



*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 Francis V.A. Primary School  
Wilson Road  
Ely  
Cardiff  
CF5 4JL**

**Date of inspection: November 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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## Context

St Francis Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School is in Ely about three miles west of Cardiff city centre. It serves the Roman Catholic parishes of St Francis and St Clare and is located in one of the five most disadvantaged districts in Wales, which is designated a Community First area with high unemployment. Around 44% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the local authority and national averages.

The school comprises two sites, originally separate infant and junior schools, which were amalgamated in 2005. There are currently 231 pupils in the school aged between 4 and 11, taught in eight classes, six of which contain a mixed age range. The number on roll has remained relatively stable over the last five years, but has declined considerably since the last inspection. There is currently no nursery provision, although this is planned for the near future. Most pupils attend some form of local pre-school provision.

The school identifies around 42% of pupils as requiring additional learning needs support, which is well above local authority and national averages; a very few pupils have a statement of special educational need. Fifteen key stage 2 pupils on school action plus are withdrawn each morning for targeted literacy and numeracy support.

Around 10% of pupils have English as an additional language and approximately 14% come from an ethnic minority background. No pupils use Welsh as a first language. Very few pupils are looked after by the local authority.

The school was last inspected in November 2006. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2007. There are ten full-time and two part-time teachers, including the headteacher, and eight full-time and two part-time teaching assistants.

The individual school budget per pupil for St Francis R.C. Primary School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £3,758 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Cardiff is £12,307 and the minimum is £2,873. St Francis R.C. Primary School is 35th out of the 99 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 school's performance is good because:

- attainment in literacy is improving across the school and by the end of key stage 2 most pupils achieve good standards;
- most pupils make good progress and generally perform better than those in other schools in the family;
- standards in Welsh are good;
- pupils' wellbeing, including behaviour, is good overall and those with additional learning needs are particularly well supported;
- pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum; and
- most teaching is good.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the process of self-evaluation has improved and outcomes are now used well to determine appropriate priorities for school improvement;
- standards and levels of attendance have recently improved;
- the school is well led and managed and many new initiatives are beginning to have an impact;
- team work is a strength and the deployment and involvement of support staff is an excellent feature; and
- governors are becoming more aware of the need to act as 'critical friends'.

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve the standards of more able pupils and those on free school meals, particularly in mathematical development in the Foundation Phase and science in key stage 2.
- R2 Improve pupils' levels of attendance and punctuality.
- R3 Develop more opportunities for independent learning and plan activities that meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- R4 Develop further assessment procedures, especially in relation to tracking pupils' progress, assessment for learning strategies and the marking of pupils' work.

### **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

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

Attainment in literacy is improving across the school. In the Foundation Phase, although nearly all pupils enter the school with skills below the level expected for their age, most make good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They listen quietly and speak clearly and read from a range of texts confidently and with good comprehension. They begin to write independently and to record their own ideas for different purposes.

By the end of key stage 2 most pupils achieve good standards in literacy. Many demonstrate good speaking and listening skills and nearly all read and write with clarity, expression and understanding. Most in key stage 2 can retrieve information from reference books and other sources. They write at length in different areas of the curriculum and for a range of audiences. Spelling and punctuation are mainly accurate and most work is neatly written and well presented.

Most pupils throughout the school demonstrate a range of skills in numeracy and information and communication technology relevant to their age and ability, when engaged in these specific subjects, but they do not always effectively apply or develop these skills across the curriculum.

Standards in Welsh are good and in 2012 there was a big improvement on previous results. Pupils apply their understanding and skills well in different areas of the curriculum.

In 2012 at the end of the Foundation Phase, pupils' attainment at the expected level in language, literature and communication skills and in personal and social development was above the family and similar schools' average, even though they enter the school at a low starting point. Attainment at the higher level in language, literature and communication skills was also better than other comparators. Results in mathematical development, however, compared less well.

In 2012 in key stage 2, pupils' attainment at the expected level in the three core subjects was better than in most previous years and above the family and similar schools' averages. The school was best in its family in English. At the higher level 5, performance was also better than in most previous years in English and mathematics and above the family average, but it was low in science.

