



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

A report on

**St David's Catholic Primary School
West Cross Avenue
West Cross
SA3 5TS**

Date of inspection: October 2017

by

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

About St David's Catholic Primary School

St.David's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School is in the suburb of West Cross about three miles west of Swansea city centre.

The school currently has 171 pupils between the ages of three and eleven. There are six mixed-age classes and a nursery class, where 14 children attend part-time. The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is 4%, which is well below the national average (19%).

The school identifies that around 18% of pupils have additional learning needs (ALN). This is lower than the national average of 25%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. About 40% of pupils come from a minority ethnic background and around 23% speak English as an additional language (EAL). No pupils are in the care of the local authority. None come from homes where Welsh is their first language.

The acting headteacher took up her post in September 2017. The school was last inspected in 2011.

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 make expected progress from their starting points on entry to the school. Across the school, pupils make effective progress in developing their literacy skills. Most pupils communicate to a high standard and they make very good progress in their oral skills. There are strengths, but too many weaknesses in pupils' learning in Welsh and information and communication technology (ICT). All pupils enjoy coming to school. They demonstrate good behaviour in class and around the school and have a positive attitude to learning.

The quality of teaching is strong, but pupils, particularly the more able, do not always receive enough challenge in their work. Planning for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum is relatively weak.

The acting headteacher has worked conscientiously with staff in the limited time at the school. The newly-formed governing body is very supportive of the school and is developing a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, it is too soon to measure the effectiveness of the new structure.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Raise the attainment of more able pupils
- R2 Develop pupils' ability to make decisions and choices in relation to their own learning
- R3 Plan for pupils to have more opportunities to apply their numeracy and ICT skills in other subject areas
- R4 Improve the provision for Welsh
- R5 Strengthen leadership and management at all levels and develop the governing body's role as a critical friend

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, most pupils make expected progress from their starting points. A minority of pupils who enter the school at varying stages with little or no English make good progress and achieve well by the end of Year 6. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress towards meeting their individual targets.

Across the school, pupils make effective progress in developing their literacy skills in English lessons. Most communicate to a high standard and they make very good progress in their oral skills. This is a strength of the school.

In the foundation phase, most pupils listen attentively, they talk proudly about their work and the life of the school. Most give detailed descriptions of their tasks and older pupils can share their opinions maturely, for example when they place the physical features in their local environment in order of preference and impact. By the end of Year 2, many pupils read simple texts confidently and use their phonic knowledge successfully to decode unfamiliar words. They are beginning to develop their knowledge of different types of texts and a range of authors appropriately. A few more able pupils discuss the content of their stories and are able to express an opinion in detail about their favourite character. Most pupils develop effective writing skills from a very young age. Many write stories and accounts well. For example, they are able to use their imagination well to write a diary entry to describe Paddington Bear's experience in the station when he first arrives in England. The older pupils write effective recounts of their weekly walks around the locality.

Most pupils in key stage 2 communicate clearly and confidently and join in with discussions enthusiastically. Most older pupils discuss their work with maturity and use an extensive vocabulary. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read confidently. They discuss a wide range of texts by their favourite authors well and apply research skills confidently, for example to produce non-chronological reports on life in the Victorian era. Pupils generally present their work purposefully and many write effectively and extensively in a range of genres. Many pupils share their emotions well when writing creatively. For example, when composing soliloquies they use interesting vocabulary and organise their ideas successfully. They are beginning to gain confidence across a range of types of writing in other areas of the curriculum.

Most pupils across the school have a sound knowledge of mathematical concepts and they use specific methods and skills confidently to carry out a range of calculations. Many pupils in key stage 2 have a secure understanding of place value and the relationships between numbers, which enables them to carry out more complex mathematical problems or challenges. Pupils in Year 2 use co-ordinates to locate an object and pupils in key stage 2 collect data by measuring the impact of exercise on their heart rates. However, most pupils apply a limited range of numeracy skills purposefully across other areas of the curriculum.

Most pupils develop appropriate skills in ICT. By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils use a range of applications on tablet computers to support their learning well. In key stage 2, many pupils are beginning to use databases and are able to create simple moving pictures appropriately. They develop suitable research skills and produce a factual poster on HMS Challenger. A few pupils are beginning to code successfully. However, pupils use limited ICT skills in most year groups.

Many pupils make purposeful progress from their starting points in developing their basic skills in Welsh. By Year 2, many pupils write a short description of a visit to the beach confidently and, by Year 6, most pupils include a suitable range of sentence patterns and tenses when writing an extended dialogue. A very few read simple texts aloud using correct pronunciation. However, too many pupils do not use their Welsh language skills often enough outside of designated Welsh lessons.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

All pupils feel safe in the caring and inclusive ethos that is an integral part of the school's life. Most pupils know whom to turn to when they need support and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet.

Most pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are extremely polite and well mannered. They show respect for adults and to one another, listening carefully to what their friends and teachers say. Their social skills develop very well from a very young age.

