



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Brackley Avenue
Colwyn Bay
Conwy
LL29 7UU**

Date of inspection: June 2012

by

Mr W Williams

for

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the 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 its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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

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Context

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school situated in the seaside town of Colwyn Bay and serves the parishes of St Joseph's and Sacred Heart in Old Colwyn. In addition, the school receives some pupils from outlying rural areas. Although most pupils are drawn from areas which are neither predominantly prosperous nor disadvantaged, around 17% reside in areas which are described as being socially and economically deprived. Around 13% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much lower than local authority and national averages.

Currently, the school has 230 pupils on roll aged between 3 and 11 years who are taught in eight single-age classes. Most are of white British ethnic origin and use English as their first language. Around 10% have English as an additional language; none uses Welsh at home. Currently, one pupil is 'looked after' by the local authority. There have not been any exclusions during the past twelve months.

Baseline assessments show that most pupils enter school with slightly above average literacy and communication skills. The school identifies around 19% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is slightly higher than the national average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

There have been no significant changes in the nature of the school since it was last inspected in June 2006. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2001.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Sant Joseph in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3137 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Conwy is £13941 and the minimum is £2935. Ysgol Sant Joseph is 58th out of the 61 primary schools in Conwy in terms of its school budget per pupil.'

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- standards of literacy are good and most pupils make strong progress throughout the school;
- achievement and progress in learning are good;
- pupils enjoy coming to school and nearly all behave well;
- teaching is generally good; and
- the school provides good value for money.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- leaders have a clear vision for developing the school;
- rigorous self-evaluation processes and strategic planning are a regular feature of the life of the school;
- all members of staff collaborate closely as a team and are willing to try new initiatives; and
- the school has established a strong professional learning community which has brought about very positive outcomes.

Recommendations

In order to make further progress, the school needs to improve:

- R1 provide more opportunities for key stage 2 pupils to direct their own learning;
- R2 ensure that the best practice in teaching is extended across the school; and
- R3 further develop systems for tracking pupil progress.

What happens next?

The school will create an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

According to their age and stage of development, most pupils achieve good standards in literacy. In the Foundation Phase, nearly all make good progress in their ability to use their literacy and communication skills in different formal and informal contexts. They express their ideas clearly and, by the end of FP2, read confidently and accurately and write to a good standard. In general, they spell common words correctly.

In key stage 2 most pupils discuss aspects of their work intelligently showing good ability to sustain and develop oral contributions. Many show a good understanding of different texts and apply a broad range of appropriate strategies for finding and retrieving information from books and websites. Nearly all express and organise their ideas in written forms confidently and coherently using different sentence structures, paragraphing and punctuation with increasing effectiveness.

Most pupils make good progress in learning Welsh and display an extremely positive attitude towards the subject. During lessons, many ask and answer questions, follow instructions with increasing confidence and occasionally use Welsh around the school. They have a growing awareness of the culture and heritage of Wales. The percentage achieving the expected level in Welsh Second Language at the end of key stage 2 in 2011 was 25% higher than the national benchmark.

At the end of Foundation Phase, during four of the past five years, the percentage of pupils who have reached the expected level 2 in the core subjects has been in the higher 50% when compared with schools that have a similar percentage of pupils eligible to receive free school meals. The proportion who achieved level 2 or above in 2011 in English and science was lower than the national benchmarks and the results of most of the schools in the same family. Mathematics results were marginally above national benchmarks. The proportion of more able pupils who reached level 3 was lower than the national benchmarks and the family of schools average in all three subjects.

With very few exceptions, results of key stage 2 pupils during the past five years have been very positive, with the percentage achieving the expected level 4 or above in the core subjects being in the higher 50% when compared with schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible to receive free school meals. In 2011, the proportion of pupils who achieved level 4 or above in English and science was significantly higher than the national benchmarks and the family of schools' average. Results in mathematics were similar to these benchmarks. The proportion of more able pupils who reached level 5 in English was above national benchmarks and the averages for the family of schools whilst science was similar and mathematics lower.

In lessons and over time nearly all pupils make good progress in their learning. Most, including the more able and those with special educational needs or who speak

English as an additional language, are working to their full potential. Girls and boys generally perform equally when compared with the national benchmarks.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils say they enjoy school and have formed close relationships with staff. Most face new experiences and challenges confidently and are keen to inquire and ask questions.

Attitudes to learning are very positive with most pupils well motivated and fully engaged in their tasks. In the Foundation Phase nearly all become confident learners who have developed positive learning habits and are able to make choices about their own learning. By key stage 2 most have the skills to improve their own learning, work with others and solve problems; nearly all evaluate their own work thoughtfully and set themselves personal targets for improvement.

Pupils of all ages have acquired a secure understanding of how they can become healthy, both through what they eat and the physical activity they undertake.

Across the school, pupils of all ages generally behave well and show courtesy and concern for others. With very few exceptions, they say they feel safe in school and know who to approach if they are worried.

During the last five years, attendance has been in the highest quartile on one occasion and the higher middle on four occasions. At 94.68 in 2011, it is slightly higher than family and all-Wales averages.

