



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

A report on

St Patrick's R.C. Primary School

**Lucknow Street
Grangetown
CF11 6NA**

Date of inspection: June 2022

by

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

About St Patrick's R.C. Primary School

Name of provider	St Patrick's R.C. Primary School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Roman Catholic
Number of pupils on roll	272
Pupils of statutory school age	234
Number in nursery classes	0
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 21.3%)	33.2%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 22%)	15.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.4%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	27.8%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/03/2013
Start date of inspection	27/06/2022
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Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection. Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

St Patrick's R.C. Primary School is a happy, inclusive school that places a high priority on the well-being of its pupils. Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe in school and know whom to ask for help should they need it. Pupils show high levels of interest and enjoyment in their lessons and the many clubs and additional activities they attend. Nearly all pupils behave very well within lessons and at break times.

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those learning English as an additional language, make strong progress in their learning. They develop effective literacy and numeracy skills and make particularly good progress in their speaking and listening skills. Most pupils develop and use an effective range of digital skills and show high levels of confidence in accessing learning materials online.

Teaching across the school is good and nearly all teachers have high expectations of pupils. Lessons are tailored to match pupils' needs well. This helps to keep challenge high for learners, including the more able. The school is developing a highly engaging curriculum which includes cooking skills, cycling lessons and sessions in the forest area of the school. Lessons are brought to life very successfully through 'immersion days' when pupils enjoy a range of trips, visitors to the school and interesting learning experiences.

Classrooms are well organised, calm and attractive. However, in a few areas, they require further development. For example, learning areas designed to support younger pupils to learn through play are underdeveloped and provision to encourage pupils' independent reading is inconsistent.

Senior leaders identify aspects of the school's work that are in need of improvement and the steps that are needed to achieve this effectively. Leaders have worked with the school community to create a clear vision of high expectation and continuous improvement for all, rooted in Christian values.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that younger pupils have effective opportunities to become independent learners through play and exploration
- R2 Strengthen provision across the school to ensure that pupils develop their engagement with, and enjoyment of, independent reading

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to developing equity and enjoyment in the curriculum, through highly engaging immersion and innovation days.

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time at the school, most pupils make strong progress in their learning, and develop effective literacy, numeracy and digital skills. This includes pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those learning English as an additional language. In the context of the recent pandemic, pupils' progress in developing and applying their skills, knowledge and understanding is a credit to the school.

During their first years at school most younger pupils make very good progress in developing their language skills. They chat happily to friends and speak confidently when sharing their thoughts about facts and opinions. As pupils move through the school their speaking skills improve successfully. For example, older pupils express themselves confidently as they explain the importance of a Mexican festival or make a movie clip with clear instructions about how to make a burrito. Most pupils make appropriate progress in developing their Welsh language skills as they move through the school. Many pupils make good progress in speaking Welsh during well planned lessons. However, they use very little incidental Welsh during the school day.

Overall, pupils' reading skills develop well. Younger readers develop an understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds and how sounds combine to form words successfully. They read simple texts with increasing understanding. By Year 2 most pupils are reading confidently. For example, they use a contents page to help them select poems which they read to their peers with good expression. Older pupils build on this progress and develop a range of strategies to become fluent readers. Most Year 6 pupils read well from appropriately challenging texts. They identify a few favourite books and authors.

Most pupils progress well as writers and develop a good understanding of the characteristics of different genres. Younger pupils apply their writing skills purposefully in a range of contexts. For example, in the reception class they write simple sentences about favourite toys. Pupils in Year 2, write an explanation of how to make a circuit. They understand adjectives and verbs and use these well in their writing. Older pupils develop their use of punctuation effectively, for the most part, including commas and speech marks. Spelling is generally accurate. Most pupils apply their literacy skills well in different contexts such as when they write a persuasive letter to the local authority about landfill sites or a newspaper report about Banksy.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their mathematical skills and understanding. Younger pupils use resources such as real coins well to develop their early understanding of number. For example, in Year 2 they make different totals up to the value of £1. In Year 1, pupils successfully find totals of money to buy items up to the value of 20p when playing a shopping game. Most older pupils develop a good understanding of large numbers and place value. They solve problems of addition and subtraction involving two decimal places and calculate the perimeter of rectangles successfully. Most pupils add and subtract fractions and convert fractions to decimals well. They apply their mathematical and thinking skills effectively across the curriculum when given the opportunity. For example, pupils in Year 4 compare

the rainfall in Cardiff to Mexico and create a continuous bar chart to show their results successfully.

