



*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 Monica's C.I.W. Primary School  
Whitchurch Road  
Cathays  
Cardiff  
CF14 3JL**

**Date of inspection: March 2012**

**by**

**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:

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

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

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Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court  
Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW

or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

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## Context

St Monica's is a voluntary-aided Church in Wales primary school in the Heath area of Cardiff. It serves families mainly from the local area who wish their children to attend a school with an Anglican ethos. A minority of pupils travel some distance to school and live outside the local area.

There are 112 pupils aged four to 11 years in the school. Pupils are organised into five classes. Three are single-age classes and two in the juniors are mixed-age classes. About 12% of pupils are entitled to free schools meals, which is below the local authority and all-Wales average. Just under a half of pupils speak English as an additional language. No pupil speaks Welsh as a first language. The school has identified 25% of pupils with additional needs, including one pupil with a statement of special educational needs. There is currently one looked-after child in the school.

Since the last inspection in 2006, there have been changes to the senior management team with the appointment of the current headteacher in 2007.

The individual school budget per pupil for St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget per pupil is £4,387. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Cardiff is £19,708 and the minimum is £2,828. St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School is 13th out of the 116 primary schools in Cardiff in terms of its school budget per pupil.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- many pupils achieve good standards and most pupils make at least appropriate and often good progress in lessons;
- teachers use data effectively to identify and provide a high level of support for pupils with literacy needs;
- most pupils have a positive attitude to their work;
- learning experiences are varied and engage most learners successfully;
- the quality of teaching is good; and
- a caring ethos develops pupils' attitudes to health and wellbeing effectively.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and governors have an appropriate vision and clear aims, and they are strongly committed to raising standards;
- governors are well informed to act as the school's 'critical friend';
- the strengthened senior leadership team has a clear agenda for improvement that it is delivering effectively;
- there is strong teamwork among all staff and a willingness to take on new ideas and ways of working; and
- distributed leadership through the 'priority teams' is having a positive impact on pupils' standards in reading and in pupils' overall skills in key stage 2.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 improve pupils' standards in Welsh;
- R2 improve provision for more able pupils to ensure they are suitably challenged within classes;
- R3 consolidate and extend the good work in the planning of skills in key stage 2 throughout the school;
- R4 continue to improve the monitoring and evaluation procedures with a clearer focus on pupil outcomes; and
- R5 address the policy and procedural issues relating to safeguarding identified during the inspection.

### **What happens next?**

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the school's progress.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Most pupils make at least appropriate and often good progress in lessons, particularly towards the end of key stage 2.

Most pupils listen well and speak confidently in a wide range of situations. Very young pupils in the Foundation Phase, for instance, talk enthusiastically during their role-play about what fire fighters do. Older pupils talk confidently about their role in school improvement, such as contributing ideas on how to improve attendance.

Many pupils read competently for their age and discuss knowledgeably what they have read. In the Foundation Phase, young pupils are developing a good understanding of letter sounds. By the end of the Foundation Phase, able pupils read accurately and with expression. Reading gains made in the Foundation Phase are built on in key stage 2 with older and abler pupils using the text well to make inferences and to discuss characters.

Pupils' writing skills develop steadily as they move through the school and by 11 years of age many pupils write well and at a good length in a variety of forms in English lessons, although work can be a little careless at times. However, pupils' writing across the curriculum is generally less well developed. Pupils make good progress in developing information and communication skills, but do not use these skills as much as they could across all curriculum areas. Pupils' thinking skills and their ability to decide what and how they learn are developing appropriately.

Pupils' speaking and listening skills in Welsh are developing reasonably well in the Foundation Phase. These pupils listen and respond to instructions, use simple greetings confidently and enjoy singing Welsh songs. Many older pupils understand instructions and incidental Welsh used by staff. In lessons, pupils ask and answer a range of simple questions. For instance, older pupils in the juniors ask each other questions to find out about where and how they went on holiday. However, most pupils lack a range of sentence patterns to engage in conversation of an appropriate length, and their pronunciation is not always accurate. Reading and writing skills in Welsh are at an early stage of development.

