



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

**Blessed William Davies School
Bodnant Crescent
Llandudno
Conwy
LL30 1LL**

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:

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

Blessed William Davies Roman Catholic School is on the outskirts of Llandudno on the north Wales coast. It is a voluntary-aided school for children aged 3 to 11 years and is maintained by Conwy local authority.

The school's catchment area is extensive and includes Llandudno Junction, Conwy, Penmaenmawr and Llanfairfechan. The school considers that parts of the area it serves are economically disadvantaged.

Currently, there are 121 full-time pupils on roll and 17 children in the part-time nursery. Most of the pupils come from homes where English is the main language. Two pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and there are 23 pupils who speak English as an additional language. Twenty-four pupils come from an ethnic minority background. Twenty-nine per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average.

There are 26 pupils who receive support for additional learning needs. Two pupils have had fixed-term exclusions during the past 12 months.

Including the headteacher, there are three full-time and six part-time teachers in the school. There are also four full-time and two part-time classroom support staff.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2011.

The school was last inspected in April 2006.

The individual school budget per pupil for Blessed William Davies school in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,842 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Conwy is £13,941 and the minimum is £2,935. Blessed William Davies school is 33rd 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:

- most pupils achieve a high standard of work by the end of key stage 2;
- most pupils make effective progress in their communication skills;
- most pupils speak, read and write Welsh at an appropriate level;
- pupils' behaviour is consistently good;
- learning experiences in the majority of classes are imaginative and engage most pupils;
- in most lessons, teachers and support staff provide good role models; and
- staff provide pupils with an inclusive and very caring environment.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher provides clear and effective direction for the school;
- there is effective team work in the school;
- the self-evaluation process accurately reflects the standards of achievement;
- the school development plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement; and
- the current school leadership has successfully brought about improvements in standards and provision.

Recommendations

To improve the school should:

- R1 ensure that pupils in all classes achieve their potential;
- R2 improve the planning for the systematic progression of skills;
- R3 ensure the consistency of good teaching across the school and address the identified shortcomings;
- R4 make arrangements for accurate assessment of pupils' achievement and standards, and develop a consistent approach to assessment for learning across the school; and
- R6 develop the strategic role of governors in monitoring the school's standards and performance.

What happens next?

The school will prepare an action plan within 45 days of the publication of this report to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will visit the school in about one year's time to monitor progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils achieve work of a generally good standard. They make sound progress in the majority of classes but, in a minority, pupils do not always achieve to the full extent of their individual abilities.

Most pupils make effective progress in developing their communication skills. They speak clearly and confidently with other pupils and with adults in a range of formal and informal situations. Throughout the school, progress in reading is sound and most pupils read a good range of material confidently, in line with their age and ability. They have a positive attitude to reading and books and they read both for pleasure and to help them look for information. Most pupils write well and accurately and most produce work of a good standard by the end of key stage 2. Most pupils produce effective extended pieces of writing of an appropriate standard to enhance their learning in subjects across the curriculum.

Most pupils speak, read and write Welsh at an appropriate level and can discuss familiar topics with confidence within the classroom and in informal situations.

Pupils with additional learning needs, including those with English as an additional language and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Pupils who are entitled to free school meals achieve on a par with other pupils during lessons and in their work books. However, as a group, they do not perform as well as those who are not entitled to receive free school meals in teacher assessment at the end of key stage 2.

Results of teacher assessment at the end of key stage 1 show that performance in mathematics and science and the core subject indicator (English, mathematics and science taken together) at the expected level (level 2 or above) has been consistently good over the past five years. Compared with similar schools based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school has regularly been in the upper 50% in all core subjects.

These key stage 1 standards are not generally reflected in pupils' work books and during lessons, and inconsistencies between them and reading test data suggest that standards in English are lower than the teacher assessments.

Performance at a higher level than expected (level 3 or above) in key stage 1 in all subject areas is generally lower than the family and Wales averages, and has generally been in the lowest 25% of that for similar schools based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Results of teacher assessment at the end of key stage 2 have been variable over the past five years. During that period, results in all subject areas and the core subject indicator were consistently higher than average for the family until 2011, when they were equal to the average. When compared to similar schools based on the

percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school has varied from being among the top 25% to the lowest 25%. In 2011, it was in the lower 50% for the core subject indicator and English, and in the lowest 25% for science and mathematics.