Most pupils develop and use an effective range of digital skills. Across the school they show high levels of confidence in accessing learning materials online. Younger pupils create simple animations of African animals and use a program to create graphs of their favourite animals successfully. Pupils in Year 4 develop their coding skills effectively as they program a robotic device to dance to Mexican music. Older pupils create informative and eye-catching presentations such as when they share the things they have learnt about the great pacific garbage patch.

Most younger pupils engage in independent group activities and tasks well. For example, they complete challenges set by their teachers. However, their independent learning skills, such as exploring, trying things out and developing their ideas, are less well developed.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils' well-being and attitudes to learning are a clear strength of the school. Nearly all pupils have readjusted to school life remarkably well following a significantly challenging period. Almost without exception, pupils show great pride in themselves, their school and their work. They value and respect the learning opportunities they receive and make the most of lessons and the many clubs and additional activities that they attend regularly.

Nearly all pupils are very positive about the experiences available to them and are keen to talk about and share their learning. For example, they are eager to show off the trees they have planted in the outdoor area and share their knowledge about caring for the environment. They develop well as ethical, informed citizens, enjoying topics such as 'The World is your Oyster' and 'All about the Woods'. Most have a good understanding of their responsibilities as global and ethical citizens. For example, older pupils are able to discuss issues that are affecting the world such as climate change confidently.

Nearly all pupils behave very well within lessons and at break times. They move around the school calmly and respectfully. Nearly all pupils are very polite and well mannered. They greet visitors warmly with a smile and often hold doors open for them. Most pupils feel valued, safe and happy at school. They trust the staff and know whom to ask for help should they need it. Most pupils recall learning about keeping safe online suitably.

Most pupils show great enthusiasm when talking about the extensive range of well-being opportunities available, such as outdoor learning including in the forested area of the school. Pupils across the school develop their resilience and problem-solving skills well through these activities. For example, pupils in Year 3 persist and try out different approaches when attempting to erect a tent.

Most pupils develop their life skills, and knowledge of how to keep fit and healthy, very well. For example, older pupils develop their financial skills and find the best value for money as they research and compare the cost of items on a shopping list at different supermarkets. Most pupils develop their understanding of a healthy diet

successfully as they take part in regular cooking sessions where they make a variety of foods such as rainbow couscous salad and healthy pizzas. They appreciate the importance of regular exercise and enjoy developing their balance and coordination as they use a range of bikes on a new cycle track. Pupils show enthusiasm in physical education lessons, and many enjoy the extra-curricular activities provided by the school such as football, baseball and karate.

Many pupils, including those with additional learning needs, relish opportunities to join a variety of pupil voice groups such as school council, eco council and Criw Cymraeg. They show a clear understanding of their responsibilities and play a developing role in making decisions that have a positive effect on the school's provision. For example, the school council took responsibility for designing an adventure play area, in the outdoor area.

Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not report pupils' rates of attendance during the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Inspectors will, however, consider the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of inspection.

Teaching and learning experiences

In response to curriculum reform, the school is working very well towards developing a purpose driven curriculum that meets the needs of pupils effectively. Leaders are innovative in their approach and focus well on ensuring that experiences are authentic, support well-being and develop pupils' life skills. For example, pupils have regular beneficial opportunities to learn cooking skills, access the forest area and develop their cycling skills.