Foundation Phase pupils willingly undertake routine responsibilities such as 'Helpwr Heddiw' and are beginning to take responsibility for their own actions. Through the school council, the eco-committee and other activities, key stage 2 pupils play an active part in the school and the community and are confident that their voice is heard.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

Learning experiences successfully meet the needs of the full ability range including the more able and talented pupils and those for whom English is an additional language. Staff collaborate effectively to plan flexible and imaginative activities, which succeed in engaging the interests of most pupils. Stimulating learning experiences, both inside and outdoors, ensure that pupils are challenged by relevant tasks that provide continuity and progression in their learning. Whilst ample opportunities are provided for developing pupils' thinking, problem-solving skills and independence, the over-reliance on worksheets in a few classes limits learning. Information and communications technology provision is well planned and is a good feature.

Planning and provision for Welsh language development is thorough and well-suited to pupils' ages and abilities. There is good provision for developing their knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of Wales.

Very effective learning support programmes enable all pupils to participate fully in every activity. Suitably challenging work is also provided for the more able and talented pupils.

Pupils benefit from a range of visits and extra-curricular activities which further enhance their learning experiences. Provision to enable them to increase their knowledge about sustainability and to improve their understanding of the wider world, is well established across the school.

Teaching: Good

Teachers have good up-to-date subject knowledge and plan lessons effectively to ensure that all pupils are challenged by stimulating learning experiences that are well matched to their age and ability. In a few lessons, however, tasks do not successfully engage the less able pupils.

Teachers successfully employ a wide range of approaches and strategies and provide good opportunities for skill development. They identify clear learning objectives and success criteria that are shared with pupils. Together with support staff, they use questioning skilfully to promote thinking skills. Incidental Welsh is used effectively in all classes.

Working relationships between pupils and staff are very positive; behaviour is generally well managed and there is a productive working atmosphere in most lessons.

Support staff provide pupils with well-focused assistance and feedback, which enhances their learning. They intervene effectively to provide support for specific groups.

There are well-established and clear systems for tracking and recording pupils' progress. These systems enable staff to identify any instances of low performance and to take remedial action when necessary. Assessment information is used purposefully in all classes to plan the next steps in learning.

Assessment for learning strategies are firmly embedded in the school's teaching and assessment methods. Teachers consistently encourage pupils to evaluate their own work, set their own targets and take part in self and peer assessment.

Parents are well informed about their children's achievements and targets through comprehensive annual reports and regular meetings with staff.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The positive and welcoming environment provided for pupils and members of staff ensures that the needs of all individuals are fully met. There are policies and procedures to guarantee that pupils are safe and that they successfully develop

emotional and physical wellbeing. All are encouraged to eat healthily and receive a wide variety of opportunities to improve their fitness and health.

A well balanced programme of personal and social education promotes pupils' social, moral and cultural development effectively. Nearly all pupils clearly understand the expected standard of behaviour and know the consequences should they not meet these expectations.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

The school works effectively with a range of external agencies to provide specialist support and facilities to vulnerable and challenging pupils. The co-ordinator and support staff provide excellent support for pupils with special educational needs both within the classes and in withdrawal groups. Pupils' individual targets are well matched to their needs, progress is tracked in detail and plans are regularly reviewed with parents.

The school has effectively accommodated the needs of recent pupils for whom English is an additional language

Productive links with a wide range of support services ensure that specific expertise and advice are readily available to staff.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a strong Christian mission statement and values, and a positive and inclusive ethos. Other faiths and cultures are successfully promoted through classroom practice, curricular themes, international aspects and collecting on behalf of a range of charities.

The building is of good quality and the school utilises all available space purposefully and for the benefit of all pupils. There is a good supply of relevant resources which are of good quality and appropriately matched to pupils' ages and abilities. The well-developed outside areas in Foundation Phase classes is a valuable resource which provides a variety of stimulating learning experiences for younger pupils.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

The headteacher, in close liaison with the senior management team, has a clear vision for developing the school. Teachers, governors and parents are committed to the school's aims and objectives and promote its values effectively. This contributes positively to creating an ethos in which pupils feel valued and a shared commitment towards raising standards. There are clear policies that focus on pupils' needs and staff and governors understand and implement them conscientiously.

The senior management team have an active monitoring role in all aspects of school life, which bears directly on improving the quality of provision and the standards pupils achieve. Staff are fully involved in the formulation of aims and policies and

their views are valued. This contributes substantially towards strategic management and the establishment of common practices across all classes.

The governing body knows the school well and plays a prominent role in identifying priorities and planning for improvement. Members undertake their statutory duties effectively and, through rigorous data analysis and self-evaluation processes, members have a firm understanding of the school's performance. The role of the governing body as critical friend is well developed.

Local and national priorities are successfully incorporated into the school's programmes of work. Initiatives, such as assessment for learning, have contributed significantly to pupils' standards and progress.

Improving quality: Good

The headteacher has established a rigorous approach to self-evaluation and overseen the establishment of a culture of robust and honest review to which governors and all members of staff contribute. A wide range of sources is used effectively to evaluate its performance. These include rigorous data analysis, regular scrutiny of policies and schemes of work, lesson observations and researching the views of a good range of partners.

