



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 Gabriel & Raphael R.C.P. School
Primrose Street
Tonypandy
CF40 1BJ**

Date of inspection: July 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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright 2012: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 05/09/2012

Context

Saints Gabriel and Raphael is a Catholic primary school situated in the small town of Tonypany in the Rhondda Fawr and maintained by Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. The school serves families in the parishes of Tonypany, Ynyshir and Tonyrefail. The pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. While the immediate area around the school is not considered to be significantly economically disadvantaged, the areas from which many pupils come are 'Communities First' areas.

Children are admitted to the school on the day after their third birthday on a full time basis. During the inspection, there were 129 pupils between three and 11 years of age on roll. They are taught by six full-time teachers.

Most pupils come from English-speaking homes. There are no pupils from homes where Welsh is the first language. A quarter of pupils are from a minority ethnic background and 34 pupils have English as an additional language. Currently 20% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is close to the national average. Nineteen per cent of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs. This is slightly below the local authority average. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2011 and a new deputy has been appointed for September 2012.

The individual school budget for Saints Gabriel and Raphael Catholic Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,232 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is £6,499 and the minimum is £2,788. Saints Gabriel and Raphael Catholic Primary School is 70th out of 114 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of Saints Gabriel and Raphael Catholic Primary School is judged as adequate because:

- many pupils make good progress during their time at the school;
- pupils who need extra help with their learning and those who have English as an additional language do well;
- nearly all pupils are well behaved in classes and around the school;
- the level of care, support and guidance provided to pupils is good; and
- the quality of teaching is consistently good.

However:

- pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science has often not compared well with that of pupils in other similar schools, in particular at the higher levels;
- standards in pupils' reading and writing are still in need of improvement; and
- learning activities do not always meet the needs and abilities of all pupils well enough.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement in Saints Gabriel and Raphael Catholic Primary School are judged as good because:

- the school is well led and leaders have a clear vision and high expectations;
- a number of initiatives have already had a positive impact on raising standards;
- accurate self-evaluation is based on a good range of first hand evidence;
- targets for school improvement are focused clearly on raising standards and improving quality, particularly in literacy; and
- there is a culture of collaboration and good team work and the school is a lead school for important cluster initiatives.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

R1 ensure that more pupils in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2 achieve at the higher levels;

R2 improve standards in reading in both key stages;

R3 improve pupils' extended writing skills across the curriculum in key stage 2; and

R4 continue to improve attendance.

What happens next?

Saints Gabriel and Raphael Catholic Primary School will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

At key stage 1 in 2011, the performance of pupils in English, mathematics and science was higher than the average for the family of schools but over the last four years it has generally been lower than the average for similar schools. Although pupils' performance at the higher level (level 3) in 2011 compared well with that of pupils in similar schools, in the previous three years it has been consistently lower than the family and Wales averages.

At key stage 2, over the last four years, the performance of pupils in mathematics and science has generally been close to or above the family and Wales averages. The performance of pupils in English has been lower than that of pupils in similar schools for the last three years. Pupils' performance at the higher level (level 5) in all subjects does not compare well with that of pupils in similar schools.

Many pupils make good progress in relation to their age and ability. Pupils entitled to receive free school meals generally do as well as other pupils in the Foundation Phase; however, in key stage 2 these pupils do not do as well as their peers. At key stage 1, over the past three years, boys have consistently performed less well than girls in English. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls at key stage 2. Pupils who need extra help with their learning do well in school and most make good progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language also do well. In some aspects of their work, pupils of higher ability are not achieving as well as they could.

Across the school, most pupils can recall previous learning well and they use this information appropriately in lessons in order to acquire new information and skills. Many show good knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt in a number of subjects. Nearly all pupils work well together in pairs or in groups. Most respond well to tasks set by their teachers and other adults.

Nearly all pupils listen well and most respond readily to questions posed by their teachers and other adults. Many speak confidently in a wide range of situations; however, a few are less confident when discussing their work with adults.

