



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

**A report on**

**St Gabriel's R.C. Primary School  
Ringland Circle  
Newport  
Newport  
NP19 9PQ**

**Date of inspection: March 2019**

**by**

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

## About St Gabriel's R.C. Primary School

St Gabriel's Roman Catholic Primary School is in Ringland, in Newport local authority. There are 179 pupils on roll, aged from three to eleven years.

The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 17%, which is just below the national average. The school identifies around 27% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is above the national average of 21%. Many pupils are from a white British background. Around 27% of pupils speak English as an additional language. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

The headteacher was appointed in May 2018. The school's last inspection was in September, 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

The headteacher, staff and governors work well as a team and ensure that the school provides very helpful, individual support for pupils and their families. There is a caring and supportive ethos in which all pupils feel safe and valued. Most pupils behave well and are polite and welcoming to visitors.

Many pupils make good progress in their learning as they move through the school. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they persevere well in lessons. Staff create a calm environment where pupils are respectful to adults and each other. Teachers provide a wide range of rich learning experiences that engage pupils well. A particular strength is the work of the school to develop pupils' creative skills.

The headteacher provides effective, purposeful leadership. Senior leaders have a clear vision for school improvement and they share this successfully with all members of staff. A culture of improvement permeates the school and an exceptional feature is the emphasis on developing staff at all levels.

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

## **Recommendations**

R1 Address the safety issue identified during the inspection

R2 Improve pupils' Welsh language skills

R3 Provide more opportunities for pupils to work independently and to take greater responsibility for their learning, especially in key stage 2

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Many pupils enter the school with skills that are below those expected for their age. As they move through the school, many make good progress, including those with additional learning needs and pupils who have English as an additional language.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop effective communication skills. They listen well to staff and each other and they contribute sensibly to class discussions. Many read confidently and develop an appropriate understanding of the link between letters and sounds. Many pupils develop their early writing skills successfully. In the reception class, most pupils can hold a pencil correctly and begin to write in a recognisable form. By the end of the foundation phase, many older pupils write well in a suitable range of simple genres, for example, they produce interesting stories about Prince Llewelyn and Gelert and construct their own legends using sensible openings, resolutions, and endings.

In key stage 2, many pupils speak confidently and make purposeful contributions to class discussions. For example, older pupils in Years 5 and 6 participate enthusiastically in class debates about characters in *Carrie's War*. Many pupils make good progress in reading from a low base. For example, pupils in Year 4 discuss the themes in *Hunger Games* and explain how these might apply in modern times. Older pupils in Year 6 read fluently and expressively. They pay careful attention to context, cues and punctuation to read for meaning. They assess characters in the books they are reading confidently and the more able suggest how some books might be improved. Across the key stage, many pupils make good progress with their writing skills. For example, in Year 4, they identify the key features of a newspaper report well, using headlines, captions, and paragraphs for effect. By Year 6, older pupils write successfully in a range of formal and informal genres. For example, they construct engaging poems on the second world war and evacuees and display effective use of descriptive language, emotion and mood.

Across the school many pupils have positive attitudes to learning Welsh. Foundation phase pupils develop a useful understanding of basic Welsh words and phrases. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils respond to simple questions about numbers, colours and the weather. However, many pupils lack confidence to speak Welsh outside of designated Welsh lessons. Many do not have a strong enough understanding or recall of words and phrases they have practised previously, such as to say where they went, or to describe themselves. Pupils' standards in reading and writing are developing suitably.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in mathematics. In the reception class, most pupils acquire skills quickly through meaningful practical activities. For example, they use potato prints to create attractive repeating patterns. This good progress through purposeful activity continues through the foundation phase. Most pupils measure accurately using standard units, such as when estimating and finding out the weight of birthday presents for Goldilocks. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils have a good understanding of number and apply this knowledge confidently in a variety of contexts. For example, most pupils divide a pizza into quarters successfully.

Most pupils continue to make good progress as they move through key stage 2. They use their numeracy skills purposefully in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 3 measure temperature and time accurately when determining the effect of different environments on ice melting. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are confident mathematicians and achieve well across the breadth of the mathematics curriculum. For example, they understand and use co-ordinates to create shapes and work out the probability of events successfully.