Most pupils are interested in their work and concentrate for long periods when completing tasks. Most pupils from across the school work together successfully in the Friday 'innovative our'. For example, pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 in the engineering group are highly motivated and work together well as they develop different surfaces for bridges. They enjoy their learning and demonstrate a good level of perseverance for extended periods. However, most pupils in both the foundation phase and in key stage 2 are only beginning to make independent decisions about their own learning. The minority of pupils for whom English is an additional language show a high level of determination in developing and practising their language skills. This helps many to make strong progress.

Many pupils take their responsibilities seriously and are effective ambassadors of the school's key values. The faith leaders and other pupil groups represent the views of pupils competently and make purposeful decisions about aspects of school life, for example introducing outdoor activities for pupils during playtimes. The school council promotes children's rights successfully. It introduces a right a month, which is having a positive effect on individual pupils' self-respect and by showing their respect to others. With the support of the new 'Buddy' group, there has been a marked improvement in pupils' behaviour during playtimes.

Nearly all pupils understand and have positive attitudes towards living healthy lives. Nearly all pupils take part regularly in physical activities during the day and enjoy representing the school at local sports events. Many pupils feel that taking part in the dance, cricket and football after school clubs benefits them physically as well as their general wellbeing. They take part in community charity running events, benefiting their health and raising awareness of local children who are in need.

Many of the older pupils are developing an empathy towards others by supporting local and world-wide charities. Their involvement in supporting a school in Sierra Leon to build a toilet and to donate their school uniform has also deepened their understanding of global issues and their effect.

Attendance rates are improving over time, but the school has remained in the lower 50% when compared with similar schools over the last three years. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

The curriculum provides a stimulating range of learning experiences for most pupils. It builds on their prior learning and meets the needs of many pupils well. The current long and medium-term plans now ensure that teachers are able to plan and deliver learning in many subjects successfully. Overall, there is a suitable degree of breadth and balance in the curriculum.

The school has re-organised its Friday afternoon provision and introduced an interesting range of enriched sessions to develop pupils' wider skills. Although these sessions are very recent, they offer stimulating experiences for most pupils across the school. For example, the ICT group are currently making a movie and poster to advertise the school and the ECO club is having a positive effect on raising pupils' awareness of environmental issues.

The school arranges stimulating opportunities for pupils to visit local places of interest, such as the lifeboat station in Mumbles and to a television manufacturing company to support its theme work. It provides a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities that enrich pupils' learning successfully and contribute well to pupils' standard of wellbeing.

Most teachers' awareness of the literacy and numeracy framework is secure and in a few examples skills are planned clearly for individual lessons. However, there is inconsistency across the school in the way teachers are taking the literacy and numeracy framework forward. Teachers provide a number of opportunities for pupils to develop a range of writing styles successfully in their English lessons. They are beginning to place a suitable emphasis on providing opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across the curriculum. However, the planning and provision for pupils to develop their numeracy and ICT skills in other areas of learning are more limited.

The school's provision to develop Welsh language skills is appropriate, but pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their Welsh skills outside of designated Welsh lessons, including in informal situations around the school. Teachers provide an increasing number of opportunities to enrich pupils' knowledge of Wales through topic work and visits. For example, Year 2/3 are studying the history of the Liberty stadium in Swansea.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. All teachers plan learning activities that have appropriate objectives and staff communicate these clearly to pupils. Planned activities stimulate and engage most pupils well, build on pupils' prior learning and ensure that lessons proceed at a suitable pace. Most teachers ask a wide range of

open questions that help to extend most pupils' learning. They prompt pupils to explain their initial thinking well. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils' learning, particularly those who have English as an additional language. All staff manage pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school successfully. However, the challenge that teachers provide in the activities they plan for pupils is not always strong enough, particularly for more able pupils. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The majority of teachers and support assistants tend to lead too many activities. This means that pupils do not have enough regular opportunities to make decisions and choices about what and how they learn.

In the foundation phase, staff provide focused and continuous activities that include purposeful opportunities for pupils to investigate, role play and practise their physical skills. The provision generally meets the principles of the foundation phase well in many respects. Most teachers plan suitable activities for pupils to make their own choices in the outdoor learning environment. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils across the school to enrich their learning experiences in the outdoor environment.

Most teachers give pupils effective verbal feedback as they carry out tasks. Many teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to assess their own work. Most pupils know how well they are doing. The effective use of self-help and resilience strategies in key stage 2 has strengthened pupils' ability to take more responsibility to improve their own work. Most teachers make effective use of assessment outcomes to identify individuals and groups of pupils who require support, for example through intervention strategies and formal school action. However, the impact of assessment on teachers' short-term planning is more limited.

Care, support and guidance: Good

All teachers use a robust and effective system for tracking pupils' progress on their journey through the school. They use this information and a range of data appropriately in order to identify pupils who need additional support in literacy and numeracy. The school arranges any necessary intervention support for individuals or groups of pupils through well-trained teaching assistants. Monitoring processes and pupil tracking show that the quality of intervention and support is effective. This results in most pupils making good progress in relation to their individual learning targets. Learning plans of good quality meet the needs of individual pupils successfully, and staff, pupils and parents review these termly.