The curriculum is enhanced through highly beneficial immersion days which take place at the beginning of each topic to inspire pupils' creativity and capture their interest. For example, at the beginning of an African Art Adventure topic, younger pupils take part in many rich learning experiences. They enjoy an African drumming session and show delight as giraffes and elephants 'visit' their classroom through a virtual application. These experiences support the curriculum to be inclusive as all pupils gain a shared foundation of knowledge at the beginning of each topic. This helps pupils to identify areas they want to find out more about. For example, during 'The World is Your Oyster' topic, a visit to Barry Island sparked pupils' curiosity about how much rubbish is in the sea. This approach is highly successful in engaging nearly all pupils and it is impacting beneficially on their knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils speak with authority and concern about the great pacific garbage patch.

The teaching of key skills such as literacy, numeracy and digital competency is effective. Provision for the development of pupils' vocabulary is particularly strong. For example, pupils readily access online class glossaries of key vocabulary to support them with their work. Most teachers develop pupils' thinking and understanding through skilful questioning such as when they challenge younger pupils' perceptions about facts and opinions and ask them to justify their answers. Provision for Welsh language includes 'patrwm yr wythnos' (language pattern of the week) and pupils are also encouraged to develop their Welsh speaking skills during

planned Welsh language activities. However, generally, teachers do not readily engage pupils in speaking Welsh during lessons or throughout the school day.

Nearly all teaching has a clear learning purpose and often includes a range of interesting resources. Nearly all staff's instructions and explanations are clear and most teaching ensures that lessons have an appropriate pace that maintains pupils' interest effectively. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and lessons are tailored to meet pupils' needs effectively. Pupils have regular opportunities to select the level of difficulty they work at themselves, and this helps to keep challenge high for most learners including the more able most of the time.

Provision designed to help pupils understand issues relating to equality and respect are being planned carefully within the curriculum. For example, young pupils are supported to consider individual differences and celebrate the things that make us all unique. This includes celebrating the achievements of others during Black History Month. Learning experiences such as studying the Mona Lisa and creating detailed portraits from clay support pupils' creative development well.

Across the school all staff have effective working relationships with pupils, which fosters a highly supportive environment for learning. Respect between pupils and adults is strong and pupils' behaviour is managed very well. The school uses support staff effectively and they play a key role in developing pupils' learning. Many support staff lead important areas of provision confidently and their work is impacting well on pupils' development.

Most teachers provide pupils with verbal and written feedback effectively and give them opportunities to reflect upon and improve their work. For example, pupils in Year 3 are prompted to redraft and improve their recipes for a Mega Monster Meal. Peer review sessions support learning through engaging pupils in supportive reflection about the work of their classmates. This has a positive impact. For example, pupils in Year 1 identify good features of a friend's collage work.

Provision for younger children has been enhanced appropriately with, for example, sand play and large construction in the outdoor area. However, most learning experiences for pupils are led or directed by adults. The learning environment does not provide effective opportunities for pupils to learn through play. This limits opportunities for children to select their own resources, try things out and develop as independent learners.

Overall, the teaching of reading is efficient in supporting the development of pupils reading skills. However, provision designed to encourage pupils' independent reading and foster a love of books and texts is variable. For example, reading areas across the school are underdeveloped and the range of authentic texts available to older readers is generally limited.

Care, support and guidance

The quality of care, support and guidance provided for pupils and their families is highly effective. The school maintains a constant focus on inclusion and improving pupils' well-being. A powerful example of this commitment is the high priority placed on pupils' well-being within the curriculum. The provision recently put in place to

develop pupils' interest in the outdoors, and life skills sessions, is successful in its impact on pupils' development in this area.

The school provides opportunities which support the development of pupils' spiritual and ethical beliefs successfully. Daily collective worship sessions provide a valuable opportunity for pupils to reflect quietly as they explore themes such as peace, friendship and forgiveness. For example, pupils are asked what 'peace' would look like if they had to draw it. This impacts well on pupils' understanding and empathy towards others, within their school community and beyond.

