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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 RC Primary School
West Cross Avenue
West Cross
Swansea
SA3 5TS**

Date of inspection: 7 - 9 June 2011

by

**Dr P David Ellis
Reporting Inspector, under contract to Estyn**

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. David's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School was built in the 1950s and is situated in the suburb of West Cross about three miles west of Swansea city centre near the seaside resort of Mumbles. The school adjoins a separate community primary school and a Welsh-medium primary school. It caters for 219 pupils between the ages of three and eleven, who are taught in eight single age classes, including the nursery, which contains 38 part-time children. The number on roll has declined over the last three years, but has increased in the current year. During the inspection there were 31 pupils in the reception class under the agreed exception rules.

Pupils are drawn from a wide geographical area, including the city of Swansea and the Gower Peninsula. Around 7% are entitled to receive free school meals, which is well below the national and local authority (LA) averages. The intake represents the full ability range. Approximately 17% are identified as requiring additional learning needs (ALN) support, which is also below the national average, of whom five have a statement. About 20% come from an ethnic minority background and around 23% speak English as an additional language (EAL), covering 14 different languages and dialects, all of whom receive extra support. According to the LA, this is the fifth highest EAL percentage in Swansea. No pupils are looked after by the LA or come from homes where Welsh is their first language.

The school was last inspected in May 2005. There have been several staff changes since then. In 2008 the headteacher was seconded to another LA for two terms and during the inspection the deputy headteacher was on secondment to another school.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for St. David's Roman Catholic Primary School is £3071 which compares with a maximum of £5744 and a minimum of £2550 for primary schools in Swansea. The school has the 55th highest budget per pupil out of the 89 primary schools in Swansea.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school is good because:

- standards across the school are consistently good, especially in key stage 2, being better overall than the family, LA and Wales at both the expected and higher levels;
- nearly all pupils, whatever their ability or background, make good progress through the school;
- standards in speaking, listening, reading and music are excellent;
- pupils' wellbeing, their learning experiences and the educational environment are good;
- teaching is good overall with some excellent features; and
- the school is a caring and supportive community where all pupils are respected and valued.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- in both key stages overall there is a trend of steady improvement in standards;
- leadership and management are good;
- team work is a notable feature of the school; and
- self-evaluation procedures are robust.

Recommendations

In order to build on its current success, the school needs to:

- R1 continue to improve pupils' skills and provision in Welsh second language in key stage 2;
- R2 share good practice in order to develop independent learning and enquiry skills consistently across the school, so that all pupils are appropriately challenged;
- R3 further develop distributed leadership and professional learning communities; and
- R4 improve information and communication technology (ICT) facilities and resources.

What happens next?

St. David's Roman Catholic Primary School will create an action plan which shows how it will address these recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

The school's results for 2010 in key stage 1 at level two or above and at level three were better than the family, the LA and Wales in all three core subjects. The picture is similar over the last four years, although there was a dip in 2009 and comparisons with the family have tended to vary.

In key stage 2 in 2010 all pupils attained at least level four in all three core subjects, which was better than the family, LA and Wales. This performance was the same as 2009 and better than 2008 and 2007. At level five, as in the previous three years, attainment in 2010 was also well above the family, LA and Wales, except in English, when around a third of the cohort had EAL.

The 2010 results in key stage 1 place the school in the best 25% of similar schools for mathematics, but in the lower 50% for English and science; this is due particularly to the number of pupils entering the school with EAL. In key stage 2 the results place the school in the best 25% for all three core subjects. In both key stages these results are an improvement on previous years.

Nearly all pupils, whatever their ability or background, including those with ALN and EAL, make good value added progress through the school.

There is no discernible trend in performance in either key stage related to gender, although in key stage 2 boys do particularly well in mathematics and science and better than the national trend in English.

Throughout the school standards in speaking, listening and reading are excellent and in writing, including spelling, they are good with excellent features. Work is consistently well presented. Pupils, especially boys, achieve better than the family, LA and Wales in all areas of literacy, particularly at the higher levels three and five.

Progress in numeracy is good overall and many pupils acquire advanced levels of knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts by the end of each key stage. The use of ICT is good overall, although progress is generally limited by a lack of provision.

Many pupils display excellent skills in music, but the development of their thinking, investigatory, problem-solving and decision-making skills is more variable between classes.

Nearly all younger pupils acquire excellent age appropriate skills in understanding, reading and using Welsh, but their abilities are less well developed in key stage 2.