The self-evaluation documentation provides a comprehensive overview of both the strengths and areas for development. This information is used well to determine the priorities in the school improvement plan. Recent initiatives to raise standards in literacy are impacting positively on standards.

Professional learning communities are well established and effective links exist with a good range of schools. This network of professional practice is making an important contribution to the school's provision and development.

The school improvement plan is a collaborative effort involving all teaching staff. It is based on objective evidence and is closely linked to self-evaluation outcomes. The plan provides a clear strategic direction for the work of the school.

Members of the senior management team have played a leading role in establishing a strong and ambitious professional learning community within the local authority. Outcomes have been extremely positive and have led to significant improvements in assessment for learning strategies and in standards of speaking and listening. This is excellent practice.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a range of strategic partners. This has a good effect on pupils' wellbeing and attainment.

Parents are very supportive of the school and they appreciate the school's 'open door' policy.

The school has effective links with the community. Members of the community visit the school to enrich the curriculum and pupils take part in concerts and functions in the local church and often entertain older members of the community in neighbouring care homes.

The link with the nursery, situated in the school, is effective. The transition plans between the school and the partner secondary schools enable older pupils to prepare appropriately for the next stage in their education.

Good partnerships exist with a range of external agencies, institutions and the local authority departments to meet pupils' specific needs.

Resource management: Good

Staff and financial resources are managed and deployed effectively to support improvement.

The school is appropriately staffed to teach the curriculum effectively. Teaching and support staff are deployed well to make the best use of their time, expertise and experience.

Teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment time and arrangements for this are managed well. Performance management is implemented in line with statutory requirements and the arrangements include all members of staff.

Staff are very well supported by a comprehensive programme of continuous professional development, both in the school and off-site, linked to school priorities. Teachers share good practice and are willing to try out new ideas and different ways of working.

Effective and efficient use is made of all available resources. The financial implications of all priorities in the school development plan are regularly monitored. This ensures that all monies are spent wisely and in accordance with the school's targets.

Overall, outcomes for pupils are good and there is a trend of improvement. The school, therefore, provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

At the end of Foundation Phase, during four of the past five years, the percentage of pupils who have reached the expected level 2 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has been in the higher 50% when compared with schools that have a similar percentage of pupils eligible to receive free school meals. Performance during one year was in the lower 50% when compare with similar schools.

The proportion of pupils who achieved level 2 or above at the end of Foundation Phase in 2011 in English and science was slightly lower than the national benchmarks and the results of nearly all of the schools in the same family. However, results for writing were 29% lower than family average and national benchmarks. Mathematics results were marginally above national benchmarks. The proportion of more able pupils who reached level 3 in English and mathematics was substantially lower than the national benchmarks and the family of schools average. Although science results were below the national benchmarks, they were comparable to those of the family of schools.

With very few exceptions, results of key stage 2 pupils during the past five years have been very positive, with the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 4 or above in the core subjects being in the higher 50% when compared with schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible to receive free school meals. English results, on four occasions, has been in the highest 25% of similar schools.

In 2011 the proportion of pupils who achieved level 4 or above at the end of key stage 2 in English and science was significantly higher than the national benchmarks and the family of schools' average. Results in mathematics were similar. The proportion of more able pupils who reached level 5 in English was above national benchmarks and the averages for the family of schools whilst science was similar. Results in mathematics were lower than national benchmarks and the family of schools' average.

Nearly all pupils, whatever their ability or background, make good progress through the school. Generally, girls and boys perform equally well.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty three parents completed the questionnaire; nearly all responses were positive and supportive of the school. Most parents say that:

- overall they are satisfied with the school, that their child likes school, has settled down well and is making good progress;
- their child is helped to become more mature and take on responsibility and is well prepared for moving on to secondary education;
- they are kept well informed about their child's progress and are comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or complaints;
- their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise;
- their child is safe at school, children behave well and are expected to do their best and to work hard; and
- the school is well run and teaching is good.

A minority of parents do not agree that there is a good range of activities, including trips and visits.

These responses compare favourably with the national benchmarks.

Responses to pupil questionnaires

One hundred and twenty seven key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaires; the majority of responses were positive. Most pupils say that:

- they are doing well at school, teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress and that they know who to talk to if they are worried or upset; and
- the school teaches them how to be healthy and that there are numerous opportunities for them to keep healthy through regular exercise.

Many pupils say:

- they feel safe in school, that staff deal well with any bullying; and
- homework helps them to understand and improve their work and that there are enough books, equipment and computers for them to do their work.

A minority of pupils do not feel that other children behave well in class and during playtime and lunch.

The majority of pupil responses are similar to national benchmarks with the exception of those relating to pupils' views on homework and the behaviour of other children in lessons and during playtimes. In these aspects, the percentage of disagreement by pupils is at least 25% greater than national averages.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Mr W Williams	Reporting Inspector
Prydwen Elfed-Owens	Team Inspector
Mr K Jones	Lay Inspector
Mr S Bates	Peer Inspector
Mrs S P Williams	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FPYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.