



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

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

Date of inspection: September 2017

by

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

About Blessed William Davies School

Blessed William Davies Catholic Primary School is in Llandudno. Currently, there are 112 pupils on roll, aged from three to eleven years of age, including 15 nursery children who attend part-time. Pupil numbers fluctuate from year to year. There are four mixed-age classes at the school.

About 21% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is slightly above the national average (19%). A majority of pupils are of white British ethnicity. The proportion of pupils from other ethnic minority backgrounds at the school has increased in recent years and now makes up about a third of the school's population. About a third of pupils speak English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

The school identifies that around 23% of pupils have additional learning needs. This is slightly above the national average (21%). A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2011. The school appointed a new deputy headteacher in September 2016. The school's previous inspection was in March 2012.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Most pupils at Blessed William Davies Catholic School make good progress as they move through the school. They achieve good standards in most areas of their learning. They have positive attitudes to learning and develop well as independent learners, particularly in the foundation phase. Pupils contribute well to decisions about how and what they learn. The quality of teaching is generally good. There are effective arrangements to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The school cares for, supports and guides its pupils well. School leaders work effectively to secure ongoing improvements and good standards for pupils.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that the level of challenge and pace of learning are effective in meeting all pupils' needs in lessons in key stage 2
- R2 Further develop the school's leadership capacity and improve strategic decision making processes
- R3 Raise standards of pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are at the level expected for their age. During their time at the school, they generally make good progress from their individual starting points and achieve good standards in most aspects of their learning by the end of Year 6. Most pupils who are new to the English language make rapid progress in learning the language.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop strong independent learning skills. They speak confidently in front of others, for example when retelling a story from a different culture when working in the small world area. More able readers read with high levels of fluency and understanding. Those of middle or lower ability use their knowledge of letter sounds and blends to read unfamiliar words. Most pupils make appropriate progress in developing their writing skills. By the end of the foundation phase, they write independently in their work across the curriculum, for example to compare the characteristics of Llandudno and London or to write recipes for a happy family. They spell familiar words accurately, present work neatly and make suitable attempts at using basic punctuation. More able pupils write independently and at length to recount stories that they know, for example during free choice writing time.

Many key stage 2 pupils talk confidently in lessons and in role-play sessions, for example during work about the prodigal son. Most more able pupils speak very well. They use an extended range of vocabulary and present their views in an engaging manner, for example when describing their hobbies or talking about their families. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read fluently with suitable levels of understanding. They are beginning to use higher order skills such as inference successfully. Many have favourite authors and can explain their preferences for different types of books. Most pupils write well for a range of purposes by the end of Year 6. They show good stamina for writing, for example when writing extended stories about the unexpected visitor. They use punctuation such as speech and exclamation marks accurately. Most pupils present their work neatly. They use their writing skills effectively in their work across the curriculum, for example to apply for a job as one of Jesus's apostles.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop a secure understanding of basic number facts. They add and subtract successfully, identify pairs of numbers that add up to 100 and have a growing command of a suitable range of times tables. They apply their number skills appropriately during roleplay sessions, for example to calculate the amount of change from 20 pence when buying fruit. They work confidently with tally charts and use the information to produce basic bar charts. Most develop a sound understanding of properties of two-dimensional shapes and make sensible estimates of length when measuring objects. In key stage 2, most pupils make good progress in developing their mathematics skills. They work with large numbers and use a suitable range of strategies to add, take away, double or halve numbers. Many older pupils work successfully to solve challenging problems involving mixed or improper fractions. Most pupils apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum appropriately in a narrow range of contexts. For example, they set out income and expenditure in a bank statement and calculate the balance. They interpret pie charts successfully in science work when evaluating an omnivore's diet.

Overall, pupils use ICT for a limited range of purposes. In the foundation phase, pupils are beginning to use a digital learning platform to create pictograms and to work with simple databases. They use early programming skills to control floor robots. In key stage 2, older pupils are beginning to develop skills to write sets of instructions to move animations and to present their work using suitable software packages.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in learning Welsh. They follow instructions well, for example when asked to form a circle. They use Welsh as a natural part of lessons for example when counting tally marks in numeracy sessions. They respond appropriately to teachers' questions using a suitable vocabulary. By the end of Year 6, more able pupils have very strong Welsh language skills. They speak confidently, with expression and good pronunciation, to describe themselves and their hobbies. They produce extended pieces of written work of a good standard and read confidently from this work, for example when completing a diary about their visit to Nant Bwlch yr Haearn. However, pupils' progress is not consistently strong through all classes in key stage 2.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They feel safe at school and know where to turn if they are worried or upset. Most show appropriate levels of concentration and many persevere when faced with challenges, such as reading tricky words. Most are developing well as independent learners. For example, pupils in key stage 2 refer to the 'help box' to try to solve problems before asking their teacher to help them.