Standards of reading are improving. However, a minority of pupils have reading skills well below the expected levels. Many pupils in the Foundation Phase have a good knowledge of letter sounds and they are beginning to use a range of strategies to read familiar and unfamiliar words well. They are keen to look at books and enjoy and appreciate the good range of reading material provided for them. Many make good progress and read at an appropriate level. More able Year 2 pupils read fluently and with understanding. A majority of pupils in key stage 2 make good progress and are fluent readers. More able older pupils read with confidence and fluency, and name authors they enjoy. Many older pupils know how to use the library effectively to find particular books which interest them. They generally apply these skills effectively to tasks across the curriculum. However, few pupils use higher order reading skills such as skimming text well enough.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase make good progress with their early writing skills and by the end of Year 2 many write successfully for a range of purposes and audiences in full sentences with correct punctuation. At key stage 2, a majority of pupils write well in response to specific language tasks. The more able pupils write confidently and accurately in a variety of forms and their writing is often thoughtful and imaginative. Less able pupils do not always use basic punctuation well enough. Few pupils produce extended pieces of writing across the curriculum.

Most pupils make good progress in gaining skills in the Welsh language. They achieve well in their structured lessons and listen and respond appropriately. Pupils' awareness of the Welsh culture and heritage is less well developed.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and feel safe and well supported. They have a good awareness of the benefits of healthy living and are keen to take part in the wide range of sporting activities available.

Most pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They co-operate effectively with one another in their lessons and activities. Most work well independently under the direction of adults. The use of 'learning logs' is helping many pupils to develop as independent learners. Many older pupils are beginning to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Nearly all pupils get on well together and standards of behaviour are high. Pupils of all ages play together happily at break time and lunchtime.

Over the last five years, attendance levels have been lower than those of similar schools. The robust steps that have been taken recently to raise attendance levels have succeeded. Attendance rates are now over 93%. Nearly all pupils arrive at school punctually.

All pupils, especially the school council, have the opportunity to contribute to decision making within the school. They feel that their opinions are valued and listened to. Members of the school council and eco group have improved the learning environment by helping design the outdoor provision. Many pupils play an active part in community, local council and parish activities.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
---	-------------

Learning experiences: Adequate

Teachers provide a good range of interesting and relevant experiences for pupils. Staff collaborate well to ensure that appropriate learning activities meet the needs of most pupils; however, they do not always offer sufficient challenge to the more able. Pupils' learning is effectively extended through a range of extra-curricular activities, such as reading clubs.

Recent improvements in teacher planning have established greater consistency and structure to the delivery of skills across the school. Arrangements for ensuring that pupils develop the key skills of numeracy and information and communication

technology are effective. Opportunities for pupils to utilise their thinking skills are used well. Provision for developing pupils' communication skills and in particular their reading and writing skills is less effective. Teachers provide few opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Provision for the Welsh language throughout the school is good. Nearly all adults provide good role models to pupils and encourage them to use the language. Provision to develop pupils' understanding of the Welsh dimension is not as well developed.

There are good arrangements to develop pupils' awareness of recycling and energy conservation. Active links with schools in both Zanzibar and New Zealand provide pupils with good opportunities to learn about the lives of children in other countries.

Teaching: Good

Teaching across the school is consistently good. Staff and other adults have developed valuable working relationships with pupils which foster learning effectively. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. Additional adults contribute successfully to support less able pupils.

In a few highly effective lessons, presentations are enthusiastic and fully engage all learners. In most lessons teachers share clear learning objectives and success criteria effectively with pupils. They use a range of teaching approaches effectively and skilful questioning extends pupils' learning well. In the few lessons where teaching is less effective, learning tasks do not always meet the needs of the wide range of abilities within the class.

The school has appropriate forms of assessment that provide staff with clear evidence of the standards pupils achieve, in order to measure progress. All pupils' work is marked thoroughly. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own work and in identifying targets for improvement, which are reviewed regularly.

The school has worked successfully with other local schools to strengthen understanding of levels of attainment. Reports to parents are of a good quality. They identify areas for improvement and allow parents and pupils the opportunity to respond.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Pupils' social, moral and spiritual awareness is developed successfully in lessons, through a wide range of extra-curricular activities and through acts of collective worship.

