



*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 Michael's C.I.W. School  
Kerry  
Newtown  
Powys  
SY16 4NU**

**Date of inspection: February 2013**

**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 Michael's Primary is a voluntary aided, Church in Wales school in the village of Kerry near Newtown, Powys. Following the closure of a nearby school in 2006, the school's catchment area has changed. It now includes pupils from the parish of Sarn. Around 15% of pupils attend from outside the catchment area. The school reports that the area it serves is neither prosperous nor socially disadvantaged. There are currently 141 pupils on roll aged four to 11, which is much larger than at the time of the last inspection when there were 101 pupils on roll. Pupils start school at the beginning of the term of their fourth birthday. This is in line with Powys local authority policy. Around 7% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is slightly lower than the local authority average and significantly lower than the national average for Wales. Nearly all pupils come from homes where English is the main language and no pupils speak Welsh as a first language. The school has identified 16% of pupils as having additional learning needs with very few pupils having a statement of special educational needs. There have been three fixed term pupil exclusions in the last twelve months.

In September 2012 the headteacher, who has been in post since September 2003, became a head without a specific class teaching responsibility. The school was last inspected in February 2007.

The individual school budget per pupil for St. Michael's C.I.W. School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £3,168 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Powys is £8,253 and the minimum is £3,087. St. Michael's C.I.W. School is 96th out of the 99 primary schools in Powys 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 judgement on the current performance of the school is good because:

- pupils make good progress from their starting points;
- most pupils use their literacy skills well in a wide range of situations;
- standards of wellbeing are good and reflect the strong Christian ethos of the school;
- pupils are very well motivated, enjoy school and co-operate effectively; and
- most teaching secures good progress and learning.

### Prospects for improvement

The judgement on the school's prospects for improvement is good because:

- the school has a culture of self-improvement leading to recent improvements in pupils' Welsh language skills, reading and writing;
- there are effective links between self-evaluation and school improvement;
- the governing body is well informed and challenges the school to improve its performance;
- the school has a range of effective partnerships that support school improvement initiatives successfully; and
- the school provides effective value for money because of the good standards most pupils achieve.

## Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards of pupils' skills in numeracy and information and communication technology, particularly in key stage 2
- R2 Ensure that marking consistently informs pupils of what they need to do to improve their work
- R3 Improve the consistency of monitoring by leaders and managers to ensure that shortcomings in provision, teaching and end of key stage assessments are challenged more effectively

### What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Pupils generally enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly equal to pupils of a similar age in other schools in the local authority. They make good progress as they move through the school.

Most pupils speak and listen very well in a wide range of situations. They often give imaginative responses to questions set by teachers and other adults. Many pupils engage effectively with each other during discussions and collaborative tasks. They are able to talk confidently about their learning experiences.

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. They are able to use appropriate strategies that help them read for pleasure and with understanding. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils read confidently with fluency, accuracy and understanding. They can explain the features and roles of key characters within stories and make astute observations that display a high level of understanding.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. By the end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils can write short texts independently in a good range of styles. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils have a wide vocabulary and can write extended pieces of interesting work. They write purposefully in a variety of contexts across the curriculum. A majority of pupils write neatly and present their work well.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their Welsh language skills. In the Foundation Phase, they use Welsh to communicate effectively within lessons. Many older pupils are able to hold short conversations and read from a range of suitable texts. They write with increasing confidence and achieve good standards by the end of key stage 2.

Although standards of mathematics are good, pupils do not use their numeracy skills well enough in other subjects. Pupils make a good start in developing their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in the Foundation Phase but do not build on these skills sufficiently in key stage 2.

Pupils who need extra support with their learning make good progress. Most more able pupils respond well to additional challenges provided in lessons. Pupils entitled to free school meals generally achieve as well as other pupils.

Due to the small number of pupils at the end of both key stages, the results of pupil assessments have to be treated with care because one pupil's results can have a significant impact on school performance. Foundation Phase pupils' achievements at outcome 5 (the expected level for pupils of seven years of age) are very slightly below those of pupils in similar schools (schools who have a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals). Achievement at outcome 5 is also slightly below

that of other schools in the family (schools which face similar challenges) in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. At the higher outcome 6, more able pupils achieve more highly than the family average. When achievement at this level is compared to that of similar schools, performance is in the upper 50% for mathematical development and language, literacy and communication skills. In personal and social development, the school's performance is in the lowest 25% of that for similar schools at both the expected and higher than expected levels.

