



Report summary for parents and carers on St Helen's Catholic Primary School

Date of inspection: October 2022

by Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Overview

This is a faith school that cares deeply for its school community. The high-quality support and guidance provided by the staff and leaders is a strong feature of the school. Nearly all pupils and staff feel safe and valued. Most are kind and respectful to each other. This results in the happy learning environment that welcomes all pupils, whatever their family background, religion or home language.

Most pupils make at least the progress they should in developing their English literacy skills, including those who speak English as an additional language. In mathematics, science and information technology (IT), pupils develop their knowledge and skills well. However, pupils do not always make the progress they could in acquiring the Welsh language, because the provision is inconsistent across the school.

Classroom practice is generally effective and nearly all pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points. There are a few occasions when pupils sit and listen for too long, for example on the carpet, or when the tasks that they are asked to do are not challenging enough. When this happens, pupils become restless, disengaged and do not achieve as well as they should.

The acting headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, has successfully sustained a school that has the well-being of pupils and the wider school community at its heart. Leaders communicate well with parents. The governing body supports the school effectively, for example overseeing some difficult financial and staffing decisions. However, leaders' extensive monitoring work is often too broad to focus precisely enough on pupil outcomes. Where this happens, it is difficult for leaders to know whether the planned improvements have made a difference to pupils' achievements.

The two separate school sites create some challenges that the staff manage well. The learning environment on each site, including the outdoor areas, is bright and welcoming. The staff have worked together to create valuable opportunities for all pupils to experience an exciting range of engaging learning activities.



Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that self-evaluation and monitoring processes are manageable and focus tightly on improving pupils' outcomes
- R2 Ensure that teaching challenges all pupils, especially the more able
- R3 Support all staff to secure systematic progression in pupils' Welsh language skills

What happens next

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



School context

Name of provider	St Helen's Catholic Primary School
Local authority	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Roman Catholic
Number of pupils on roll	324
Pupils of statutory school age	235
Number in nursery classes	48
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 23.0%)	12.8%
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 16.1%)	10.2%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	16.6%
Date of headteacher appointment	N/A
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	N/A
Start date of inspection	03/10/2022

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