Most pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. In the foundation phase, the youngest pupils use a range of applications effectively to support their language and number skills. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils access their own school-based account, save and retrieve their work successfully. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use databases and spreadsheets confidently and interrogate the data to find information. Many pupils in key stage 2 create effective presentations on the solar system and diary entries of Jewish children who lived during the Second World War. Digital leaders develop effective internet codes of conduct and organise parent workshops on how to use Hwb at home.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Most pupils behave well in lessons, at break times and around the school. They are very polite and respectful towards staff, visitors and their peers. Most work together effectively and older pupils take good care of younger pupils on the playground and when moving around the school. Most pupils know where to turn if they feel worried or upset.

Most pupils display positive attitudes towards their work and they are ready to learn at the start of lessons. They demonstrate interest in their work and are excited to learn new things. Most concentrate well on their tasks and work well individually, in groups and in pairs. Many show perseverance and resilience and develop a very positive approach to tackling challenging work. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 worked enthusiastically and displayed determination as they searched for information about famous Victorians. Most pupils listen carefully to the views of others and wait patiently for their turn. This contributes successfully to the school's calm and tolerant ethos and has a very positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and standards. Most have a good understanding of what they do well and what they need to do to improve their work. This improves their self-confidence and supports their progress as they move through the school. However, although pupils contribute ideas for topics, in key stage 2 many do not work independently enough.

Members of the school council, eco council and Criw Cymraeg fulfil their roles competently and make a notable contribution to school life. Another group of pupils plan successful whole-school activities, such as arranging events with refreshments in order to share the Welsh language with parents, supporting various charities at home and abroad through a Catholic organisation and organising carol singing in a local care home.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. For example, pupils benefit from the strong focus on healthy lunch boxes and snacks. Many take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, which include dancing, football and fitness. Nearly all pupils feel safe and valued in school. The school's digital leaders remind pupils about the rules of the internet and, as a result, most have a sound awareness of the importance of staying safe online. Most pupils have a good understanding of the problems that substance misuse, tobacco, alcohol and anti-social behaviour can cause.

Most pupils respond well to the school's focus on improving attendance and they understand the importance of attending school regularly. Most are punctual at the start of the school day.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

Staff have very positive working relationships with pupils and apply effective behaviour management strategies. Consequently, most pupils behave well and are eager to learn. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and use probing questioning techniques skilfully to assess pupils' understanding. Most teachers share learning objectives clearly with pupils and provide them with valuable oral and written feedback. This helps them to know what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers are effectively creating more opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of others.

In both key stages, teachers plan interesting activities to engage pupils in their learning. For example, in Year 4, teachers ask pupils to consider the impact of a meteor falling on the earth and this stimulates purposeful discussion about space and the earth's place in the universe. Older pupils have opportunities to role play as news correspondents who inform the school that a spaceship has landed in their area. These activities very successfully promote pupils' oracy and writing skills.

Most teachers plan well for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through a range of purposeful cross-curricular themes and projects. For example, in key stage 2, pupils undertake competent and original projects on the loss of the Titanic and this helps to develop their investigative and research skills very well. The school is developing its provision to meet the requirements of the digital competency framework well.

The school implements the foundation phase effectively and staff provide an appropriate range of teacher-led and child-led activities, which develop pupils' skills well. They make creative use of the indoor and outdoor environments when planning and delivering activities. The school is taking appropriate account of the new curriculum for Wales in designing its own curriculum. However, in key stage 2, teachers do not develop pupils' independent learning skills well enough.

Teachers enrich the curriculum effectively through a wide range of educational visits and by inviting visitors to the school to speak to pupils. For example, in the foundation phase, pupils visit a farm as part of their topic work on 'out and about' and this helps them to understand different modes of transport and why farms need tractors. Theatre companies visit the school regularly to help promote pupils' understanding of a wide range of myths and legends. There are also purposeful

opportunities for pupils to improve their understanding of other cultures. For example, they participate in a cultural diversity week and learn about such countries as Brazil and Poland.