Pupils have worthwhile opportunities within the curriculum to discuss the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. Nearly all pupils enjoy eating fruit and vegetables from the school tuck shop at breaktime. Opportunities to take part in healthy living projects with Swansea University have improved most of the older pupils' understanding of healthy living choices successfully. The school encourages pupils to be physically active, for example by running a kilometre a day and during regular after-school clubs.

The school enables most pupils to develop a purposeful understanding of life and customs in countries around the world. In order to welcome new pupils from Mexico, the school organised a Mexican day so that the whole school developed an

understanding about their culture. The school enables most pupils to develop as well-rounded citizens who have a sound understanding of different, morals, beliefs and religions. The older pupils organise a range of activities to highlight the issues facing farmers in developing countries.

Pupils have a number of opportunities to make decisions and take on meaningful responsibilities, for example the school council, Criw Cymraeg and digital leaders, which develop pupils' leadership skills well. The super ambassadors are leading a school project to develop pupils' understanding of their right to be happy, safe and valued. This is encouraging them to reflect on their lives and the lives of others successfully.

The school has effective arrangements to support pupils' wellbeing. Consistent expectations and effective behaviour management ensure high standards of politeness, mutual respect and conduct among pupils. Strategies used in key stage 2 that focus on pupils being active citizens and working through their problems are having a beneficial effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

The school is a caring community that nurtures pupils' personal and social skills well. Through regular school assemblies, visitors from the church and visits to a number of local churches there are worthwhile opportunities to develop the pupils' spiritual understanding. Also, the activities during the school's world religion week help pupils to learn effectively about a range of religious practices and customs. The school provides rich experiences to meet local groups, such as the coastguards and to work with a local artist. However, there are limited opportunities to develop pupils' creative and cultural understanding.

The school has many initiatives to improve attendance rates. These include weekly and termly celebrations of high attendance, and regular reminders on the school's website and a social media site. These have improved the understanding of pupils and parents of the importance of regular attendance.

The school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for instance, on the internet. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The recently appointed acting headteacher has quickly established clear lines of communication and accountability across the school. She has developed a stronger team with the new acting deputy headteachers and has identified quickly the areas in the school in need of most improvement. The acting headteacher receives effective support from the school staff who work well together to ensure that the school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Senior leaders and governors share a suitable vision for the school and they communicate this well to all members of the school community, including parents. However, improvement planning and the management of change at the school have suffered due to instability among key staff over recent years. There is scope for more coherent forward planning in the current arrangements, but there is still uncertainty over the school's leadership in the near future.

The acting headteacher has distributed responsibilities effectively and, in a limited amount of time, all staff are beginning to fulfil their new roles and responsibilities well. The new phase meetings enable all staff to share ideas and have led to an improvement in whole school curriculum planning and a more consistent approach to the feedback given to pupils. Termly discussions on pupil progress are beginning to impact on teachers introducing new practices in their teaching and improving the provision to develop pupils' skills. However, it is too soon to measure the impact of the new arrangements.

The school's self-evaluation processes involve the whole staff appropriately. Recent improvements in staff engagement have led to an increased understanding of the school's strengths and the identification of more relevant strategic priorities that focus well on raising standards. For example, the improvement planning focuses appropriately on the need to improve outcomes for more able pupils and to develop pupils' ICT skills further. The recent plan has clear targets and appropriate actions for improvement, and staff have clearly defined areas of responsibility.

The school's processes to manage and oversee the professional development of staff are appropriate. There are useful opportunities for most members of staff to attend courses, receive in-house training and work with other schools to view effective practice. For example, working with other teachers in the local cluster of schools to introduce group guided reading sessions has been effective in improving standards and pupil attitudes towards reading. Improved procedures for the performance management of staff support school improvement well and link suitably to school and national priorities.

The school is progressing well in a few of the Welsh Government priorities, particularly in improving pupils' literacy skills. However, the opportunities to improve pupils' numeracy, ICT skills and Welsh are less successful.

Members of the governing body, led by the newly appointed chair of governors, are very supportive of the school. They understand and carry out their responsibilities diligently, particularly those relating to staffing and finance. They meet regularly and have developed quickly an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have recently set up a 'team around the school' committee to learn more about the standards pupils achieve and the school's curriculum provision. Their current knowledge of the school enables them to make a stronger contribution to setting the strategic priorities for the school. However, their involvement in evaluating and challenging the school's work is at an early stage of development.

The acting headteacher, with the support of the governing body, manages the school budget efficiently. The projected school reserves are at a much more appropriate level compared with the very large surpluses held by the school in the past. The school has recently begun to use pupil development grant funding well to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, for example by improving the provision for developing the literacy and numeracy skills of these pupils. It also makes good use of funding to support pupils from minority ethnic groups to help them understand and to use English successfully.

Resources are generally appropriate to meet pupils' needs and the targets in the improvement plan. However, a lack of suitable ICT equipment has contributed to

adequate standards in certain aspects of ICT. The indoor environment supports teaching and learning efficiently and the increased use of the spacious outdoor areas is beginning to impact positively on most pupils' creative skills.

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.

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:

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