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They co-operate well with others at work and play. They know the school rules and explain why these are important in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. Most pupils have a sound awareness of how to stay safe on the internet. For example, they explain the importance of not sharing personal information. They know not to touch but to tell if they come across potentially harmful objects.

Across the school, many pupils contribute to decisions about what and how they learn. Many older pupils take on additional responsibilities enthusiastically. For instance they support positive play times in their roles as playground monitors. However, the roles of more formal pupil voice groups, such as the school council, are underdeveloped.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating a well-balanced diet and taking regular exercise. Many pupils from key stage 2 work alongside kitchen staff to learn about the nutritional value of food and prepare healthy meals. The majority of pupils show positive attitudes to exercise when attending after school sports clubs, such as netball.

Pupils and their families respond positively to initiatives to improve attendance. However, rates of attendance usually place the school in the lower 50% when compared with other similar schools. Nearly all pupils arrive at school punctually.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets requirements. Provision for most aspects of pupils' skill development is effective. In combination, teaching and learning experiences support most pupils to make good progress from their individual starting points. All teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and relationships between adults and pupils have a positive impact on pupils' standards. Arrangements to teach English to pupils who are new to the language are effective. However, the school's provision to develop pupils' ICT skills is generally weak.

Teachers in the foundation phase set out the learning environment and plan experiences well to meet the needs and interests of nearly all pupils. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills, for example by involving pupils in planning activities. This leads to high levels of engagement and enthusiasm for learning. Teachers and support staff question pupils thoughtfully during learning experiences. They intervene in learning at suitable points to consolidate or extend learning. They make effective use of assessment information to match the level of challenge in tasks to pupils' abilities. Provision to develop pupils' early speaking, reading and writing skills is effective. However, in a few instances arrangements to challenge pupils to achieve writing targets are not successful, for example when pupils copy out individual spellings repeatedly. Teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' number skills, for example by setting matching activities and challenging pupils to count in multiples of four. They make suitable use of outdoor learning spaces to encourage pupils to be physically active or to develop skills using large apparatus.

In key stage 2, teachers plan an engaging curriculum based on topics such as rainforests and Victorian Britain. They provide valuable contexts for pupils to develop and apply their skills in real life situations. For example, pupils work out how much money there is in a bank account after a withdrawal. The standard of work that pupils produce by the end of key stage 2 indicates that teachers have high expectations and well-developed professional skills. However, recent changes to school organisation mean that class sizes have increased considerably. This limits teachers' capacity to cater fully for the wide range of needs in the class or ensure that learning always proceeds at a fast enough pace. As a result, pupils do not always make as much progress as they could in lessons.

Across the school, most teachers provide pupils with useful verbal feedback during lessons. Teachers' written comments show pupils what they have done well and make suitable suggestions for improvement. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' marking.

Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills is effective. Most teachers and teaching assistants are good language role models. They incorporate everyday

Welsh in classrooms and around the school successfully. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to speak and write Welsh, for example in specific lessons and in Helpwr Heddiw sessions where pupils take responsibility for leading the learning in Welsh. Residential visits to Glan Llyn and places of historical interest such as Penrhyn Castle develop pupils' language skills and understanding of Welsh culture successfully.

Teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures. For example, a teacher from Lesotho visited the school to teach pupils about customs and characteristics of the people and the country. Regular visits to places of interest such as Penrhyn Castle support pupils' learning successfully. Provision to develop pupils' creative skills is strong. Many benefit from opportunities to learn a variety of musical instruments. Staff offer a wide range of extra-curricular clubs including chess and netball.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has effective arrangements to support the wellbeing of pupils. There are high expectations for standards of pupils' behaviour and this supports a calm and orderly learning environment. Teachers make effective use of local agencies to develop pupils' awareness of how to stay safe, for example through work with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and police. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Provision for pupils who require additional support is strong. The school uses a suitable range of assessment strategies to identify individual needs at an early stage of a pupil's learning journey. They use this assessment well to create good quality individual education plans and to plan additional support for pupils. Staff work effectively with pupils who need additional support within the class or in small withdrawal groups. This enables all pupils to make good progress towards their individual targets. They keep progress under appropriate review and ensure that pupils and parents have suitable opportunities to evaluate progress and set further targets for improvement.

