to incorporate the main purposes of the revised curriculum for Wales into their planning. For example, they provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to share their ideas and interests at the start of new topics. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy and ICT skills effectively across the curriculum.

Overall, teachers support pupils to develop their Welsh language skills well. In the foundation phase, staff use the Welsh language with pupils daily. As a result, many pupils use Welsh confidently as part of class routines. In key stage 2, teachers develop pupils' Welsh language skills well during specific Welsh language lessons. However, provision to enable pupils to practise and enhance these skills outside of Welsh lessons varies too much from class to class. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales, for example when studying local castles. A residential visit to the Urdd Centre in Cardiff promotes pupils' understanding of the culture and modern economy of Wales and develops their self-esteem and independence well.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Staff create a caring, inclusive and supportive ethos, which celebrates and promotes respect for all individuals. Staff know the needs of individual pupils well and ensure that pupils feel safe and are valued. The school is using pupil voice well to inform its planning and decision-making.

The school uses a wide range of information effectively to assess and track individual pupils' progress and to identify their particular needs. As a result, staff provide timely and beneficial support for groups of pupils and those with additional needs. This has led to measurable improvements, especially in pupils' language and numeracy skills. Staff provide additional reading support for individuals which is having a beneficial impact on the reading skills of the targeted pupils.

The school has appropriate procedures in place to identify and monitor support for pupils with specific and additional learning needs. Class teachers and the additional learning needs co-ordinator plan appropriate individual development for identified pupils. Generally, these plans are specific and targets are measurable and achievable. Pupils and parents take an appropriate role in monitoring progress against the targets. However, at times, processes are not always formal enough and the progress of a very few pupils is unclear.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to learn how to be healthy within the curriculum and through a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, such as sport, drama and gymnastics. These promote the importance of physical fitness and support pupils' wellbeing well. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote the importance of healthy eating and drinking and the benefits of regular exercise. They include eating fruit and taking part in regular outdoor activities. Through a specific questionnaire, pupils highlighted the need for more play equipment on the yard. This resulted in the school purchasing a 'Trim Trail' in the school grounds. This has had a positive impact on pupil fitness and behaviour during playtime.

Staff work effectively with specialist agencies, that provide them with valuable support and guidance to address the needs of pupils. The police school liaison officer programmes ensure that pupils learn the importance of making right decisions that impact positively on their wellbeing. Highly effective external support for pupils with specific needs has a particularly successful impact on developing the linguistic skills of specific pupils.

The school ensures that pupils receive valuable opportunities to develop their creative skills, for example in dance where foundation phase pupils participated in the local Dance Fest. The school engages purposefully with the wider community and provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and countries, for example in whole-school country week topics. The school promotes empathy for others effectively. The 'Mini Vinnies' group of pupils meets regularly to discuss local, national and global issues surrounding deprivation and poverty. This enhances their knowledge and understanding of other countries and global issues well.

The school gives pupils beneficial opportunities to play an active role in the work of the school through a wide range of pupil committees. For example, the eco-committee monitors the use of waste and encourages pupils to save energy by switching off lights and electrical equipment. They provide recycling bins and organise litter collection days. As a result, many pupils understand how their actions contribute to the wider benefit of the community.

The school has productive relationships with parents. Teachers communicate effectively with parents using many effective lines of communication. Teachers in the foundation phase have recently introduced an online platform that enables parents to see what their child has achieved in school. Parents value this development and, as a result, they are increasingly aware of what they can do at home to support their children's learning. The school provides a good range of opportunities for parents to contribute and be part of the wider school community. For example, the school regularly invites parents to attend school and to have lunch with the pupils in 'Come dine with me' sessions.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher manages the school effectively and receives strong support from the foundation phase manager. They have a clear vision for the school, based on creating a caring, supportive and inclusive community, and they share this successfully with pupils, staff, governors and parents.

Members of staff work together effectively as a team. Leaders distribute roles and responsibilities clearly and there is a suitable focus on raising standards and developing provision. Teachers fulfil their roles successfully and support the headteacher conscientiously. Leaders at all levels promote positive professional values and behaviours, which help create a purposeful learning organisation. They show a strong commitment to promoting continuous and sustainable improvements. For example, pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work has improved as a result of the school's work on marking and feedback.

Leaders address local and national priorities effectively. For example, the development of 'Cymraeg Campus' across the school is purposeful and is having a positive effect on pupils' use of the Welsh language. Teachers are beginning to work effectively on introducing the new curriculum for Wales and the four core purposes. This is having a positive impact on the teachers' ownership of their roles and responsibilities. The school has considered carefully the requirements of the digital competence framework. This has led to increased opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills in a range of interesting ways.

The school supports the professional learning of staff well, ensuring that staff have valuable opportunities to benefit from professional learning activities that link well to the school's priorities. Nearly all teachers benefit from useful collaborative working with other schools to improve teaching and learning. Performance management procedures link appropriately with identified actions for improvement.

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 very well. Governors have a valuable range of professional expertise and play a key part in ensuring an effective strategic direction for the school. They challenge leaders sensibly as critical friends. Governors monitor the expenditure and the impact of the school's resources prudently. They respond well to financial challenges and plan sensibly to mitigate any possible future risks. For example, the proactive way they have promoted the school has resulted in a rise in the number of pupils on roll. In their monitoring role, governors carry out learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' work. As a result, they hold the school to account successfully and contribute well to school life and to its place within the community.

The school has appropriate processes to evaluate its performance and to plan for improvement. Self-evaluation procedures give leaders a suitable understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. For example, the emphasis on improving pupils' reading, ICT and Welsh skills over the past year has raised standards in these areas successfully across the school. Leaders use a suitable range of information to identify areas for improvement, including learning walks, book scrutiny, lesson observations and pupil performance data. Leaders use this information well to identify appropriate areas for improvement. For example, they have recognised the need to improve the way pupils write for a purpose and the school's provision for science. However, these priorities do not always focus clearly enough on standards or ensure that leaders have effective means to monitor and evaluate progress and the impact of initiatives on outcomes for pupils.

The school is well resourced, with sufficient, suitably qualified teachers to deliver all aspects of the curriculum. The teaching assistants provide worthwhile support for individuals and groups of pupils. The school makes appropriate use of the pupil development grant to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals. As a result, most identified pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent 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 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' wellbeing, 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

Copies of the report

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

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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