Wellbeing: Good

All pupils are happy, motivated and confident learners who work conscientiously and display pride in their work. Their behaviour is excellent inside and outside the classroom; parents and pupils agree, despite a minority of the latter expressing reservations in their questionnaires.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate high levels of support and kindness and older ones, in particular, have a positive impact on the wellbeing of those who are younger. All take on responsibilities willingly and effectively.

All pupils are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and keeping safe. They feel secure in school and the excellent staff-pupil relationships ensure they receive support when they need it.

Many pupils demonstrate good collaborative skills and a growing awareness of how to improve their work.

Overall attendance is higher than the Welsh average but below that of similar schools. This is partly due to the increasing number of holidays taken during school time. All but a very few pupils arrive punctually in the mornings.

Pupils' views are sought primarily through the school council, which does much to influence life within school. However, input into what and how they learn is limited.

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

The school provides a curriculum that is broad and balanced and which meets statutory requirements. The Foundation Phase is effectively implemented, although in key stage 2, where subjects are mainly taught discretely, problem-solving and independent learning, as outlined in Curriculum 2008, are relatively underdeveloped. Extra-curricular activities, such as sport and school visits, enhance learning opportunities.

Planning is consistent and comprehensive across the school. The provision for the development of pupils' key skills is good; these are identified appropriately in teachers' planning and are discussed with pupils at the start of lessons. The provision for music is excellent.

In Welsh pupils have access to a good range of well-planned activities and lessons in accordance with the aims of the LA's Welsh Education Scheme and as a result of the support of the athrawes fro. However, in key stage 2 provision and teacher expertise is less well developed, although the newly introduced 'drill' is beginning to have an impact on standards. Provision to develop pupils' understanding of their Welsh heritage is good.

Pupils receive a good introduction to the principles and practices of sustainability with a strong emphasis on the natural world. The aspect of energy conservation is,

however, an area for development. The school provides pupils with a good awareness of the impact of environmental changes on peoples across the world.

Teaching: Good

Where teaching is excellent, there is very good use of praise, targets are clearly specified, tasks are carefully matched to ability levels and a lively pace keeps pupils alert and interested. Where there are shortcomings, these include a lack of independent learning and investigatory work with all pupils undertaking the same tasks, so that the more able, in particular, are insufficiently challenged.

All lessons are well prepared and effectively organised. Teachers share the purpose of the lesson and the key skills needed for success. They have good subject knowledge, ask appropriate questions and give clear explanations. All have high expectations and communicate very well.

In the Foundation Phase, in particular, teachers and support staff provide many enriching and stimulating experiences for pupils, both inside and outside the classroom.

Behaviour is very well managed, so that a calm and productive working atmosphere prevails in all classes. Pupils' progress is well monitored and learning and effort are positively rewarded.

Teachers' use of ICT and Welsh and how they retain pupils' work vary between classes.

Effective assessment procedures are in place and are being further developed in line with the new curriculum orders to track progress and to set targets. Statutory requirements are fully met.

Individual targets are set and regularly updated and both younger and older pupils are involved in devising their own targets. Assessment for learning strategies, including self and peer assessment, are in the process of development; in a minority of classes they are well embedded in practice.

All work is marked, although the quality of comments varies between classes and the way forward is not generally indicated.

Parents receive interim reports on their children's progress in the autumn and spring terms and a full report at the end of the year. In line with statutory requirements, the reports include summary information on all aspects of the curriculum plus targets for development; parents and pupils are invited to respond in writing. Reports for the Foundation Phase are particularly appropriate for the age range.

There are three parent consultation evenings a year, one in each term, the last one being after the annual report is issued. Parents can have additional meetings on request.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school's Christian foundation permeates all aspects of school life and impacts positively on pupils' all-round development. The school is a caring and supportive community where relationships are very good and all pupils are respected and valued.

There is effective provision to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills and achievement is regularly celebrated. Staff and members of the school and the local community make an effective contribution to developing awareness of health and personal safety issues.

The care, support and guidance provided for pupils with ALN are excellent. The school identifies learning needs as early as possible and parents are fully involved in the process. Teachers and support staff work well as a team to reduce barriers to learning and to provide a range of intervention programmes. There is appropriate liaison with specialist external services.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding, but initiatives to improve attendance are underdeveloped.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a strong inclusive ethos with a clear emphasis on equal opportunities and recognising, respecting and celebrating difference and diversity.

The school buildings and grounds provide an environment conducive to successful learning, enhanced internally by attractive displays. Overall, the facilities meet the needs of pupils, although the majority of classrooms are rather small.

Except for the provision of computers, learning resources are sufficient to meet pupils' needs and for EAL are they are excellent. Security is good.

