



*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 Helen's RC Junior School**  
**Tynewydd Road**  
**Barry**  
**Vale of Glamorgan**  
**CF62 8BB**

**Date of inspection: March 2011**

**by**

**Mr Peter Mathias**

**Under Contract 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:

<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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## Context

St Helen's Roman Catholic Junior School is situated in Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan which is the Local Authority (LA). Pupils generally come from homes which are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. Many live locally although the school serves a wider area. About 18% of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is above the local average and close to the national average.

There are 185 pupils on roll between the ages of eight and eleven years. Many pupils come from English speaking homes and a few have English as an additional language (EAL). Of these about half receive support in EAL. No pupil has Welsh as the language of the home.

Five pupils have statements of special educational needs (SEN) and no pupil has the National Curriculum (NC) disapplied. Twenty one per cent of pupils in the school are identified as having some degree of Additional Learning Needs (ALN). One pupil was excluded in the previous school year and one pupil is looked after by the LA.

During the inspection two members of the permanent teaching staff were absent, one due to long-term ill health and the other as a result of maternity leave.

The school holds Green Flag status, the BECTA Award for information and communications technology (ICT), the International School Award of the British Council and the Healthy Schools Award.

The 2010/2011 individual school budget per pupil for St Helen's RC Primary School is £3,359 which compares with a maximum of £4,491 and a minimum of £2,756 for primary school in the Vale of Glamorgan. The school has the 29<sup>th</sup> highest budget per pupil out of the 46 primary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan.

## 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 school is good because of:

- the overall quality of teaching;
- the cohesive and constructive working relationships between staff;
- standards compared to other schools in the family of schools across Wales to which the school belongs;
- a positive and inclusive ethos;
- the support for additional learning needs (ALN); and
- a wide range of partnerships with other providers -.

### Prospects for improvement

The school has good prospects for improvement because of:

- progress since the last inspection in addressing the key issues of that inspection;
- an accurate identification of the school's strategic needs by the leadership;
- the progress nearly all pupils make; and
- the commitment of all professional staff to improve further

## Recommendations

In order to improve further St Helen's Roman Catholic Junior School needs to:

- R1 Carefully review the progress made by those of higher ability so that they consistently attain the standards in the national teachers assessments it would be reasonable to expect of them;
- R2 Strengthen the role of the governing body as a supportive yet critical friend of the professional leadership of the school;
- R3 Review and improve the process for pupils to express their concerns about and their perceptions of unacceptable behaviour and put in place arrangements to address issues which arrive from this; and
- R4 Improve communication with parents so that all parents are fully aware of the school's policies and practice relating to the setting of homework and ensure that all staff follow these.

### ***What happens next?***

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

The majority of pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment. Nearly all make at least the progress predicted for them when they were assessed at the age of seven.

Over the last three years, pupils' performance in the end of key stage 2 national teacher assessments for eleven year olds in English, mathematics and science has been close to local and national averages at the expected level, Level 4. Trends in performance in these assessments have been broadly static except for those relating to pupils reaching the higher level, Level 5 which were below these averages in 2009 and 2010. The combined results follow a similar pattern.

Over the last three years the results when compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals have alternatively been above or below most of these schools in English and mathematics and above in science. The combined results have followed the pattern in English and mathematics.

From the evidence of lessons and work in pupils' books, standards are generally good. School data confirms that nearly all pupils achieve in line with what could be expected of them.

When compared to the family of schools across Wales to which this school belongs, results at eleven years of age are above most of these schools at Level 4 but below at the higher level, Level 5.

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In these assessments the relative performance of boys compared to girls has varied over the last four years it has broadly reflected the national picture where girls outperform boys. However, in mathematics in 2010 there was little difference between boys' and girls' performance at Level 5.

Nearly all pupils in receipt of free school meals achieve well as do those who have some degree of ALN. A particular strength is the good progress made by those who have English as an additional language.

The standards of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are good. Nearly all pupils across the key stage express themselves confidently in class, group and paired activities. Pupils of different abilities make good progress in reading. They read with accuracy and expression. Writing is generally of a good standard. Nearly all pupils demonstrate competent numeracy skills in mathematics lessons, but the use of numeracy across the curriculum is limited. Nearly all pupils make good progress in a range of ICT skills, including the use of the internet for research, power-point, spreadsheets and word processing.

Overall, pupils make good progress in Welsh language. Standards in speaking, reading and writing at the end of the key stage are good. All pupils use incidental Welsh effectively in registration and collective worship.

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Standards: Good**

The standards reached by EAL pupils is carefully tracked showing that nearly all make good progress and reach the expected levels as do those who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM). In 2010 four of the cohort were FSM and all reached Level 4. The pattern of performance of boys compared to girls is similar to the national picture where girls outperform boys at Level 4. Boys and girls perform about the same at Level 4, however this is not pronounced. At Level 5 boys and girls performed about the same.