In key stage 2, in 2012, the percentage of pupils who attained the expected level or above, in English, mathematics and science when combined was slightly above the family of schools average. Overall, the trend of performance is consistently high.

When compared to that of similar schools, performance at the expected level or above is in the highest 25% for mathematics and science and the lower 50% for English.

In 2012, more able pupils' performance at the higher than expected level was well above the family average. Performance in mathematics has been in the top 25% of that for similar schools for the last three years. In relation to performance in science, the school is now in the upper 50% of similar schools having spent the previous two years in the lower 50%.

Over the last five years, at key stage 2, boys' performance at both the expected and higher than expected levels has been better than that of girls.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all pupils are courteous and polite. They develop very good relationships with each other and with adults. Many pupils are very well motivated. They enjoy school and co-operate effectively during lessons and in problem solving activities. Behaviour within lessons and around the school is very good.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school. They are confident that adults take any concerns seriously and act upon them quickly and fairly. Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and the benefits of taking regular exercise. Over time, attendance compares favourably with that of other similar schools and punctuality is consistently good.

Members of the school council and eco-committee are enthusiastic and understand their roles clearly. They represent their fellow pupils well, perform their duties diligently and influence developments significantly. For example, they have changed seating arrangements at lunchtime in the canteen in order to encourage older pupils to look after younger ones. Their sense of responsibility towards fellow pupils is strong. The school council has managed its small budget effectively to purchase playground equipment. Pupils engage purposefully with the local community, for example by organising fundraising events for charities.

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

The school generally provides a wide range of challenging and interesting learning experiences to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Nearly all teachers provide pupils with good opportunities for developing their literacy skills but, the provision for pupils' numeracy and ICT skills at key stage 2 is currently underdeveloped. The school offers a good number of interesting out-of-school activities. These activities are well attended and support pupils' wellbeing and achievement successfully.

Provision for pupils' Welsh language development is good. Adults model the use of the Welsh language effectively in many classrooms and around the school. Pupils have many interesting opportunities to learn about their locality and celebrate their Welsh heritage. A local history study, visits to Welsh castles and the study of a Welsh artist, together with regular participation in Urdd activities and visits to Llangrannog, foster a sense of cultural identity.

There is good provision for pupils to learn about sustainability especially recycling and energy conservation. Events such as 'FairTrade Friday', sponsorship of a pupil in India and a study of other countries help to develop pupils' awareness of their place in the wider world.

**Teaching: Good**

Most teaching secures good progress and effective learning. Teachers and other adults motivate pupils well. Most teachers have good, up-to-date subject knowledge. They use a good range of resources and activities to challenge all groups of pupils at the right level. There are very good working relationships between staff and pupils that support pupils' achievements well. In the few lessons where teaching is less successful, teachers do not plan learning carefully enough and the pace of learning is too slow.

Teachers' marking is detailed and informs pupils of what they have done well. However, written comments do not always help pupils know how to improve their work. A few pupils are becoming skilful at assessing each other's work objectively.

Good use is made of the information about pupils' progress and wellbeing, for example in providing additional support for pupils who need more help with their learning. Parents receive very detailed information about their children's wellbeing, achievements and progress. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work at the end of each key stage are broadly secure. However, the school does not always consider a wide enough range of work to support judgements.

**Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school provides an extensive range of opportunities that positively promote pupils' health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This aspect of provision effectively sets the standard for much of the work of the school by ensuring that all pupils are cared for and valued. Learning

experiences promote pupils' personal development well in a diverse range of ways. For example, during acts of collective worship all pupils respectfully join in a moment of silent reflection.