Most pupils make good progress through the school. There is no discernible gender difference in attainment, but pupils on free school meals achieve less well and the more able could reach higher standards, especially in science in key stage 2.

### Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of healthy living and feel safe in school. They understand about eating healthy foods and many realise the importance of regular exercise and fitness.

Most pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards learning. They persevere with their tasks and work well individually and with each other. Nearly all are considerate, courteous and polite and show respect to one another and to adults.

Although a few pupils can be disruptive, standards of behaviour are generally good in most lessons and around the school. Nearly all pupils understand and adhere to the school's positive behaviour code.

Attendance, at around 91% in the last academic year, is just below that for similar schools, although it is below the national and local averages. In the first half of the current term it has increased significantly over previous years. A few pupils regularly arrive late in the mornings.

Most pupils can evaluate their own learning and the majority are aware of how well they are doing and their targets for improvement. However, they take on few responsibilities and are not generally involved in planning their own learning. The school and eco councils, for example, although they are involved in decision-making about the school, do not have officers and are primarily led by adults.

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

The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers statutory requirements and recommended contact time at each key stage. It provides a good range of experiences that engage and interest nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs.

The new thematic approach to the curriculum, designed to ensure more continuity and progression in skills, is being developed and is beginning to benefit pupils' learning.

Teachers plan systematically for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school. In particular, they plan well for the application of literacy skills across the curriculum. However, the provision for developing numeracy and information and communication technology skills is not sufficiently embedded and tasks are not always differentiated well enough to challenge the more able.

A number of intervention programmes are being successfully implemented to improve standards in key skills, especially to support the less able. However, the provision for the more able and talented is relatively underdeveloped.

The school provides pupils and parents with a range of out-of-school learning activities. These enhance the school's provision and are well attended by pupils and parents.

The school makes good provision for promoting the Welsh language and the culture and heritage of Wales through, for example, visits to places of interest and a range of visitors.

The school is at an early stage of operating in a sustainable way. This aspect of the curriculum is not effectively embedded across the school and pupils' understanding of the principles involved is limited.

There are established links with a school in Somerset and contacts are being developed with a school in Turkey, which help to broaden pupils' awareness of life in other places.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

Where teaching is good, teachers plan carefully, make learning objectives clear and use a range of strategies. They motivate pupils to achieve and ensure that they remain on task by using appropriate questioning techniques, acknowledging their contributions and providing effective praise and encouragement.

In the few lessons where teaching is less successful, planning is insufficiently detailed, with the result that activities lack interest and challenge for pupils and are not well matched to individual abilities. There is a lack of pace with pupils being given too little responsibility for their own learning.

In most lessons teachers organise learning effectively and manage time and behaviour well, resulting in an appropriately calm and productive working atmosphere.

All teachers make good use of resources, monitor progress efficiently and intervene at appropriate times to promote learning.

All teachers have appropriate background knowledge and establish good relationships with pupils based on trust and support.

Statutory requirements for assessment, recording and reporting are fulfilled. A range of standardised tests provide teachers with information about each pupil's progress. The recently introduced tracking system to identify specific individual and group needs and to inform planning and teaching is in the early stages of development.

Teachers in the Foundation Phase help to show pupils the next steps in their learning and in key stage 2 they work with pupils to set individual targets in literacy.

Assessment for learning strategies have been a school priority, but, together with self and peer assessment, are at a relatively early stage of development across the school.

All work is marked and a range of supportive and positive rewards are used to motivate pupils, but comments tend to be brief and do not consistently point the way forward or engage older pupils in a learning dialogue.

Annual pupil reports are detailed and provide information for parents on how to help their children move forward in their learning. There are two formal consultation meetings with teachers each year, as well as the opportunity to discuss the annual report after it is issued in the summer term.

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

Effective policies and practices for healthy living, wellbeing and health and safety are embedded in the school. Nearly all pupils feel cared for in all aspects of the school day and are confident to talk to staff for support and guidance.

Collective worship meets statutory requirements and plays a significant role in pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Personal, social and health education, together with emotional wellbeing, is a strong feature of the provision and is being further improved through links to religious education and other aspects of the curriculum.

The breakfast club is well attended, provides a caring environment and offers a healthy start to the day for the pupils who attend.