Tracking of ALN pupil progress in 2010 assessments indicate that nearly all achieved Level 4 in some if not all areas. Where there were failures they related to English. Taken overall, performance of ALN pupils was good bearing in mind their starting points.

**Wellbeing: Good**

Many pupils feel safe in the school. They know how to keep healthy and fit and have positive attitudes to healthy eating and physical exercise. Many pupils take advantage of the opportunities to improve their fitness levels by participating in the activities that are available to them.

Pupils' attendance levels are good at 92.4% and compares favourably with LA targets and schools of similar backgrounds. There are very few instances of lateness.

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Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school. However, in the questionnaire, a minority were concerned about the behaviour of other pupils.

Pupils also participate well in many aspects of school life. They are actively represented on the school and eco-councils. There are a good range of opportunities for pupils to participate in decision making. The school plays a full part within the wider community to which it belongs.

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

Teachers use the NC programmes of study together with the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) effectively. Detailed attention is given to the development of key skills and subject specific skills in the planning for each term. A good range of extra-curricular activities has a positive effect on pupils' learning in Y5 and Y6. A homework policy is in place but is not followed consistently by all.

Teachers plan comprehensively for the development of pupils' key skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT and Welsh. Subject specific skills and key skills in other subjects are thoroughly organised on the basis of the IPC framework and meet legal requirements.

Sufficient time is allocated to the teaching of Welsh language skills. Planning for the development of Welsh oracy, reading and writing is logically constructed. Welsh sentence patterns which are being practised currently are displayed prominently in classrooms. However, bilingual signs in the displays of pupils' work are limited. Planning for the development of the Welsh dimension in the curriculum displays an awareness of the character of modern Wales as well as of more traditional aspects.

The school has good provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship, including making good use of links with the local community and places in other parts of the world. The school has achieved the eco-schools 'Green Flag' award as a result of successfully promoting sustainability through schemes such as recycling, energy conservation and healthy living.

**Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is good. Good teaching is found across the school and is a strength. Teachers nearly always use a good range of strategies to review previous learning and to explain what will happen next. They often make their expectations very clear and review progress against these objectives at the end of lessons. In many lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge and a very obvious enthusiasm for what they wish to teach, for example in how to construct a play script.

In nearly all lessons there is a very positive and constructive working atmosphere in which the efforts of individual pupils are warmly recognised. Teachers positively encourage all pupils to evaluate their own achievements and to comment sensitively on that of others. In the best lessons teachers take well judged opportunities to extent pupils' skills and confidence to use Welsh and English together.

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Where there were some shortcomings, in a few lessons the objectives of the lessons are unclear and time is not well used to review what has been learnt. Resources are disorganised and teachers' planning lacks structure.

There are well constructed and consistently applied strategies in place to assess, moderate and level samples of pupils' work in English. However, standards in mathematics, science, Welsh as a second language and ICT are assessed using different processes. The school keeps very detailed individual pupil profiles.

Most pupils make good use of self assessment strategies for learning. Nearly all pupils know and talk about individual targets, how their progress is tracked and what they have to do to achieve future targets. They understand what they need to do to make good progress.

Parents are kept well informed about the progress made by their children through detailed annual reports identifying targets for future development.

**Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school stresses successfully the importance of a healthy life-style for all its pupils. The good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is a clear reflection of the school's religious foundation. Personal and social education is an integral part of the curriculum, and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, and develop successfully as members of the school community. Anti-bullying and behaviour policies and procedures are in place. However, a significant minority of the large number of pupils who responded to the questionnaire expressed some concerns about this aspect.

The school has a comprehensive system of monitoring pupils with ALN. A comprehensive register for different categories has been established. Teachers fulfil their roles and responsibilities in offering support and advice to pupils. The school receives good support from external and specialist agencies who visit the school on a regular basis.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) provides additional support for pupils identified on the ALN register. Good procedures in place for monitoring pupils with ALN. These are coordinated effectively by the ALNCo in consultation with members of staff and the headteacher.

Detailed Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are provided for pupils. These are reviewed and updated appropriately with parents, pupils and staff. Nearly all pupils make good progress.

Outside agencies such as the Education Psychology Service, Behavioural Support and Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) have a positive impact on the progress that pupils make within the school.

The school is a well-ordered caring community where everyone feels valued. Good quality assemblies effectively promote pupil's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Adults and pupils show mutual respect for each other. There is good provision for pupils' wellbeing and the promotion of healthy living is a strong feature. The school monitors this and offers support when needed. There are developing transition arrangements for pupils in Y6 with the local secondary school.

**Learning environment: Good**

The school is a fully inclusive and diverse community which is proactive in promoting respect for the cultural identity and the home languages of all of its pupils. All pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum, and the school actively challenges stereotypes in pupils' choices and expectations. The IPC framework for the foundation subjects places a significant emphasis on the importance of an international dimension in the curriculum.