The school has good arrangements for supporting pupils' health and wellbeing and for ensuring that pupils enjoy regular opportunities to participate in a range of physical activities. The school also has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour which contributes to the very positive ethos that is evident throughout the school.

Effective arrangements have been implemented to improve attendance, which include a number of incentives that which impact positively on pupil attendance and punctuality.

The school makes effective use of a range of specialist services to enhance the support and guidance it provides for all pupils. The recent introduction of the School Ambassadors' scheme is a good example of the school's efforts to raise pupils' self-esteem.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Pupils who have additional learning needs are identified early and given well-planned and targeted support. Detailed individual education plans ensure that the work provided for these pupils match their needs. These plans and the play plans provided for the Foundation Phase are effective in ensuring that these pupils know what they need to do to improve. Support assistants make a significant contribution in delivering these support programmes. This is a strength of the school. Teachers regularly assess and report to parents the progress made by pupils.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a supportive and inclusive ethos where all pupils have equal access to provision. All pupils are valued, regardless of background, race, gender or ability and individual talents are celebrated. Valuable opportunities are provided by the school for all pupils to develop an understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Appropriate policies, plans and procedures are in place to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils.

Pupils have access to a range of suitable resources to support their learning and the school has recently extended the range of reading materials to the benefit of all pupils, including those with additional learning needs.

Despite the constraints of the building, the school utilises internal and external space very well. Recent physical changes to the building, such as the outdoor canopy, have further improved its use as a learning environment and made all areas accessible to pupils with disabilities. Stimulating displays successfully celebrate the ethos and activities of the pupils as well as providing valuable support in learning.

The school building and grounds are well maintained.

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

Leadership: Good

The newly appointed headteacher provides strong leadership. She has a clear vision and high expectations. In a relatively short time, she has introduced successfully a number of initiatives which have had a positive impact on raising standards, particularly in literacy. Since her appointment, the headteacher has collaborated well with staff and governors to set clear aims. These aims focus appropriately on improving provision and standards, and inform the priorities in the school development plan.

Distributed leadership is now a management feature throughout the school, which includes team leaders' responsibilities in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. Meetings are held regularly to look at resourcing, planning and target setting to ensure high expectations are set and achieved.

The governing body, which has had several changes recently, is very supportive and is now better informed about its role. Governors know about the performance of pupils and how local factors can affect this performance. They are also generally aware of how pupils' performance compares with the performance of pupils in other similar schools. This has enabled them to become more effective as critical friends.

The school has introduced successfully initiatives that meet local and national priorities such as the implementation of the Foundation Phase and improving reading and writing. These initiatives are having a positive impact on raising pupils' standards.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation is based on a suitable range of first-hand evidence. This evidence includes rigorous analysis of the performance of pupils, observations of teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and seeking the views of teachers, pupils and parents.

The school's self-evaluation report is comprehensive and conveys an accurate picture of the school's current situation. It comes to a clear judgement on pupils' standards of attainment.

The outcomes of the self-evaluation process are used well to determine targets for school improvement. These are focused clearly on raising standards and improving quality, particularly in literacy. The school is making good progress in achieving these targets.

A culture of collaboration and good teamwork is developing well in the school and this is helping it grow as a reflective learning community. Teachers share good practice with others across the school and cluster. There is also good involvement of support staff in key areas of development, for example in reading initiatives.

Partnership working: Good

The school has effective links with a range of partnerships that make a positive contribution to improving outcomes for pupils. Parents feel welcome in school. They appreciate the ease with which they can approach the school. Links with the church, the community and voluntary organisations are good. These partnerships enable pupils to be involved in and contribute in a positive way to their community.

The school is involved with a number of productive partnerships which are having a positive impact on raising standards. A good example of this is the project in improving vocabulary, and punctuation with other local schools. The school is the lead school for important cluster initiatives to raise standards in literacy and moderation of pupils' work in key stage 2.

Effective arrangements are in place for pupils' transition to the local comprehensive school. Teachers work well with their cluster of schools to share good practice and to moderate standards at key stage 2.

The school makes good use of local authority services for staff development and support in raising standards further.

