



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

A report on

**St Ethelwold's Primary School
Melrose Avenue
Shotton
Deeside
Flintshire
CH5 1NG**

Date of inspection: October 2018

by

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

About St Ethelwold's Primary School

St Ethelwold's Primary School is in Deeside, Flintshire. Currently, there are 104 pupils on roll aged from 3 to 11 years, including 15 nursery age pupils who attend part-time. There are four mixed-aged classes at the school.

About 30% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average of 18%. The school identifies around 28% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is above the national average of 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Around 10% of pupils have English as an additional language and a very few speak Welsh at home. A very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background.

The headteacher took up his post in September 2008. The school's previous inspection was in February 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

Leaders and staff at St Ethelwold's Primary School work diligently to create a safe and nurturing learning environment where all pupils benefit from their care. They form positive relationships with parents and carers to ensure that they meet pupils' needs well.

Many pupils at the school make suitable progress in their learning. They develop effective information and communication technology (ICT) skills, which they use skilfully to enhance their learning throughout the curriculum. Many pupils read and speak well, however they do not develop their Welsh and numeracy skills strongly enough.

The school's curriculum is engaging, and its learning environment attractive and well organised. Teachers are beginning to develop and implement a worthwhile curriculum to give pupils effective opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. However, at present, there are still elements of the curriculum that need improvement, such as the balance and effectiveness of foundation phase learning.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
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 Improve pupils' numeracy and Welsh oracy skills
- R2 Improve pupils' spelling and their ability to use punctuation accurately
- R3 Ensure that teaching challenges all pupils at an appropriate level
- R4 Improve the balance of learning and effectiveness of independent learning activities in the foundation phase.
- R5 Ensure that improvement processes focus effectively on identifying and addressing shortcomings in standards

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: Adequate and needs improvement

Many pupils enter the school with skills that are generally in line with those expected for their age and, by the end of key stage 2, many make suitable progress. However, few pupils who are eligible for free school meals reach standards higher than those expected for their age. Most pupils identified as having additional needs make worthwhile progress towards their personal goals.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop appropriate communication skills. They listen to adults beneficially and talk about their likes and dislikes confidently. For example, speaking through the class puppet, they explain that he likes beans for breakfast. Many develop a suitable understanding of letters and sounds, and recall the main points from stories they have read well. However, a minority do not have a strong enough understanding of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. By the end of the phase, many pupils communicate their ideas suitably in writing. For example, they write short phrases and sentences appropriately to provide directions to Red Riding Hood's house. However, too many do not spell well enough or use punctuation, such as capital letters and full stops, accurately enough.

As they progress through key stage 2, many pupils develop effective listening and speaking skills. They talk to adults and their class confidently, explaining and sharing their ideas successfully. For example, when explaining why countries near the equator are hotter than countries at the poles. Many pupils' reading skills improve consistently as they move through the key stage. They read, recall and discuss the texts enthusiastically. For example, they discuss characters from Roald Dahl, making particular comments about Mr Twit's beard. Towards the end of key stage 2, many pupils write confidently and understand well how to structure their writing for different purposes, such as reports or recounts. A few older pupils use imaginative vocabulary to enliven their writing well, for example describing mummification as a 'long and disgusting process', where a 'metal hook is vigorously whisked' and 'forced the brain down'. However, throughout the stage, pupils' spelling and punctuation is not accurate enough. Across the school, pupils apply their literacy skills appropriately in a satisfactory range of contexts across the curriculum.

Throughout the school, many pupils make limited progress in developing their Welsh language skills. In the foundation phase, a majority of pupils respond suitably to instructions given by adults. They understand and use a few simple words and phrases competently. In key stage 2, many pupils expand on their vocabulary, and by the end of the stage understand and respond to a suitable range of simple questions. For example, many can say how old they are and where they live. Overall, most pupils Welsh language skills are not well developed.

In the foundation phase, many pupils make suitable progress in developing their mathematical and numeracy skills. Many younger pupils develop their understanding of number and counting appropriately, for example when finding and counting seeds in a chopped-up pumpkin. As they progress through the phase, many pupils transfer their mathematical skills competently to their play activities, for example when working with money in the shop area. Towards the end of key stage 2, many pupils

identify steps to complete numeracy tasks appropriately, for example to find missing numbers in an addition sequence. They make suitable progress in improving their understanding of number and which mental or written strategies to use to solve problems. For example, they multiply and divide by tens and hundreds competently. However, throughout the school, many pupils reach only satisfactory standards in numeracy.