Performance at the higher levels (level 5 or above) has been generally high over the past five years, and consistently above the family and all-Wales average performance.

School tracking data shows that most pupils make the expected progress, or better, from key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2.

There is no generally recurring pattern of difference between the performance of boys and girls at either key stage 1 or key stage 2.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a good awareness of the need to keep fit and healthy. The school has many healthy eating initiatives and sports-based after-school clubs and many pupils support these well. Many parents agree that the school encourages their children to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Pupils generally enjoy school and have a positive attitude to learning. The attendance rate is just over 94%, which is above the all-Wales average and, for the last two years, places the school within the highest 25% of similar schools based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals

Most pupils are polite and work well together. Pupils' behaviour in classes, on the school yard and during break and lunch times is very good. They respond positively to the recently-introduced 'golden rules' and understand well the benefits and consequences of good and bad behaviour.

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and know to whom they can talk if they are worried or upset.

Pupils are involved in making decisions as members of the eco committee. The school council is involved in many issues that affect the life of the school, and have made a worthwhile contribution to improving the school environment. Members are developing a good understanding of their role and are beginning to share the lead roles within the council.

All pupils benefit from taking part in activities involving the wider community. They are closely involved with the work of the local Catholic Church, contribute actively to charity and have benefitted from visits to local amenities and establishments, for example a wildlife area, an art gallery and a theatre.

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

The school generally provides a good range of learning experiences in line with the needs of pupils. Learning is organised to ensure that all pupils cover the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education.

Most teachers plan lessons suited to the age and different abilities of their pupils. However, in a few instances, activities lack the challenge necessary to meet the needs of learners.

Staff provide effective cross-curricular opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of communication that enable pupils to write effectively, but detailed planning for progression and continuity in key skills is at an early stage and does not currently provide enough structure for pupils.

The school plans well for the development of Welsh language skills, and the Welsh dimension is effectively included in relevant curriculum areas.

The provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship is good, and ensures pupils' active involvement in areas such as recycling, energy conservation and healthy eating. The school fosters an appropriate understanding of other countries and enhances pupils' knowledge of the wider world effectively through curricular work and through involvement in charity work fair trade activities.

Teaching: Adequate

The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. In the very few lessons where there is excellent teaching, teachers focus securely on motivating pupils. They ensure a lively pace, have very high expectations and target groups of pupils very effectively to extend their learning.

In the majority of lessons, where teaching is good, teachers engage pupils and provide structured support to groups of pupils to improve their learning.

In a minority of lessons, shortcomings include slow pace, low expectations from teachers, and a lack of planning to provide tasks for the range of abilities in a class. As a result, pupils' learning is not as effective as it could be.

In the early parts of the Foundation Phase and at the top end of key stage 2, teaching strategies support pupils' stage of development well, and the teaching challenges all the children and has good structure to improve their learning. However, inconsistencies in setting tasks to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, and weaknesses in the degree of pace and teacher expectation across other year groups, have a negative impact on pupils' learning.

Almost all staff have sound subject knowledge and establish very good relationships with the pupils; they are good adult role models and provide positive oral encouragement for the children in all learning situations. Support staff contribute effectively to pupils' learning and their good behaviour in school.

Procedures for assessment of and for learning are not established consistently throughout the school. Teachers do not ensure that pupils engage in their own target setting and self-assessment. The sharing of lesson objectives and success criteria is inconsistent across classes.

A clear marking policy has recently been established, but teachers do not apply this consistently. In the majority of classes, it does not provide pupils with next steps or ways to improve their work.

Procedures for end of key stage 1 assessments have lacked rigour, though processes are now in place for moderation within the school, supported by the local authority.

Reports on pupil progress meet statutory requirements and ensure that parents are well informed about their children's development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are good arrangements to promote pupils' health and wellbeing, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Acts of worship for the whole school and for individual classes encourage pupils to reflect and consider questions about their own and others' beliefs. The recently-established behaviour policy, with its emphasis on respect for the individual, has had a significant impact on improving behaviour.

The school collaborates well with a range of external agencies and specialist services provided by the local authority, such as speech and language support, educational psychology and behaviour support.