While there are sufficient resources for learning the building does not have enough space to comfortably accommodate the pupils. The improvements to the outdoor area, such as the garden and covered areas have a positive impact on standards.

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

The headteacher provides an experienced and caring lead to all staff. They all share a common commitment to put the school's mission statement into practice and to work together as a cohesive and effective team. They are focused on providing the best education and opportunities for all pupils. All staff willingly share expertise and ideas to these ends. The roles of subject leaders have been reviewed and all have a good understanding of their areas of responsibility including areas for development. They are well supported by performance management arrangements and the school's own procedures for improvement.

The chair of governors is very experienced and well informed on educational issues. The governing body is supportive of the school. However, it is not sufficiently, as a whole, engaged in holding the professional leadership constructively to account and in judging the overall progress of the school is raising standards further.

The school has successfully addressed nearly all of the national and local priorities set for it. Much has been achieved in increasing pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. The school has continued to develop its curriculum to meet the objectives of Curriculum 2008 through its involvement in IPC activities. Initiatives to develop Welsh have been well used to develop pupils' confidence and ability.

Links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer have been strengthened. However, the work to agree standards and to share educational approaches is incomplete.

**Improving quality: Good**

The overall quality of self-evaluation is good. Procedures are in place to review the impact of initiatives on standards achieved by pupils. The views of pupils and parents are not fully reflected in the process of self-evaluation. For example, the school is unaware of the concerns expressed in the pupils' questionnaires regarding pupils' perception of behaviour. The governors have been appropriately involved.

The school utilises effectively the information gathered from its self-evaluation to set new targets. These are identified from the collegiality of teaching staff working to

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address the needs of the school. This is having a measurable impact upon standards.

The school is developing successfully as a professional learning community. A good culture of professional development and management exists for all members of staff. When innovative changes have been introduced teachers have worked in collaboration to secure an improvement in standards and provision. Good professional practice is being shared within and beyond school.

**Partnership working: Good**

The school works well with a wide range of partners to plan and manage provision. It keeps parents well informed about their children's progress, and encourages them to help in a variety of activities. However, a minority of parents are unsure of the homework policy and how they can contribute to their children's learning. The policy is not always put into practice consistently.

The school works closely with the local parish community to enable pupils to better understand the spiritual community to which they belong. It has developing links with its secondary schools and with other local primary schools. The school has good links with a range of local employers which enhance pupils' learning experiences. Students on work experience from the local high school and further education colleges contribute effectively to pupils' learning.

The school works well with LA officers and support services and other agencies to manage and assure the provision for its pupils. Pupils understand the world of work and the importance of working as a team from the school's use of training and services offered by 'Careers Wales'.

**Resource management: Good**

Teachers are well deployed to make the best use of their expertise and to deliver the curriculum effectively. Learning support assistants, administrative staff and the caretaker make a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school.

Performance management procedures are well established and have a positive effect on the continuous professional development of staff and on pupils' learning.

Planning for school improvement is used effectively to guide expenditure on resources and the school makes good use of the funding it receives.

Teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time is used well to plan lessons collaboratively, and pupils benefit from the services of part-time specialist physical education and additional needs teachers.

Bearing in mind the progress nearly all pupils make and the quality of education provided, the school gives good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Many parents completed the questionnaire. All were satisfied with the school and said that their children liked coming to school. They felt that their children made good progress and teaching was good. They thought that the school was well run.

Nearly all believed that their children were helped to successfully begin school. They believed pupils behaved well.

Nearly all felt staff had high expectations of their children and that homework built successfully on what was taught at school. Nearly all felt that their children were fairly treated. Nearly all believed that their children were encouraged to be healthy and to take exercise.

They thought that their children were safe in school and received the appropriate amount of support. Nearly all felt that they were well informed about their children's progress and were comfortable about approaching the school if they had a problem.

Nearly all thought that the school helped their children to become more mature and to accept responsibilities and were well prepared for the next phase of their education. They were happy with the range of activities and visits which were provided.

However, a few parents did not understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Many pupils completed the questionnaire. Nearly all felt safe at school and thought the school dealt with bullying effectively. They knew who to talk to if they were worried or upset. Nearly all thought that they were taught to keep healthy and have many opportunities for regular exercise.

Many pupils felt that they were doing well at school and were well supported by teachers and other adults. They knew what to do and who to ask if they found their work hard. Most thought that they had enough equipment to do their work.

Many thought that their homework helped them to improve their schoolwork. A minority felt that other children did not behave well in lessons and interfered with their own progress. A minority also felt that behaviour at play time and lunch time was not as good as it should be.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Mr Peter Mathias	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Rhiannon Harris	Team Inspector
Ms Helen Adams	Lay Inspector
Mrs Margary Brown	Peer Inspector
Mr Gavin Russ	School Nominee

### Contractor

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### 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