There are generally small numbers of pupils at the end of each key stage and pupils often join the school mid-way through a key stage, sometimes with very little English. As a result, the failure of individual pupils to attain the expected level or better has a negative impact on overall results.

In key stage 1, pupils' performance in the core subject indicator (the expected level in English, mathematics and science) is generally in line with or better than family averages. However, year on year trends in data show that standards in mathematics and science, and in the core subject indicator, have fallen over recent years. In key stage 2, with the exception of 2010, there has been steady improvement in pupils'

performance in the core subject indicator. In key stage 2, the overall performance of pupils improved a lot from very low results in 2010 and compares well with that of pupils in the family but not with similar pupils across Wales.

In both key stages, pupils generally do less well at the higher levels in English, mathematics and science compared with pupils in similar schools. Pupils' outcomes in the assessment of writing are relatively low compared to those of other schools.

There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with additional learning needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good and often very good progress in line with their ability and their stage of language acquisition.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and engage enthusiastically with the tasks they are set. They show great pride in their school, for example when talking about their role in producing the hall mural. Most pupils are confident and well behaved and they are courteous to each other and to adults. They have positive attitudes to healthy living, feel safe in school and are keen to engage in out-of-school activities.

Most pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time. However, despite the good work by the school to raise attendance levels, rates have remained at or around 91% for several years. This figure is just below family averages.

Pupils take part in an appropriate range of sporting and social activities during and after school. A significant number of pupils take advantage of the breakfast club before school where activities help to promote their social development.

Across the school, pupils readily take on appropriate responsibilities. Older pupils support lunchtime play well by organising games for younger pupils. These pupils carry out their work conscientiously and their presence contributes positively to the smooth running of lunchtimes. The school council is a strength of the school. Members make decisions and organise aspects of school life, such as playing an active role in contributing to the school website, running a healthy lunchbox competition and providing suggestions on how to improve collective worship. They represent pupils' opinions well. The head boy and head girl show high levels of maturity and responsibility in agreeing who should receive the 'children's choice' award.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

The school provides a suitable range of learning experiences, which meet the needs of most learners. Schemes of work, particularly in key stage 2, provide a cross-curricular approach to learning, which ensures a broad, balanced curriculum that engages and motivates pupils. In the best schemes of work, there is a clear focus on consolidating and extending pupils' skills. Throughout the school, the work

for more able pupils sometimes lacks enough challenge. The school makes high quality provision for pupils with specific literacy needs and these pupils make good and often very good progress as a result.

The school promotes pupils' oracy skills well. For instance, pupils in the Foundation Phase act out fairy stories and individual characters sit in the 'hot seat' to answer questions about their behaviour. During acts of collective worship, individual pupils are encouraged to read their own prayers. Over-reliance on worksheets, however, sometimes inhibits pupils' independence and opportunities for extended writing. Opportunities for developing pupils' information and communication technology skills across the curriculum are developing satisfactorily.

The school makes good provision for pupils to develop an understanding of Welsh culture and heritage through visits to such place as Caerleon, St Fagans, the National Museum and Wales Millennium Centre. The provision for developing the Welsh language is improving steadily. All staff, for example, make a conscious effort to use incidental Welsh regularly with pupils, new Welsh reading resources encourage pupils' reading appropriately and Welsh signage around the school ensures that Welsh is suitably promoted and celebrated.

The school has suitable provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship, including links with the local community and places in other parts of the world.

### **Teaching: Good**

Teachers have a good knowledge of the areas of learning and the subjects they teach and use a suitable range of methods to stimulate the interest of pupils. Very good relationships exist between teachers, support staff and pupils, and staff manage pupils' behaviour well. Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations of pupils, encourage pupils to be independent learners successfully and manage classroom time effectively. In a few cases, where teaching is less effective, teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently and expectations of pupils are too low.