Personal, social and emotional work across the school receives useful support from the school nurse who works with both key stages to cover work on hygiene, puberty, and keeping healthy. A range of other agencies also enhance pupils' experience of health and wellbeing.

The provision for additional learning needs supports a range of needs effectively. The headteacher, as the co-ordinator for additional learning needs, works well with parents, the local authority and specialist support agencies to ensure the appropriate level of support for the pupils. Reviewing test information, reading records and observations all form part of the effective identification of additional learning needs.

Useful individual education plans, which are reviewed termly, are in place for relevant pupils. The school ensures that parents are involved in the setting of appropriate targets. Where it is suitable, pupils are also involved. Support staff provide effective guidance for children with learning needs. The school uses basic skills support programmes well to provide additional help for pupils.

The school has recently set up a nurture group with support from the local authority. This is beginning to deliver effective programmes for pupils who have emotional needs or challenging behaviour.

The school has procedures and has an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school is very inclusive and has a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. All pupils receive equal opportunity in every aspect of school life, with the result that pupils who belong to any particular group blend seamlessly into the life of the school. Pupils are prepared well for life in a multi-ethnic community.

The school building is in a good condition and is well maintained. Though there are many steps, both inside and outside the building, the school ensures the safety of all pupils and staff, and all areas of the school are accessible. Classroom and corridor displays contribute well to the school's ethos and enhance pupils' learning.

The outside learning area for the Foundation Phase pupils does not yet provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn effectively.

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

The headteacher provides clear and effective direction for the school. She works effectively to build a collaborative style of leadership and communicates well with staff and governors. Together they have a purposeful vision for the school that focuses on high expectations for pupils' wellbeing and achievement. The headteacher leads very well by example and is a visible presence around the school. She enjoys good relationships with pupils, staff, governors and parents.

Led by the headteacher, the governing body have set a clear, planned direction for the school. The deputy headteacher supports the headteacher very well and undertakes curriculum responsibilities conscientiously, but has relatively few opportunities to undertake more managerial roles.

All staff have clearly-defined roles and responsibilities and are developing systems to monitor teaching and learning. The level of effective teamwork throughout the school is good.

Performance management procedures are sound. Staff have appropriate targets aligned to their professional development needs and the priorities within the school development plan. All support staff have opportunities to attend relevant courses.

The school is alert to educational and policy initiatives both locally and nationally and responds enthusiastically to opportunities to develop its provision, for example in relation to the Foundation Phase and transition arrangements.

The governing body is very supportive of the school, fulfils its legal responsibilities and receives appropriately detailed information on the school's performance from the headteacher. They visit classes to develop their understanding of the school's provision. They are only beginning to develop their role as a 'critical friend'.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school has self-evaluation procedures that involve all staff and governors. Staff analyse performance data consistently and they identify relevant strengths and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation report is detailed and accurately reflects the standards of achievement.

In light of parents' comments, the school has recently improved its communication system through regular newsletters. However, the school does not seek consistently enough the views of parents and pupils.

The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement. The improvement plan includes realistic timescales and allocation of suitable resources. However, it is not clear enough as to how actions in the plan will lead to raising pupils' standards of achievement. The school is developing systems to monitor the impact of its developmental actions.

Teachers are involved in a number of networks of professional practices, including a monitoring group for standards of work in key stage 2.

In a short time, the current school leadership has successfully addressed and resolved issues that were a matter of concern, including many of the previous inspection's recommendations. The process of seeking the views of all stakeholders in the self-evaluation process is not rigorous enough.

Partnership working: Good

The school has established a good range of partnerships with the local authority, the local community, support services, the nursery group, which is held on the school site, and the local cluster of schools.

There are good arrangements for transferring pupils to the local secondary school and all pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. These partnerships have a positive impact on pupils' achievement, standards and wellbeing.

There is good general communication with parents and they feel they are part of the life of the school. Parents and visitors from the community make a positive contribution to enriching pupils' experiences in the school and in the local area.

The school collaborates well with the local cluster of schools and the comprehensive schools to moderate standards at key stage 2.

Resource management: Good

The headteacher and the governing body manage the budget appropriately. They have agreed a clear plan of action to resolve the current deficit.

