



Report summary for parents and carers on St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Date of inspection: February 2024

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

Overview

St Mary's Catholic Primary is a caring school, putting its dedication to its community at its heart. The headteacher, governors and staff work thoughtfully and conscientiously together to promote an ethos characterised by its strong belief in creating a committed Catholic family.

The school's values underpin its vision for learning and well-being and permeate every aspect of school life. The headteacher leads by example. He is supported effectively by other leaders and staff in developing very strong partnerships with parents and the wider community. Pupils build strong relationships with staff and show positive attitudes to their learning.

On entry to nursery, there is a broad spread of abilities. Around half the pupils begin school with literacy and numeracy skills below age related expectations, however within a very short time, due to a wide range of rich learning experiences, the youngest pupils make strong progress. Nearly all pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals (eFSM), those who have additional learning needs (ALN), or those who have English as an additional language (EAL), make strong progress as they move through the school. By the time they leave, nearly all pupils achieve well across most areas of the curriculum. However, pupils do not always make strong enough progress in developing their Welsh language skills.

Teachers are effective in delivering a curriculum which the school has developed over a number of recent years. Its principles are based on a focus on learning domains which are repeated as pupils move through the school. These domains allow pupils to explore the same topics and themes at repeated intervals, deepen their understanding and extend their knowledge, skills and vocabulary effectively. To support domain learning, teachers use the outdoors imaginatively to create exciting learning experiences, promoting strong pupil participation and enjoyment in learning.

There is a productive culture of reflection and evaluation within the school and leaders identify appropriate priorities for improvement. Leaders focus suitably on evaluating the quality of teaching at regular intervals, but it is not always clear enough to staff what they need to focus on most in order to improve.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve teachers' skills and confidence in the teaching of Welsh to improve the progress that pupils make
- R2 Improve self-evaluation processes to identify clearly the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the provision of high quality learning experiences for their youngest pupils, for dissemination on Estyn's website.



School context

Name of provider	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Local authority	Bridgend County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Roman Catholic
Number of pupils on roll	263
Pupils of statutory school age	207
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 23.7%)	11.5%
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 13.2%)	10.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	44%
Date of headteacher appointment	September 2008
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/06/2016
Start date of inspection	26/02/2024
The school is a lead school for initial teacher education.	

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