Good liaison with outside agencies, such as speech and language therapy, impact positively on pupils' levels of wellbeing. There are effective strategies to address the few issues of poor attendance. Staff consistently promote high standards of behaviour.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is very good and enables these pupils to do well. Teachers quickly identify pupils who need additional support and provide appropriate help for them, aided by a skilled team of support staff. This process is managed well and co-ordinated efficiently. Parents are well informed and involved in reviewing their child's individual education plans.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is an inclusive environment where all pupils are valued equally. All pupils have full access to the wide range of learning opportunities within and beyond the school day. Pupils are friendly and polite and behaviour is very positive. They benefit from worthwhile opportunities to take responsibility such as being a school councillor. All adults collaborate extremely well to create a calm and caring atmosphere that impacts positively on pupils' outcomes. This reflects the strong Christian ethos of the school.

The school's accommodation provides a stimulating and well-maintained learning environment, both indoors and outside in the school grounds. There are interesting displays throughout the school that celebrate pupils' achievements and enhance learning experiences.

The school has sufficient appropriate resources to support the effective delivery of the curriculum. These include engaging outdoor learning areas to support the Foundation Phase curriculum and a well-resourced library. Such resources have a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve.

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

The school has a clear commitment to continuous improvement. Leaders and managers have well-defined aims for the school. These aims accurately reflect the school's mission statement, its place in the community and its Christian ethos. The headteacher is well supported in her drive for improvement by the senior leadership team, governing body and all staff.

Roles and responsibilities are distributed effectively and staff have appropriate skills and resources to perform their duties well. Job descriptions are clear. Regular



senior leadership team and staff meetings provide good opportunities for all staff to contribute to the strategic direction of the school. Leaders challenge staff effectively to bring about improvements in provision, such as in the teaching of phonics.

Governors support the school well and have a good awareness the school's strengths, shortcomings and future priorities. They have a good understanding of performance data. Governors make worthwhile use of this information to challenge the school about the standards it achieves. They also ensure that the school meets statutory obligations.

The school has been successful in addressing local and national priorities. This has led to recent improvements in pupil outcomes in Welsh language, reading and writing.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The headteacher and senior management team have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There are clear steps in place for checking quality and progress including book reviews, lesson observations, the use of data and questionnaires. Many of these are effective and lead to appropriate improvement plans. However, in a few cases, leaders do not rigorously challenge shortcomings, for example the use of numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.

Senior staff review performance data effectively to monitor progress. This enables them to keep close track of initiatives, make changes where necessary and plan for further improvement.

There are clear links between the self-evaluation process and the school development plan. The plan is a useful tool for moving the school forward and driving improvement. The school prioritises improvements effectively. There are appropriate links that assist the improvement process well. For example, the school development plan informs the performance management process and leads to relevant staff training opportunities.

Recent involvement in a network of professional practice has made a positive contribution to raising standards in writing. The school is currently involved with other local schools in tackling underachievement in numeracy, but it is too early to judge the impact of this work.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has a very positive partnership with parents. Parents receive regular information about many aspects of school life. For example, the school organised an information evening when home-school reading systems changed recently. Parents support 'fix it' days, when they and other members of the community help to make minor repairs to the school building. The 'Friends of St Michael's' raise significant funds to support the school, most recently by purchasing attractive new reading books. This has helped to foster positive pupil attitudes towards their learning.

The school has a very strong partnership with the church, which impacts positively on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Partnerships with the local police are beneficial. They have resulted in pupils acting as junior road safety officers, supporting the constabulary to apprehend speeding motorists outside the school.

Members of the local community support the school's wide range of after school and lunchtime clubs, for example the school orchestra, where pupils play their musical instruments together confidently and perform at acts of worship and concerts.

There are good arrangements to ensure smooth induction to the school from local playgroups. Partnerships with the local secondary school are very effective and ensure seamless transition to secondary education, particularly for those pupils who may be vulnerable to underachievement.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school manages its finances well and monitors expenditure carefully. This enables the school to allocate appropriate resources to identified improvement initiatives. Teaching and support staff are deployed effectively in order to meet the needs of all pupils. In particular, the school makes good use of training to raise standards, for example, in Welsh language and literacy. The school has good arrangements to support new staff.