Inappropriate behaviour is well managed. The recently introduced positive behaviour code is appreciated by pupils and is having a significant impact, for example on the number of fixed-term exclusions.

The school has implemented wide ranging strategies to increase attendance and punctuality and has set challenging targets for both. These are beginning to have a positive effect. Collaborative processes with the cluster attendance officer and governors are being developed to support further improvement.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. The school makes good use of specialist services, when required.

The provision and approach for additional learning needs are a strength of the school. Issues are identified early and targeted groups are well supported by a strong team of learning support assistants. Individual education plans are child-friendly, appropriate and reviewed on a regular basis. Robust systems for tracking the progress of pupils are being developed.

The school is fully inclusive and provides pupils who have additional needs with learning experiences that meet statutory requirements.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school's very positive Christian ethos underpins its commitment to combating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and fairness and respect for all. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and all aspects of school life.

The school promotes tolerant attitudes to ensure staff and pupils are free from any form of harassment. Although a minority of pupils and parents have concerns about incidents of discrimination or bullying, these are decreasing and the school has procedures to deal with them promptly and effectively.

The school celebrates diversity through school events, assemblies and class activities. Staff are sensitive to different cultural and religious practices. Pupils learn to show care and consideration for others in the school and the wider community and to challenge any negative stereotyping.

The school is fully accessible to any pupils or adults with a disability and reasonable adjustments are made when necessary.

The school's accommodation is effectively utilised. The playgrounds are in a good condition, but limited use is made of the outside areas to enhance the learning environment. Overall, resources are suitable and sufficient to support the needs of pupils.

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

The school is well led and managed. Although improvement has been slow in some respects until recently, the headteacher has an effective overview of the school and its strategic direction. He enjoys good relationships with all stakeholders and displays care and consideration for the wellbeing of all staff and pupils.

The deputy headteacher provides good support and undertakes a range of managerial responsibilities conscientiously and efficiently. She models good classroom practice. The senior leadership team has recently been expanded and is beginning to play a major role in school improvement.

Team work is a strength of the school and all staff work together well. Distributed leadership is well established. All teachers have a subject or aspect role and are making an increasingly valuable contribution to raising standards.

There is a developing beneficial partnership between the school and the governing body. Governors have subject interests and offer an appropriate balance of expertise. Most visit the school regularly and attend training events. They are becoming more aware of the need to monitor standards and to act as 'critical friends' to the school.

All statutory policies are in place and regularly reviewed. The prospectus and governing body's annual report to parents meet most of the new requirements.

The school effectively addresses national and local priorities. In particular, its current focus on raising standards in literacy is having a positive impact.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The school makes good use of a range of first-hand evidence to identify accurately its main strengths and areas for improvement. It also effectively uses information gathered from classroom observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the views of stakeholders, although parents have not recently been surveyed.

The school is successfully developing the process of self-evaluation and its school improvement plan is now having a positive impact on provision and standards. Together with the self-evaluation report, it provides an honest and accurate appraisal of progress and identifies relevant and manageable priorities for development.

Subject co-ordinators monitor and evaluate standards linked to their areas of responsibility and produce end of year subject reports, which feed in to the school improvement plan. Members of the senior leadership team monitor teaching and learning across the school and evaluate the impact of new initiatives.

Although some issues arising from the previous inspection have not been fully addressed, the school has acted upon many of the recent local authority' recommendations of March 2012.

The school is developing as a strong learning community, with teachers and support staff jointly involved in planning and sharing information with colleagues and governors. A few teachers have visited other schools and demonstrated good practice to staff from elsewhere.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Overall, there are good relationships with parents and carers and the school takes effective measures to ensure that they are well informed about their children's progress. However, they report that the quality and quantity of homework is variable between classes. Nearly all are supportive of the school.

There are effective arrangements to support transition from local nurseries to the Foundation Phase and from key stage 2 to the receiving Catholic secondary school.

The school has developed a range of positive links with the community, the parish, archdiocese and local authority, especially in relation to additional learning needs and spiritual, moral and social development. Many of these partnerships have a positive impact on the standards and wellbeing of all pupils.

The school provides opportunities for students from various educational establishments to participate in a range of work experience placements.