There are well-established links with specialist support agencies such as speech therapists and the hearing impairment service. The support given to pupils who are new to English is particularly effective and supports many to make rapid progress in learning the language. Teachers work well with neighbouring schools to share good practice. For example, they share approaches to challenge more able pupils in mathematics.

There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to influence their own learning. For example, pupils plan the resources they would like to use in the foundation phase areas of learning and older pupils identify places they would like to visit to enrich their learning experiences. Opportunities for pupils to assess their work and identify improvements are developing appropriately. However, opportunities for formal pupil voice groups, such as the school council, to influence the life and work of the school are limited. Provision to develop pupils' personal and social skills is successful.

Staff promote pupils' cultural development well through a broad range of musical, dance and performance experiences, for example through work with the Welsh National Opera. A partnership with creative arts workshops provides pupils with valuable opportunities to perform, for example at the creative dance festival. Visits to the local museum broaden pupils' understanding of the heritage of Llandudno.

The school works in partnership with parents effectively. Parents receive valuable information about their child's progress through meetings and detailed annual reports. Strategies such as the 'play sack' initiative provide valuable opportunities for parents to support their child's progress.

The school promotes a healthy eating and drinking successfully. A broad range of activities develops pupils' understanding of healthy living and life skills well. For example, pupils in Year 6 take a leading role in running a weekly food co-operative programme. They take orders, source fresh produce from local farms and distribute the food to families at low cost.

The school works hard to improve rates of pupils' attendance, for example by encouraging families from overseas to ensure that any extended absences coincide, at least partly, with school holidays.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has established an effective vision to secure good standards of learning and wellbeing for pupils. Together with her team of staff, she sets high expectations for pupils' social and emotional development. This supports nearly all pupils to feel happy and secure at school and helps most pupils to make good progress.

Leaders and school staff evaluate many aspects of the school's provision and performance appropriately. Activities, such as lesson observations, book scrutiny and data analysis help leaders to identify the school's strengths and areas for development. They use this information to plan suitable priorities for improvement. Generally, leaders plan and facilitate actions that lead to the required improvements. These actions include valuable professional development opportunities. In combination, school improvement processes are effective. For example, following evaluation work and subsequent training, the school adapted its foundation phase provision successfully to improve pupils' independent learning skills.

Leaders keep progress against improvement plans under review and make suitable evaluations of the impact of improvement initiatives. Arrangements for the performance management of teaching staff meet requirements and support school improvement appropriately. However, the school has not established processes to manage the performance of teaching assistants.

Arrangements to distribute leadership responsibilities among the small team of staff are beginning to support school improvement successfully. For example, the deputy headteacher uses leadership time appropriately to monitor pupils' performance data and the quality of teachers' marking.

The school is developing a beneficial culture of professional learning. For example, training to support teachers to raise standards of Welsh is particularly effective in upper key stage 2. Recently, staff created good quality moderation portfolios. This work means that they have a sound understanding of national curriculum levels and foundation phase outcomes. This underpins generally accurate arrangements for teacher assessments.

School leaders have a sound understanding of the school's financial position. They normally allocate appropriate amounts of funding to school improvement priorities. Expenditure to fund specialist provision for pupils who are new to the English language represents good value for money. Leaders generally use grant funding successfully to improve outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals, for example by spending on intervention strategies to improve pupils' basic skills and to improve pupils' attendance and life skills. However, leaders do not always consider well enough the sustainability or impact of financial decisions, for example when planning staffing arrangements. This has led to a move from four classes to two much larger classes in key stage 2 recently, which has a negative impact on aspects of teaching. The school has the resources it needs to deliver most areas of the curriculum successfully.

Governors receive useful updates from the headteacher about school performance and progress against improvement priorities. They visit the school regularly to monitor aspects of the school's work at first-hand. They use this information appropriately to update the full governing body at meetings. Governors work alongside the school's challenge advisor to set performance objectives for the headteacher. This supports school improvement appropriately. There are a suitable range of committees and appropriate arrangements to deal with any complaints that occur. Overall, the governing body's capacity to act as a critical friend is at an early stage of development.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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