The quality of assessment is good. Teachers assess the performance of individual pupils over time effectively and generally use assessment information appropriately to inform future planning. Teachers and teaching assistants provide suitable oral and written feedback to pupils on their achievements, which helps pupils to know how well they are doing. However, marking of written work does not always inform pupils well enough about how to improve their work. Teachers are beginning to use a range of assessment for learning strategies effectively, particularly in the latter part of key stage 2. Peer and self-assessment by pupils are developing appropriately with older pupils. Reports to parents are informative and set out clear targets for improvement.

### **Care, support and guidance: Unsatisfactory**

The school is a caring community where everybody is valued and respected. Effective arrangements exist to promote healthy living and good behaviour. 'Young Leaders' provide highly-organised playtime activities to help develop pupils'



wellbeing, and older pupils run a food co-operative to encourage healthy eating. Learning experiences promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils and parents feel able to approach members of staff for support, advice and guidance when required.

The school liaises effectively with many external agencies to benefit pupils such as the school education welfare officer, police, Crucial Crew and local authority services.

Provision for pupils who need additional learning support is very good. Support staff offer a high level of support of good quality to individuals and small groups of pupils, which targets pupils' needs well. The progress of pupils following support programmes is carefully recorded and pupil improvement is clearly evident.

The school building and playground areas are safe and secure and staff carefully record visitors on site. However, the school does not have an appropriate policy for safeguarding. Procedures for dealing with safeguarding issues are not fully developed.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school provides a very inclusive and caring ethos within a strong Christian framework, where pupils have equal access to all areas of learning and provision. It places a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. As a result, the school is a harmonious and happy place. Appropriate class activities, such as studying Polish traditional stories and the performance of poetry from other cultures, promote and celebrate diversity successfully.

There are sufficient, appropriate resources that meet the needs of learners well. The learning environment is attractive with colourful, stimulating displays in the classrooms and in communal areas. There are a few parts of the building and outdoor areas that are small and limit social and play activities. However, the school makes the best use of the space that it has.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The headteacher and governing body lead the school well and all staff, pupils and governors share a common vision, which the school sums up as 'At St. Monica's every child has the chance to shine'. The headteacher and governors succeed in co-ordinating the efforts of all staff effectively and are strongly committed to providing pupils with the best opportunities for learning. Good relationships between staff and smooth-running day-to-day administration have a positive effect on the whole learning environment.

The school has recently increased its senior management team. This has strengthened the capacity of leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's priorities for action more effectively. The distributed leadership roles of members of staff in taking forward priorities for action are developing well and contribute positively to school improvement. For example, the work of the skills priority team has improved

the planning and tracking of pupils' skills in key stage 2, with the result that pupils have better opportunities to use their skills.

Governors support the school well with effective leadership by the chair. They have a good understanding of how the school performs in comparison with similar schools. Governors are clear about their roles and carry out their responsibilities appropriately. They work closely with the headteacher and senior leadership team to set the strategic direction of the school.

The school implements successfully a number of local and national priorities for the pupil's benefit; for example, the recently introduced literacy programme has impacted positively on the standards of pupils' reading.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Leaders and managers have an accurate picture and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They analyse performance data carefully to identify how well pupils achieve and use the information particularly effectively to identify pupils with additional literacy needs. The outcomes of the self-evaluation process determine appropriate priorities for school improvement. There is a comprehensive school improvement plan with funded actions and realistic timescales. However, monitoring and evaluation of the priorities for action do not always focus enough on pupil outcomes and there are no formal arrangements in place to seek the views of parents and other interested parties.

The school is an effective professional learning community, which enables all staff to develop and share their professional knowledge within and beyond the school. Such professional development is having a positive impact on school life, especially in relation to pupils' literacy skills.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has good partnerships with parents and carers. Many parents attend weekly celebration assemblies, visit the school to discuss their careers with pupils and provide regular support in classes. The school also works well with a range of other partners, such as the local cluster of schools, the Diocese, police, the English as an additional language service, local mosques and the local authority. They all make a positive contribution to improving outcomes for children.