Effective standardisation and moderation procedures are in place involving the local Catholic school cluster, which has produced portfolios of exemplar work in the core subjects and Welsh.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school has a full complement of well-qualified and experienced staff. Teaching assistants, in particular, are efficiently deployed and undertake their responsibilities very effectively. This is an excellent feature that impacts particularly on the standards pupils with additional learning needs achieve.

Ancillary staff make an important contribution to the efficient administration and maintenance of the school.

All staff have access to on-going staff development opportunities linked to their own performance management targets and whole school priorities. All teachers have undertaken in-service training in literacy and numeracy and behaviour management within the last two years, mainly in association with other schools in the cluster.

Performance management procedures meet statutory requirements. All staff are involved and are offered training opportunities linked to their targets and roles.

All requirements of the national workload agreement are met. Teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time is well organised through the rotational deployment for a year of one of the school's teachers, in order to utilise his/her curriculum strengths across the school.

The school manages its accommodation, resources and budget well and the school is well maintained internally and externally. The budget is balanced with a small surplus. Good financial controls are in place.

Good outcomes in terms of standards and provision ensure that the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

In 2012 at the end of the Foundation Phase, pupil attainment overall at the expected outcome 5 and in language, literature and communication skills was above the family and similar schools average and comparable to the local authority, but below the Wales average. In mathematical development, attainment was comparable to the family average, but below that for similar schools, the local authority and Wales. In personal and social development it was above all comparators. Attainment at the higher outcome 6 in language, literature and communication skills was above the family, similar schools, local authority and Wales averages, but it was below all these comparators in mathematical and personal and social development.

In 2012 in key stage 2 pupil attainment at the expected level 4 overall and in the three core subjects was better than in most previous years and above the family and similar schools' averages, but in almost all cases below the local authority and Wales averages. The school was best in its family overall and in English. At the higher level 5, performance was also better than in most previous years in English and mathematics and above the family average, but below that for similar schools, the local authority and Wales. In science, where no pupils attained level 5, results were below all previous years and all comparators.

There is evidence that attainment in literacy is improving in both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. In 2012, Year 6 pupils' performance in oracy was better than the family average and similar to the local authority, but below the Wales average. In writing it was also better than the family average and similar to the local authority and Wales averages, whereas in reading it was better than all three comparators.

Most pupils make good progress through the school. There is no discernible gender difference in attainment, although boys tend to do better in mathematics at the higher level 5 in key stage 2. Evidence indicates that pupils eligible for free school meals have achieved less well recently and that more able pupils could reach higher standards, especially in science in key stage 2.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

### Responses to parent questionnaires

Out of the 15 parents responding to the questionnaire, ten added written comments, which were both positive and negative.

All parents say that:

- they are satisfied with the school;
- their child likes school and makes good progress;
- their child was helped to settle in well when starting school;
- teaching is good;
- staff expect pupils to work hard and to do their best; and
- their child is helped to become more mature and responsible.

Most parents say that:

- their child is safe in school;
- appropriate additional support is provided, if necessary;
- they feel comfortable about approaching the school with any suggestions or problems; and
- their child is well prepared for moving on to the next stage of his/her education.

Many parents say that:

- pupils behave well in school;
- homework builds well on what is learnt in school;
- staff treat all pupils fairly and with respect;
- their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise;
- they are kept well informed about their child's progress;
- they understand the procedures for dealing with complaints;
- there is a good range of activities and trips provided; and
- the school is well run.

### Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred and twelve key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaire. All of their responses were worse than the national norms.

Nearly all pupils say that they:

- are helped to learn and to make progress.

Most pupils say that they:

- feel safe in school;
- know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset;
- learn how to keep healthy; and
- know whom to ask if they find work hard.

Many pupils say that:

- the school deals well with any bullying;
- they are doing well at school.
- they have plenty of opportunities for regular exercise;
- homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school; and
- they have enough books and equipment.

Around half the pupils say that:

- nearly all pupils behave well at playtimes and lunch time; and
- pupils behave well in class so they can get their work done.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

David Ellis	Reporting Inspector
Terry Williams	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Jeremy Piper	Peer Inspector
Michael Williams	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

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