The school has sufficient qualified teachers and support staff. It deploys the support staff effectively and trains them appropriately in specific areas, for example in language and reading support programmes.

The school has appropriate procedures in place for the planning, preparation and assessment time for teachers. Sound performance management procedures are in place for teachers. This ensures that they receive training in line with the school's priorities for development.

The school manages its accommodation and outside areas very well. It ensures that there is a sufficient supply of good resources in to meet the needs of the pupils and the curriculum and it links all spending decisions to priorities for action in the school development plan.

In view of the standards obtained by most of the pupils and the appropriate management of the budget, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Results of teacher assessment at the end of key stage 1 show that performance in mathematics and science and the core subject indicator (English, mathematics and science taken together) at the expected level (level 2 or above) has been consistently good over the past five years. Performance in all subject areas is similar over the five years, with 100% of pupils achieving level 2 or better in 2008 and 2011. The school generally performs at, or above, the family and Wales averages. Compared with similar schools based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school has regularly been in the upper 50% in all subject areas, and in the top 25% in 2008 and 2011.

Performance at a higher level than expected (level 3 or above) in all subject areas is generally lower than the family and Wales averages, and has generally placed the school in the lowest 25% of similar schools based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. In 2011, the performance in science was above family and all-Wales averages, and in the top 25% of that for similar schools based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

These key stage 1 standards are not generally reflected in pupils' work books and during lessons, and inconsistencies between them and reading test data suggest that standards in English are lower than shown in teacher assessment.

Results of teacher assessment at the end of key stage 2 have been variable over the past five years. During that period, results in all subject areas and the core subject indicator were consistently higher than average for the family until 2011, when they were equal. Comparisons with the average results for Wales vary from year to year when compared to similar schools based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school has varied from being among the top 25% to the lowest 25%. In 2010, the school was in the top 25% of schools in all subject areas and the core subject indicator. In 2011, it was in the lower 50% for the core subject indicator and English, and in the lowest 25% for science and mathematics.

Performance at the higher levels (level 5 or above) has been generally high over the past five years, and is consistently above the family and all-Wales average performance.

School tracking data shows that most pupils make the expected progress, or better, from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2. The standards suggested by teacher assessment are reflected in pupils' work in lessons and in books.

There is no generally recurring pattern of difference between the performance of boys and girls at either key stage 1 or key stage 2, though there have been significant differences on occasions in key stage 2. However, in 2011, the boys out-performed the girls at the expected level (level 4 or above) in all core subject areas at the end of key stage 2.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Pupil questionnaire

Sixty-four pupils responded to the pupil questionnaire. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and know what to do and whom to ask if they find the work hard. They believe that teachers and adults help them to learn and make progress, and that the school has enough resources to enable them to do their work.

Most pupils know whom to talk to if they are worried, and feel they are doing well in school. They say that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that there are lots of opportunities to get regular exercise. Many pupils believe that the school deals well with any bullying and that homework helps them understand and improve their school work.

About half the pupils say that other pupils behave well in lessons so that they can get their work done, and also on the yard during break times and at lunchtime. These views are significantly less positive than those of other schools across Wales.

Parents' questionnaire

There were 51 responses to the parents' questionnaire. They are generally positive and in line with those of parents of other schools across Wales. All parents agree that teaching is good at the school and that staff expect their children to work hard and do their best. Nearly all of them say that the school helps their children to become more mature and take on responsibility.

Most parents state that their children like school, that they make good progress in school and that the school helps children settle when they start school. They believe that homework builds well on what children learn at school, and that children feel safe at school. They say that the school supports children well with any additional learning needs, and that they encourage pupils to be healthy and do take regular exercise. Most believe that the school provides support for children who need additional help, and that their children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Many parents are happy with the school in general. They believe that pupils behave well in school, and that staff treat all children with respect. They feel that the school provides them with regular information about their children's progress, and are comfortable about asking questions or making suggestions to the school. They understand the school's procedure for making complaints, and state that the school is run well. Many parents believe that there is a good range of activities for pupils, including trips and visits.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Terwyn Tomas	Reporting Inspector
Carolyn Thomas	Team Inspector
Susan Owen	Lay Inspector
Margaret Lonsdale	Peer Inspector
Colette Owen	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. 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.