As they progress through the school, many pupils develop effective information and communication technology (ICT) skills. By the end of key stage 2, many use a broad range of applications on tablet computers well in many areas of their learning. They retrieve and save their work efficiently. Many older pupils upload their work confidently to an application that allows their parents to view what they have done. They develop and use a few spreadsheets suitably, and use these to draw graphs well. They produce informative and eye-catching reports, using their own research to help them learn about a broad range of topics, such as animals and ancient Egypt. However, they have a limited understanding of how to develop or use databases.

Many pupils are beginning to develop suitable thinking and problem solving skills. They often work together efficiently to reach solutions in their everyday work. For example, in the early foundation phase, pupils work as a team to build a run that allows them to roll a ball down a slope, across the flat and end up in the class teepee.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils like attending school. Many have positive attitudes towards their learning and enjoy celebrating and discussing their work with adults. They know, understand and embrace the school's values. As a result, most pupils are courteous, polite and helpful. Nearly all pupils understand the need to take regular exercise and the importance of eating and drinking healthily. For example, in the foundation phase, pupils independently select and eat fruit and vegetables for their snack. Many pupils have a beneficial understanding of how to stay safe online and give examples of precautions they should take when using the internet, such as not giving out personal details.

Most pupils have a very clear understanding of children's rights and discuss sensibly their right to be educated and for others to listen to their views. Many are well-motivated learners and engage purposefully in class. They show interest in their work and sustain concentration for appropriate lengths of time. Many persevere when tasks are difficult, for example when working on mathematical investigations to order coins based on set criteria. Towards the end of the foundation phase, a minority of pupils find it hard to settle to work or to maintain focus on independent activities.

Pupils enjoy taking on growing responsibilities, such as the school and eco councils. School council members organise meetings, agendas and minutes with a good degree of independence, taking account of other's views and feeding back to pupils. The eco-council has worked recently with local industry to develop a tree circle and this enhances the school's outdoor provision effectively.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school. They feel confident that they can talk to an adult if they are upset or worried. Older pupils respond sensitively to an online system that allows them to pass on any concerns discretely to a teacher. They are aware of the need to attend school regularly and punctually. However, despite this, and the school's considerable efforts, attendance places the school in the bottom 25% when compared with similar schools for the last three years.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

In many cases, teachers plan engaging learning experiences for pupils. Teachers and support staff develop effective working relationship with most pupils and this helps to re-inforce the school's caring ethos. They consider carefully how to use resources to help to engage pupils in activities, and this helps to foster their enthusiasm in learning. For example, in the lower foundation phase, activities such as using tweezers to pick-up conkers and acorns allows pupils to develop their physical and number skills beneficially. Teachers deploy support assistants effectively, for example to develop reading strategies with groups of pupils in key stage 2. This makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. However, across the school teachers do not always plan learning that challenges pupils at the right level, or ensure that pupils understand well enough what they need to do. As a result, they do not always make enough progress.

Most teachers provide beneficial oral feedback to pupils about what they do well and how to improve their work. They have recently implemented a new system for providing feedback that is beginning to allow pupils to see more quickly when they have been successful and where they need to make their work better. However, this is yet to have a strong impact on improving standards. All teachers provide a few opportunities for pupils to assess the quality of their own or other's work, but these strategies are not consistent or embedded well into school practices.

The school environment supports the ethos of the foundation phase well. Planned activities include beneficial opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their skills indoors and outside. In the lower foundation phase, adults develop these practices well to engage pupils in their learning. This helps pupils to develop confidence and independence. However, towards the end of the phase, they do not always ensure that pupils understand well enough how to engage with and benefit from independent activities. Throughout the phase, the curriculum is not balanced well enough to ensure that pupils experience all areas of learning sufficiently.

The school has recently introduced a revised curriculum to improve opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills. This provides teachers with ideas to plan learning activities to develop pupils' skills and understanding systematically. However, it is too early for this to have a noticeable impact on pupils' achievement. Longer term planning identifies usefully opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. However, when planning in the short term, teachers do not yet use this well enough to ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to develop these skills across the curriculum. Teachers consider usefully how to develop pupils' digital competence in many lessons. As a result, pupils develop their confidence, and their ICT skills, well.

Through daily Welsh sessions, all teachers promote pupils' use of the Welsh language suitably. They develop simple language patterns in these lessons systematically. However, they do not consider well enough how to help pupils practise and use these skills throughout the day. As a result, pupils' Welsh language development is slow. The school ensures that all pupils have beneficial opportunities to learn about Welsh history and culture. For example, in the foundation phase, pupils learn about the life of St David. They study Wales in Tudor times and visit a Tudor house in Conwy to learn about this period of history.

