



*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

**Report following monitoring  
Level of follow-up: significant improvement**

**Holy Family R.C. Primary School  
Beechley Drive  
Pentrebane  
Fairwater  
Cardiff  
CF5 3SN**

**Date of visit: December 2014**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and  
Training in Wales**

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**The monitoring team**

Rosemary Lait	Reporting Inspector
Eleanor Davies	Team Inspector

## Outcome of monitoring visit

Holy Family Roman Catholic Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2013.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise the standards of pupils' work in English and mathematics at the end of the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Standards of pupils' work in English and mathematics show a continuing trend of improvement since the last inspection. There has been a good improvement in pupils' attainment at the expected levels in these subjects at the end of each key stage in 2014. When compared to other similar schools, pupils' performance at the end of the Foundation Phase placed the school in the top 25% for literacy and higher 50% for mathematical development. Pupils' performance at the end of key stage 2 moved the school from the bottom 25% in both subjects to the lower 50% for English and higher 50% for mathematics.

Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that pupils across the school are now developing writing for a good range of purposes and different audiences. For example, older pupils produce persuasive arguments in their letters to Queen Victoria, concerning child labour in the coal mines. More able pupils use an appropriate range of vocabulary and structure their work well.

Overall, the quality of pupils' presentation has improved. The school has introduced focused support for pupils who need help to improve their handwriting. This has had a notable impact on improving standards, particularly for those pupils in lower key stage 2 who had experienced difficulty in developing a fluent cursive style. Most pupils have made suitable progress in improving their spelling and grammar but there is room for further development.

Across the school almost all pupils read at a level at least in line with their age and ability. They read a range of suitable books and discuss the content with enthusiasm. Reading test data confirms that standards in reading continue to improve at the expected rate.

Most pupils have a good knowledge of number facts, appropriate for their age, and can carry out simple calculations for a range of purposes. For example, older pupils in the Foundation Phase add and subtract items on a shopping list and understand the concept of giving change. In all classes, pupils have appropriate opportunities to use their numeracy skills. For example, in science in Year 6, pupils measure the reduction in weight, over time, of a burning candle and display their findings accurately on a bar chart. However, more able pupils in upper Foundation Phase

and lower key stage 2 do not always achieve high enough standards because they are not challenged enough by the tasks.

### **Recommendation 2: Challenge more able pupils and develop all pupils' independent learning skills**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school's policy lists a range of appropriate strategies that staff should consider in planning appropriate work for more able and talented pupils. Although staff identify this group of pupils in each class, the level of challenge in the work planned is too variable across the school. Planning for more able older pupils in key stage 2 is rigorous. These pupils engage in challenging problem solving activities in mathematics with enthusiasm and persist to find the correct answer. However, older pupils in the Foundation Phase are not always challenged enough and have too little opportunity to attain the higher outcome 6+.

The school has introduced a range of effective strategies to develop pupils' independent learning skills. These have had a notable impact on pupils' ability to think for themselves. In all the lessons observed, teachers encourage pupils to discuss aspects of the task with a partner. All pupils focus well on the activity during this paired work and give appropriate feedback during plenary sessions. Pupils comment that they like to learn from each other and find the strategy helpful. Pupils from across the school are confident in knowing how to check their answers by using a dictionary or calculator, for example before seeking help from staff. .

At the start of each lesson, teachers share the lesson objective and ensure that pupils know the success criteria. All pupils have appropriate individual learning targets that they know and understand. They have made good progress in developing appropriate self-assessment skills. Older pupils record evaluations of their own and each other's work and generally make sensible suggestions about how this could be improved. In the most effective lessons, teachers use challenging questioning to help pupils learn to develop and support their own opinions.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the consistency and standards of teaching across the school**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the inspection, the school has provided staff with a good range of professional training opportunities, for example to improve their understanding of what makes a good lesson. The headteacher has introduced a range of appropriate, rigorous strategies to monitor teaching, including regular lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work.

Overall, there is an improvement in teaching. No lessons observed are judged as unsatisfactory. All teachers now use a common approach to lesson planning. Their plans include appropriate reference to developing pupils' skills and focus on outcomes for pupils. They generally make sure that pupils understand the lesson objective, manage assessment for learning strategies well and create appropriate

opportunities to discuss the lesson in plenary.