In view of the appropriate use the school makes of its funding and the good progress made by most pupils, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Due to the small number of pupils at the end of both key stages, the results of pupil assessments have to be treated with care because one pupil's results can have a significant impact on school performance. In the Foundation Phase, many pupils in 2012 achieved outcome 5 overall (the combined expected outcome in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity). Pupils' performance in most areas was slightly above the all-Wales averages. The school's performance was around the expected level when compared to that of other schools in the same family (a group of schools with similar characteristics).

In language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development, pupils' performance at the expected outcome (outcome 5) is very near to the family average. At the higher outcome, pupils' performance in language literacy and communication is significantly higher than the family average. It is near the family average for mathematical development. In personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity, at both outcomes 5 and 6, the school is the lowest performing in the family. In 2012, performance in language literacy and communication skills, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity placed the school in the bottom 25% of schools in Wales with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In key stage 2, pupils' overall performance has been consistently near to the family and all Wales averages over the last three years in English, mathematics and science. In 2012, most pupils achieved the expected level (level 4) in English, mathematics and science. Performance was in the top 25% for mathematics and science but in the lower 50% for English, when compared with performance levels of schools in Wales and schools with similar percentages of pupils entitled to free school meals.

More able pupils' performance at the higher level at key stage 2 has fallen over the last three years in English but remains slightly above the average for the family of schools. In 2012, performance in mathematics and science, at the higher level, was significantly above the family average. When compared to that of schools across Wales with similar percentages of pupils entitled to free school meals, performance in mathematics has been the top 25% for the last three years. Performance in English has declined from the top 25% of that for similar schools in 2010 to the lower 50% in 2012. In science, the school has been in the lower 50% of similar schools for two of the last three years.

In 2012, boys in the Foundation Phase performed significantly less well than girls across all areas at the expected outcome 5. However, boys' performance was considerably higher than girls at the higher outcome 6 for language literacy and communication skills and mathematical development. In 2012, in key stage 2, boys' performance was higher than the performance of girls at both level 4 and 5 for English. There is no gender difference at level 4 for mathematics and science but boys' performance is better in these subjects at level 5. There is a trend of boys' performance being better than across most subjects in most of the last five years.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Learner questionnaires

Sixty-seven pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire fully. One further questionnaire was mostly completed.

All pupils think that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress and all know whom to talk to if they find their work hard. All pupils know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. As a result, all pupils say that they feel safe and nearly all feel that they are doing well at school.

Nearly all pupils feel that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that they get regular exercise. Nearly all pupils feel that they have enough books and equipment in school and most feel that homework helps them to improve their work.

Nearly all pupils feel that the school deals well with bullying and that nearly all behave well at playtimes and lunchtimes. Most pupils feel that children behave well in class and they can get their work done without interference.

All of these views are more positive than the average views of pupils in other schools across Wales. Significantly more pupils at the school feel that children behave well in classes and they can get their work done.

#### Parent questionnaires

Thirty-four parents completed the questionnaire and all of these are happy with the school and feel that it is well run.

All parents state that their children were helped to settle into school when they first started. All also feel that their children like school and are happy and safe there. All parents feel that teaching is good and pupils are expected to work hard. As a result, all parents feel that their children are making good progress. All parents feel that their children are becoming more mature, taking on responsibilities, and that they are encouraged to be healthy. All parents feel that there is a good range of activities in school and nearly all feel that homework given is appropriate. All parents state that the school treats their children fairly. All parents state that their children receive enough additional support with their individual learning needs and that pupils are well prepared to move on to their next school.

Nearly all parents state that school staff are approachable if they have concerns or questions and nearly all feel that they are well informed about their children's progress. All parents feel that pupils behave well in school. Nearly all parents are clear about what to do if they need to raise issues with the school or to make a complaint. Nearly all parents feel that the school keeps them well informed about their child's progress and that they feel comfortable in approaching the school. All parents feel that there is a good range of visits and trips.

Many of these views compare favourably with the views of parents in other schools in Wales.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Richard Lloyd	Reporting Inspector
Rick Hawkley	Team Inspector
Fiona Arnison	Team Inspector
Julie Ann Price	Lay Inspector
Heather Vaughan	Peer Inspector
Mrs Thomas	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))

### Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, 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**

### **Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)**

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

### **The core subject indicator (CSI)**

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

### **All-Wales Core Data sets**

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.