All teachers provide an effective range of opportunities for pupils to learn outside of the school on trips and visits. Many teachers take advantage of these to extend pupils knowledge and understanding. For example, younger pupils visit a local animal park to learn about different animals, and where milk comes from. In key stage 2, pupils visit a nearby Roman centre. This helps to give them a broader understanding of Roman life in Wales.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy and inclusive community, which supports its pupils and their families well, taking account of their individual needs. The school has a strong working relationship with parents and communicates with them effectively. Leaders organise useful workshops for parents to develop this relationship further. For example, the school held parent classes on literacy, numeracy and their forest school project, which helped parents to support their children's learning at home. The school has established a worthwhile parent-forum for parents to raise concerns and discuss issues with staff. Parents value this useful link.

Staff promote the school's values and ethos effectively through lessons and daily acts of collective worship. These provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to reflect on values such as compassion for others, and promote pupils' spiritual and moral development effectively. Close and effective links with the local church mean that pupils have the opportunity to visit places of worship, make a pilgrimage to Bardsey Island and benefit from the experiences of local religious figures. This further enhances pupils' understanding of moral and social issues, for example the importance of caring for others. The school develops pupils' cultural understanding of art in exciting ways. For example, pupils have worked with a local graffiti artist to produce works on Welsh themes.

Staff use a clear, robust system for tracking pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress. Leaders hold regular meetings with teachers to evaluate each pupil's progress against their individual targets. They use a wellbeing measure to gauge each pupil's social and emotional development. As a result, leaders and staff identify issues well and respond promptly through the provision of targeted support for identified pupils. They ensure that all pupils with additional learning needs have individual targets that include measurable, challenging and achievable goals. As a result, nearly all identified pupils make beneficial progress.

The school works effectively with a wide range of outside agencies to support pupils' education and care. For example, its ongoing work with a local outreach service helps it to identify and provide effective support for pupils with severe learning difficulties.

The school makes appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating, drinking and lifestyles. Pupils have valuable opportunities to learn about the importance of healthy eating, drinking, physical activity and internet safety. Pupils and parents value the good range of extra-curricular activities that the school provides, including dance, football, construction club, craft and coding club. Pupils attend these well and they have a positive impact on their personal development and wellbeing. A few older pupils have benefited well from working towards a royal award for team working and leadership. This has helped to develop their resilience and confidence. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leaders monitor all pupils' attendance closely. They renew and develop initiatives regularly to target and support families with lower attendance. For example, leaders have engaged a family engagement officer who works with parents to find ways that the school can help improve their children's attendance. These strategies ensure that attendance remains a priority.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which focuses effectively on developing pupils to 'be the best they can' and reinforces the school's Christian values. Other leaders support the headteacher well, and together they share this vision confidently with pupils, staff, governors and parents. As a result, leaders take forward developments, such as the implementation of a new school curriculum with a clear focus in mind. The headteacher has high expectations of himself, his leaders and staff, and all are supportive of one another.

Leaders make appropriate use of performance management procedures to identify areas for staff improvement. They use this to facilitate the professional development of teachers and support staff efficiently. This leads to suitable opportunities for staff to improve their skills and to observe practice in other schools. For example, the school has established good links with a school in a neighbouring county to observe foundation phase practice. As a result, teachers have recently introduced strategies that allow pupils to have influence over their own learning. However, staff appraisal processes do not always identify and target shortcomings in standards and provision effectively enough. Support staff work effectively across the school and attend regular training that has a positive impact on the school's provision. A good example is the creation of the forest school, which offers innovative ways to present aspects of the curriculum. For example, pupils build small huts in the forest area to learn about celebrations in the Jewish faith.

Leaders have established effective systems to evaluate the school's performance. Activities, such as classroom observations, the scrutiny of pupils work and learning walks provide leaders with useful information. However, leaders' evaluations lack focus and do not identify well enough the standards of pupils' learning. As a result, they do not identify and address important areas that require improvement, such as the standard of pupils' spelling and their Welsh language skills.

The governing body is supportive of the school and carries out its statutory responsibilities efficiently. Through regular reports from the headteacher, governors have a sound understanding of the school's provision. However, their contribution to

the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes is limited and this reduces their ability to ask searching questions.

The headteacher, with the support of the governing body, manages the school budget effectively. They target finances well to meet pupils' needs and to support priorities in the school's development plan. Leaders and governors ensure that the school has an appropriate level of staffing and learning resources to deliver the planned curriculum. They maintain an attractive environment, both indoors and outside, in which pupils learn and play happily. Leaders link expenditure to strategic priorities and staff training efficiently. The school makes suitable use of the pupil development grant to provide a worthwhile range of intervention groups that ensure that pupils who are eligible improve their attendance and achieve appropriately. However, they do not evaluate the impact of these initiatives well enough and, as a result, are not sure which are most effective.

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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