There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, pupils study the stories of Gelert and Cantre'r Gwaelod, and they are inspired by Welsh artists to produce stimulating landscape paintings, which they proudly display throughout the school. There is appropriate provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills in lessons. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and improve their Welsh skills outside of designated Welsh lessons.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is a very happy, caring community that nurtures pupils well and successfully promotes their confidence and self-esteem. Leaders implement positive behaviour strategies, which help to ensure that nearly all pupils display high standards of respect and politeness.

There are efficient procedures to track and monitor pupils' progress that have a significant impact on their standards and wellbeing. Staff know pupils well and have rigorous arrangements for assessing their achievement. Teachers use the information from these assessments successfully to plan and provide purposeful support for pupils. For example, the school has introduced a literacy process to support any pupils who may be under achieving. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is effective. All pupils with additional learning needs have a comprehensive individual development plan, which includes ambitious and achievable targets that teachers review regularly with pupils and their parents.

The school provides pupils with many rich opportunities to undertake leadership roles that have a very positive impact on their wellbeing. There is an active eco club, a diligent school council and competent digital leaders. This ensures that pupils have a strong sense of pride and ownership in their school.

The school promotes the importance of healthy eating and drinking through physical education sessions and a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities, for instance, a football club which attracts a large number of participants. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern. However, the inspection team did share one safety issue with the head teacher and governors regarding the water tower on the school grounds.

Pupils have many worthwhile opportunities to develop their understanding of moral and social matters. The personal and social education programme contributes well to developing these aspects of pupils' learning and wellbeing. The provision to develop pupils' creative skills is very successful and pupils produce high quality, attractive artwork. For example, they create very effective artwork based on war artists and the Titanic; these are very stimulating and engaging pieces displayed throughout the school. There are also very good examples of oil pastels and designs in the style of William Morris. Many produce stimulating art in the style of a range of Welsh landscape artists.

The school uses a suitable range of methods to communicate with parents. These include regular newsletters and an app that enables a range of experiences and work to be shared with parents. The school organises beneficial workshops to help parents to support their child's work. For example, digital leaders arrange workshops to show parents how they can help their children with ICT activities. The school also organises regular coffee mornings for parents so that they can share any concerns with the head teacher and staff.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that she pursues with determination. She motivates staff, pupils, parents and governors effectively to work together in an ethos where every individual is valued. She leads by example and communicates high expectations to all in the school. Staff support her ably and play an important role in moving the school forward. Leaders at all levels secure notable improvements in pupils' outcomes and levels of provision. For example, all staff have been involved in the development of a strategy to promote key literacy and numeracy skills, which has improved pupils' use of these skills across the curriculum.

Staff understand their roles well and adjust quickly to new responsibilities in a supportive atmosphere. The headteacher includes teaching assistants in all aspects of school life very effectively. As a result, they engage very successfully with learning opportunities that have a significant impact on pupils' wellbeing and performance. For example, teaching assistants took part in training to help them to support vulnerable pupils to deal with their emotions. The school uses the pupil development grant successfully to fund this and other purposeful initiatives.

Governors have an effective understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They offer very good support for the school and challenge leaders on the effectiveness of initiatives. They monitor the budget carefully and have managed a potentially difficult time of changes in senior staff very effectively. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties appropriately.

Leaders and managers know the school well and have a detailed understanding of individual pupils. They identify strengths and areas for development using thorough monitoring systems that involve staff, pupils, parents and governors. For example, learning walks identified the need to improve the learning environment for the foundation phase. After inclusion in an effective action plan, the foundation phase learning environment is now a strength of the school. The school has a good track record of bringing about improvements. For example, the spiritual development of pupils has been prioritised over a number of years and this aspect of the life of the school is a significant strength.

The school has a powerful learning culture that promotes the development of all staff. The school uses links with local schools purposefully. For example, schools joined together to fund training in an initiative that has made a strong contribution to the positive ethos in the school. Staff are eager to learn from one another, for example, teaching assistants trained each other in how to use a literacy intervention effectively. Performance management targets contribute purposefully to whole-school development. For example, targets to improve the teaching of skills in ICT have made a valuable contribution to improving provision for this subject.

The school has an appropriate level of staffing and learning resources to deliver the planned curriculum effectively. Staff create a stimulating environment in classrooms that celebrates pupils' work well and provides helpful support for pupils' acquisition of skills. They use the hall particularly well to promote pupils' spiritual development.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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

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

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

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