Resource management: Adequate

Staffing and financial resources are managed and deployed effectively to support learning. There are appropriate arrangements for the provision of planning, preparation and assessment time for all teachers.

The school's performance management processes are effective.

The school accommodation is very well ordered and managed. The school identifies and allocates resources well and makes good use of training grants, in line with the priorities identified in its school development plan. Recent spending on, accommodation, reading materials and the library was clearly targeted and is having a very positive impact on raising pupils' standards.

In view of the standards achieved the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Saints Gabriel and Raphael Catholic School is the seventh most challenged school in its family of schools (schools with similar characteristics in terms of free school meals, socio-economic factors and percentage of pupils with additional learning needs).

At key stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 2) has varied. In 2011, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels was above the family average in English, mathematics and science. In two of the previous three years, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level has been lower than the averages for the family and Wales.

In comparison with that of schools with similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, the school's performance, at the expected level, has been in the lower 50% for the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science in combination) for the past three years. In English, pupils' performance has been in the bottom 25% for the last two years.

In 2011, the percentage of pupils achieving at the higher level (level 3) was higher than the average for other schools in the family but below the Wales average. In the previous three years it has consistently been lower than the family and Wales averages.

At key stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics in combination has decreased over the past five years and has been lower than the all-Wales average for the last two years.

At key stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in the core subject indicator has varied. Over the past four years the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) in the core subject indicator, mathematics and science has been close to or above the averages for the family and Wales. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in English has been lower than the family and Wales averages for the last two years.

The school's performance in the core subject indicator placed it among the lower 50% of schools with similar entitlement to free school meals in three of the previous five years. Whilst the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in mathematics has been in the upper 50% for the last two years, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in English has been in the lower 50% for four of the previous five years.

In 2011, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level (level 5), in English and mathematics was lower than family and Wales averages. The percentage of pupils achieving at this level in science was above the family average but below the Wales average. The school's performance at the higher level has placed it in the lower 50% of schools with similar entitlement to free school meals in three of the last five years.

The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics in combination has been close to the family and Wales averages for the last four years.

At key stage 1, over the past three years, boys have consistently performed less well than girls in English. The gap has been greater than the family and the Wales averages in the past two years. There has been no consistent pattern of boys' underachievement in comparison with girls' in mathematics or science during this period. At key stage 2 in 2011, boys achieved better than girls. There has been no consistent pattern of boys' underachievement in comparison with girls' over the last three years.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals generally perform as well as those pupils not entitled to free school meals at key stage 1, but not at key stage 2.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twelve parents or carers completed the questionnaire. Parents' satisfaction levels are higher than the average for primary schools.

Parents all say that their children like school and that staff treat their children fairly and with respect. All are confident that their children are safe there and nearly all believe that pupils are helped to settle when they join the school. All agree that the school encourages their children to eat healthily and take regular exercise and that behaviour is good. Almost all parents who responded think that the school is well run and understand what to do if they wish to make a complaint. All parents who returned the questionnaire think that their children are making good progress and almost all feel that they are kept well informed about their child's progress.

All parents think teaching is good and are happy that teachers expect pupils to do their best. They believe that teachers help their children to become more mature and take on responsibility so that they are well prepared for the move to the secondary school. All parents agree that the homework given builds well on what their child learns in school and all are confident that their child receives enough additional support for their additional learning needs. Almost all believe that there is a good range of activities including trips and visits.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Sixty-two pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Responses to nearly all questions were positive, and are generally more positive than the averages for primary schools

All pupils agree that the school helps them to be healthy and provides them with plenty of opportunities to be physically active. Most feel that they are doing well and almost all think that teachers and support staff help them to learn and make progress. All pupils say that they feel safe in school and nearly all know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset or are finding their work difficult. Most pupils think that the school deals well with bullying. All think that there are enough resources to enable them to learn effectively and nearly all believe that homework helps them to improve on their work in school. Nearly all pupils believe that behaviour in lessons is good and that children behave well during lunch and break times.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Goronwy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Terry Williams	Team Inspector
Deirdre Emberson	Lay Inspector
Russell Dwyer	Peer Inspector
Wendy Lavagna	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.