The school works collaboratively with a number of partners to improve moderation processes to ensure that teacher assessments are accurate at the end of both key stages. The good transition arrangements with the local secondary school enable pupils to transfer smoothly to the next stage of their learning.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school manages its staff and resources well. It deploys its teaching and support staff effectively to support learning across the school. All staff receive appropriate training linked to school improvement objectives. For example, learning support assistants and mid-day supervisors attended training recently to develop their Welsh language skills in response to a target in the school improvement plan.

The school uses its funding appropriately to meet the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Teachers make effective use of their time for planning, preparation and assessment. The school has an established performance management system for all staff where improvement targets are set, monitored and evaluated. This improves the quality of provision for the pupils.

The school offers good value for money in terms of the standards achieved by the pupils.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

The school's performance does not normally compare well with that of similar schools across Wales. However, there are generally small numbers of pupils at the end of each key stage and pupils often join the school mid-way through a key stage, sometimes with very little English. As a result, the failure of individual pupils to attain the expected level or better impacts negatively upon overall results.

Overall, with the exception of 2011, pupils' performance in the core subject indicator (the expected level in English, mathematics and science) is generally in line with or better than family averages in key stage 1. In key stage 2, it is more uneven, but generally shows an improving trend.

In key stage 1, the performance of individual subjects is variable over time. Pupils' English results are generally similar or better than family averages, but pupils' mathematics and science results meanwhile show a declining trend.

In key stage 2, with the exception of 2010, there has been steady improvement in pupils' performance in mathematics and science at the expected level (level 4). While pupils' English results are more variable, recent data shows that almost all pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 achieve at least a functional literacy level of nine years and six months. In 2011, pupils' results at the expected level improved in English, mathematics and science and compared well with family averages.

The school is generally less successful than schools within its family and with schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in ensuring that pupils achieve at the higher levels in either key stage.

There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls over time. Pupils with additional learning needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good and often very good progress in line with their ability and stage of language acquisition. There are too few pupils entitled to free schools meals at the end of each key stage to comment upon their progress.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Learner questionnaires

Sixty-one pupils in key stage 2 and year 2 of the Foundation Phase completed the questionnaire.

All pupils:

- feel safe in school;
- believe that teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress; and
- know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard.

Most pupils:

- feel that the school deals with any bullying and know whom to talk to if worried or upset;
- believe that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and provides lots of chances for them to get regular exercise;
- feel that they are doing well; and
- consider that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

Many pupils:

- believe that homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school;
- report that children behave well so that they can get on with their work; and
- feel that nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

Pupils' views are generally more positive than the views of pupils in other schools across Wales with the exception of their view on homework and behaviour.

#### Parent questionnaires

Twenty-eight parents or carers returned the questionnaire.

All parents or carers feel that:

- their child is safe in school and likes the school;
- the school helped their child settle well when they started at the school;
- pupils behave well;
- staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- the schools encourages their child to be healthy and to take regular exercise;
- they are comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems; and
- the school is well run.

Most parents and carers feel that:

- they are satisfied with the school;
- their child is making good progress;
- teaching is good;
- staff expect their child to work hard and do their best;
- their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular needs;
- the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility; and
- there is a good range of activities including trips or visits.

Many parents and carers feel that:

- the homework given builds well on what their child learns in school;
- they are kept well informed about their child's progress; and
- they understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

The views of parents and carers are generally more positive than the views of other parents or carers across Wales with the exception of their views on homework, information about their child's progress and understanding of the procedures for dealing with complaints.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Bev Jenkins	Reporting Inspector
Peter Roach	Team Inspector
Helen Adams	Lay Inspector
Sarah Rees	Peer Inspector
Elizabeth Beynon	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://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. FYear 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.