However, the quality of teaching is still variable. In the best practice, teachers have good subject knowledge and deliver the lessons with confidence and enthusiasm. In upper key stage 2, the teacher uses challenging open-ended questioning effectively to encourage pupils to develop their ideas. In the lower Foundation Phase, staff plan imaginative activities and use appropriate resources to stimulate pupils' interest in learning. In these classes, most pupils' work shows that they have made good progress over time.

In lessons with shortcomings, teachers do not explain the task well so the focus becomes muddled and pupils are unclear. For example, pupils are confused by scaffold frameworks and these have not had enough impact on improving writing. Teachers do not all deliver the lesson at a sharp enough pace or plan tasks that challenge pupils enough.

#### **Recommendation 4: Ensure that all staff with a management role fulfil their responsibilities**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The headteacher continues to provide the school with strong and clear leadership. Since her appointment, there has been a steady rise in the standards that pupils throughout the school achieve. All stakeholders understand the school's vision and aims. The focus of performance management has been on pupils' progress and this has generally resulted in good improvements in pupils' outcomes, particularly at the end of key stage 2.

All teachers are now responsible for meeting a range of clear and challenging targets.

All teachers have detailed and relevant job descriptions and understand clearly what is expected of them. All teachers have appropriate responsibilities and these all have a strong focus on improving outcomes and the quality of pupils' work. While most teachers have responded well to the challenges facing the school, there is still too much variation in the way in which all teachers carry out their responsibilities.

Senior leadership team meetings focus appropriately on strategic matters, as well as on monitoring the progress towards the targets in the post inspection action plan. Leaders work together well as a team to monitor pupils' progress through regular scrutiny of books and records of pupils' progress. As a result, senior leaders hold teachers to account robustly for the standards of pupils' work in their classes.

#### **Recommendation 5: Develop the skills of governors to enable them to act as critical friends**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school's governors are now very well informed about the standards that pupils achieve as well as the progress that the school is making in implementing its post

inspection action plan. Their knowledge has improved considerably through the reports that they have received from the senior leadership team on the school's data and the detailed analysis of the progress made by current pupils. Many governors have taken part in learning walks, during which they have had informative presentations by pupils. As a result, they have very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

Individual governors have taken on lead responsibilities for monitoring progress against particular recommendations in the school's post inspection action plan. As part of their preparation for this role they prepare challenging questions for members of the school's leadership team and then conduct a rigorous oral scrutiny of the evidence. As a result, nearly all governors are now very well informed about standards of pupils' work and the progress that the school is making in bringing about improvement. They have helped the school's leaders to set realistic yet challenging targets for improvement at the end of key stages.

Nearly all members of the governing body attend meetings regularly and fulfil their responsibilities as critical friends very well, although there is still room for further improvement.

**Recommendation 6: Develop rigorous self-evaluation and school improvement planning with a clear focus on raising overall standards**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school now has rigorous and appropriate procedures to monitor and evaluate the standards of pupils' work and outcomes as well as to monitor curriculum planning. Senior leaders' regular programmes of lesson observation and book scrutiny give them good first-hand evidence of standards. They have also consulted well with a wide range of stakeholders, including pupils. For example, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their lessons. Staff at all levels are more involved in the process of self-evaluation.

Senior leaders analyse the information well to give them an accurate picture of the standards of work of the school. As a result, self-evaluation is based on reliable and appropriate first-hand evidence.

The current school improvement plan focuses strongly on the recommendations of the last inspection. The monitoring of the implementation of this plan forms a sound basis for on-going self-evaluation. The targets for pupils' achievement are appropriately challenging and based on the detailed analysis of a comprehensive range of evidence. The school improvement plan takes good and relevant account of national priorities for improving pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy.

Governors are fully informed of the progress that the school is making in improving provision. As a result of their close scrutiny of the outcomes, governors now have a very sound basis for monitoring the work of the school.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to work towards meeting the inspection recommendations that have not yet been fully addressed.