Staff have a good knowledge of pupils' needs, which results in any necessary extra help being put in place at an early stage. Teachers and support staff provide realistic targets for pupils which are regularly reviewed and monitored. Staff work closely with families and external agencies to produce effective support plans for pupils with ALN. This support, together with regular communication with parents, has a positive impact on pupils' progress and well-being. The school is working successfully toward the new ALN Act and has developed beneficial links with external agencies.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop leadership roles through applying to join one of the many councils on offer such as the digital leaders or Minnie Vinnies (who focus on doing good deeds). Members of these groups have a direct impact on improving school priorities. For example, the Minnie Vinnies develop community links when they deliver gifts they have made, to residents in a local care home.

The school has adopted the Siarter Iaith and the Criw Cymraeg and have introduced 'phrase of the week' to encourage pupils to speak more Welsh. However, the school's provision to help pupils develop an understanding of their identity, heritage and culture as a Welsh citizen is underdeveloped.

Carefully planned educational visits during the school's immersion days provide very worthwhile opportunities for pupils to be creative and imaginative. For example, after a visit to Barry Island, older pupils make thoughtful artwork from the rubbish they collect. The school provides interesting opportunities for pupils to learn about democracy and the role of government. For example, a group of pupils recently met with the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street to discuss climate change.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, provides strong, compassionate leadership, which has created a highly inclusive school where every pupil is valued and supported. A clear purpose and vision ensure high aspiration for pupils and staff.

Senior leaders are effective role models and place a strong emphasis on the importance of showing care and consideration for others. The headteacher leads by example and has been very successful in working with the deputy headteacher to create a highly motivated team of teachers and support staff.

In response to curriculum reform the school is working very well towards a purpose driven curriculum that meets the needs of pupils effectively. Leaders are strategic in their approach and focus well on ensuring that experiences are authentic, support well-being and develop life skills. Innovative approaches such as the highly successful innovation days support the school's ethos of inclusivity and enrichment very well.

Leaders have a reflective approach, which focuses successfully on improving outcomes for pupils. For example, on return to school after the pandemic, staff identified that the well-being of some pupils had been negatively affected by periods of lockdown. They swiftly introduced innovative strategies to address this issue that resulted in most pupils showing high levels of wellbeing and engagement.

Findings from monitoring activities feed purposefully into new areas for development. For example, senior leaders and teachers recognise the need to improve pupils' Welsh language oracy skills. However, in a very few cases, improvement activities do not address identified areas robustly enough. For example, although recognised by the school as an area of focus, leaders have not placed enough emphasis on the need to develop provision for younger pupils to learn through play.

All staff have an effective understanding of their roles and responsibilities and implement them conscientiously. Increasingly staff are developing professional responsibility and successfully influencing the quality of provision. For example, support assistants are leading and delivering important aspects of the school's provision such as the use of outdoor areas.

Performance management processes are robust. Senior leaders use the professional standards to engage in worthwhile professional discussion, identify and work with staff strengths and identify appropriate support. Staff value this approach and are taking responsibility for their own professional development as a result. The professional learning offer is broad and relevant and clearly links to the school priorities.

Leaders are responsive and acted swiftly during the pandemic. They maintained a focus on professional development opportunities such as improving staff's digital skills and worked diligently to secure the trust and engagement of parents in their pupils' learning. This resulted in teachers providing a range of balanced and effective blended learning opportunities. Leaders have continued to build upon this work. The use of digital tools is now embedded and enhancing learning well across the curriculum.

Governors are supportive and a strong influence in the work of the school, contributing significantly to the community ethos. They ensure that the school promotes the importance of living a healthy lifestyle well. For example, introducing cooking classes for all pupils and promoting healthy lunch boxes.

Leaders and governors manage finances effectively. Leaders use grants efficiently to support vulnerable pupils who make good progress as a result. Leaders create a strong safeguarding culture and staff know pupils and their families well.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

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

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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