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

The headteacher provides strong leadership and has a very visible presence around the school. He displays a deep concern for all pupils and staff in his care and enjoys very good relationships with all staff, governors and parents.

The acting deputy headteacher, who is continuing in her permanent role as key stage 2 leader, performs her duties very conscientiously and effectively and is well respected by all staff.

Due to recent rearrangements in staffing, distributed leadership is in the early stages of development. However, although there are variations in classroom practice between teachers, team work is a notable feature and all staff are good role models of the school's vision and ethos.

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Performance management arrangements meet statutory requirements. Teachers' targets are linked to the school improvement plan and staff responsibilities.

The governing body is well established and meets regularly and relevant committees are in place. Although a number of governors are relatively new, they are supportive and challenging. They undertake training, although not all are able to visit the school regularly and they are not generally involved in the initial stages of school development. The school's mission and aims have not recently been reviewed.

The school takes note of national and local priorities. Literacy and numeracy are given high priority and the Foundation Phase has been introduced effectively.

All statutory policies are in place, although these are not signed or dated and there is no rolling programme of review.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation procedures are robust and its report is a useful and honest document that bases its findings on a comprehensive review of standards and provision. The views of pupils, governors and staff are taken into consideration, but parents have not recently been canvassed.

The school improvement plan clearly states the priorities identified in the self-evaluation report. It appropriately costs each activity and identifies the individuals responsible, timescales and success criteria.

Standardised test information is analysed accurately and support for pupils with EAL and ALN is identified and addressed. This contributes significantly to the good standards achieved by the majority of pupils and is a strength of the school.

The school is at an early stage of developing professional learning communities. Within the school, staff are beginning to share good practice and groups are being formed in the family of schools and the LA to share initiatives in literacy and thinking skills respectively.

The school has satisfactorily addressed the recommendations from the last inspection, although staff responsibilities and independent learning remain aspects for development.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with a range of services contribute significantly to the wellbeing and outcomes of pupils. The school has appropriate links with local communities, particularly the parish churches.

Pupils benefit from a range of home-school links. Parents are kept well informed and are supportive of the school, for example through the Friends' Association. They are happy with the arrangements for homework, which mainly focuses on developing skills in literacy and numeracy.

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The school makes use of resources and support offered by the LA, when appropriate, but partnerships with other schools and employers are relatively underdeveloped.

Effective transition arrangements ensure that pupils settle well into the nursery on arrival and into new classes. There is also a smooth transfer to the receiving secondary schools. Appropriate procedures for in-house and cluster standardisation and moderation of pupils' work are in place.

Resource management: Good

Although there are a number of temporary appointments, the school has a full complement of teachers and support staff, all of whom are effectively deployed and who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Workforce remodelling and teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time are effectively implemented and meet statutory requirements.

Teaching and support staff have good opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills through continuous professional development. All teachers have attended recent in-house training events and relevant courses, related to the school improvement plan and their performance management objectives. Support staff also receive training as necessary.

Resources, facilities and accommodation are effectively managed. The buildings and grounds are very well maintained.

The governing body's financial procedures ensure the budget is well managed and that money is spent in line with school priorities, although there have been recent overspends, which have been covered by the school's reserves. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

One hundred and three parents completed the questionnaire, of whom sixty-six added written comments, nearly all of which were very positive and supportive of the school. All are satisfied with the school and feel it is well run. Without exception, they think their child likes school and is helped to become more mature and responsible; they think pupils are well behaved, teaching is good and staff expect pupils to do their best. Nearly all believe their child settled in well, is safe, makes good progress and receives any necessary additional support; they think staff treat pupils fairly and with respect, that there is a good range of activities, that homework is useful, that the school promotes healthy living and that they are kept well informed about their child's progress. Nearly all feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns and understand the procedures for dealing with complaints; they believe their children are well prepared for secondary education.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Ninety-five key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaire. All think that they know who to talk to if they are worried or upset and that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress. Nearly all consider that they are doing well and feel safe in school, that they know what to do if they find the work hard, that they have enough resources and that they are taught to keep healthy. A very few, mainly boys, consider that the school does not deal well with bullying, that there are insufficient opportunities for regular exercise and that homework does not help them improve their work in school. Most importantly, around a third of pupils, again mainly boys, feel that their peers do not behave well enough in class and around a fifth think there are problems with behaviour at playtimes.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Dr. P. David Ellis	Reporting Inspector
Mrs. Ruth Ferrier	Team Inspector
Mr. Ted Tipper	Lay Inspector
Mrs. Alison Price	Peer Inspector
Mr. Colin Greenwood	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 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	R	Y1	Y2	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:

Key stage 1	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

