



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

A report on

St Brides Major C.I.W. Primary School

**Heol yr Ysgol
St Brides Major
Vale of Glamorgan
CF32 0TB**

Date of inspection: December 2023

by

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

About St Brides Major C.I.W. Primary School

Name of provider	St Brides Major C.I.W. Primary School
Local authority	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	St Brides Major is a voluntary aided Church in Wales Primary School
Number of pupils on roll	241
Pupils of statutory school age	176
Number in nursery classes	35
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 23.7%)	3.6%
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 13.2%)	10.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	7.4%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2014
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/06/2015
Start date of inspection	04/12/2023

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 Brides Major C.I.W. Primary School is a highly inclusive and happy school where pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with politeness and respect. Pupils behave well and make visitors feel welcome.

The headteacher has developed a team that places pupil well-being and high standards at the centre of its work. Leaders ensure that all staff are involved in identifying areas of strengths and areas to develop. However, improvement plans are not focused enough. As a result, improvement plans do not prioritise what actions will have the biggest impact on teaching and learning. Staff at all levels work closely together and there is a strong sense of teamwork. Daily acts of collective worship are highly inclusive and successfully reinforce that everyone is part of the St Brides family.

Teachers know their pupils well. They have developed a broad and balanced curriculum and plan engaging topics that the pupils enjoy. Teachers use the experiences and skills of local people to bring the curriculum alive. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and progress. However, as pupils progress through the school, teachers over-direct the learning and as a result limit pupils' opportunities to develop as independent learners.

Most pupils make at least good progress in their learning during their time in school. The school is a language rich environment, where careful planning for international languages ensures that pupils are exposed to many languages from an early age. They are challenged to continuously add to their growing vocabulary. This is a strength of the school.

The headteacher and governors are committed to creating a school environment that makes pupils feel valued and nurtures their learning and well-being.

Recommendations

- R1 Focus improvement precisely on the aspects of teaching and learning that are most in need of improvement
- R2 Ensure that older pupils take more responsibility for their learning and develop their independent learning skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Many pupils start school with skills that are at, or above, the expected level for their age. Overall, most pupils make at least good progress in their learning during their time in school. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals progress well from their individual starting points. Overall, most pupils develop their skills and knowledge effectively across all areas of learning and experience.

The youngest pupils settle into school life quickly and engage successfully in the range of experiences the school provides. In Reception, most pupils speak confidently. They listen well, follow instructions carefully and interact positively with staff and peers. By Year 2, most pupils communicate their thoughts clearly. They talk enthusiastically about their learning, for example when describing what humans need to do to care for the world. Most pupils become increasingly articulate as they progress through the school. By the time they reach Years 5 and 6, most pupils' oracy skills are well-developed.

Most pupils develop effective reading skills and apply them well. In Year 2, many pupils read fluently, using a range of strategies to read words they are unsure of. Most pupils continue to develop their reading skills successfully and become confident and enthusiastic readers as they move through school. By Year 6, most pupils read aloud with fluency and expression, using intonation effectively to engage their audience. Older pupils research information from a range of texts to enrich their work across the curriculum successfully; for example when exploring the experiences of children who were evacuated during the Second World War. Year 6 pupils enjoy reading books together successfully increasing their enjoyment of reading.

In the youngest classes, most pupils quickly develop early writing skills well. They apply their knowledge of letter sounds to spell simple words. By Year 2, many pupils write using increasingly complex sentences, a growing understanding of punctuation and rich descriptive vocabulary. Pupils from Years 3 to Year 6 build well on these skills, writing with increasing competence across a range of genres, adapting their work to different styles and organising writing logically. Nearly all pupils take care when presenting their work and this is a notable strength.

Overall, most pupils develop their mathematical and numeracy skills effectively. By Year 2, many have a good grasp of number. Pupils continue to develop these skills suitably, building successfully on their previous knowledge as they move through the school. By Year 6, most pupils use a wide range of methods to solve mathematical problems competently, for example using increasingly complex formulas to find the area of irregular shapes.

Most pupils enjoy learning Welsh. Younger pupils respond well to instructions and demonstrate a suitable understanding of greetings. A few respond confidently in Welsh when asked simple questions. As they move through the school, pupils use previously learned vocabulary and phrases appropriately when sharing personal

information, expressing their likes and dislikes. Overall, most pupils' Welsh language skills are developing appropriately.

Pupils' digital skills are developing well across the school. Younger pupils use mobile devices to record their work purposefully. As they move through school, pupils start to use their digital skills effectively to support their learning in other areas. Older pupils use a range of software confidently. For example, they use coding software to create animated stories.

Most pupils develop a wide range of physical skills well. For example, younger pupils run and jump across different surfaces and use a climbing wall with confidence. Most pupils continue to build on these skills well as they participate in the wide range of activities available to them throughout the year.

Pupils enjoy using their artistic and musical skills and produce work and performances that are of a high quality. For example, younger pupils experiment with paint to create their own rangoli patterns. Many pupils love to sing in the school choir and enjoy opportunities to perform in front of a range of audiences in the local area.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Across the school, nearly all pupils demonstrate high levels of well-being; they feel safe, happy and valued. They show considerable respect for each other, staff, their peers, and visitors to the school. They know that they are well cared for and are kind to each other. On the rare occasion they are upset or worried, they know whom they can approach to give them support if needed.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is consistently good. Nearly all pupils are respectful and respond well to staff. They feel they are treated fairly. Many pupils, including younger pupils, understand the 'five finger' school rules and follow them appropriately.

Pupils are developing as ethically informed citizens well. They understand how they need to look after their local environment, through their work to become a plastic free school, and understand how this benefits the local surfing community. Pupils develop as enterprising, creative contributors through their link with an engineering company and use a 3D printer to make and then sell pencil pots and whistles for charity. Pupils work with other pupils from different age groups well. For example, older pupils buddy up with younger pupils to help them develop their reading skills.

Pupils treat their peers well and treat each other equally. Pupils are confident to challenge other ideas and do so with maturity and respect, maintaining positive relationships. Pupils influence the work of the school appropriately through their involvement in a range of pupil leadership groups such as the pupil parliament. As a result, most pupils feel that their views are listened to.

In a majority of classes, pupils develop well as independent, resourceful learners who collaborate effectively in groups, often showing resilience when tackling problems and challenges. However, older pupils do not always take responsibility for their learning. They do not develop their independent learning skills successfully.

Older pupils draw upon their previous learning and use this effectively to navigate new experiences. For example, pupils in Year 5 use their knowledge of one language to translate a different language sentence, without using the internet.

Most pupils value the feedback they receive from staff during lessons and make the improvements their teacher has asked them to make. Younger pupils check their own work and make corrections such as adding capital letters and full stops. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 develop their collaboration and independent skills well. They check each other's work and suggest how it could be improved. For example, when planning a news report about the Antarctic angels, they check that each other's work is accurate and engaging.

Younger pupils develop valuable problem-solving skills through daily independent tasks and many know what to do if they get stuck and need help. However, as they move through the school, older pupils do not develop these skills well enough. By the time pupils reach Year 6, pupils are overly reliant on adult direction and have too few opportunities to explore their own strategies, work collaboratively and deepen understanding.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has a clear vision for its curriculum. Teachers have worked productively to develop a curriculum that engages pupils well and meets their needs successfully. They work together productively to plan topics that cover the full range of areas of learning and experience, and a majority of teachers consider the views of pupils well to ensure they capture their interests. Teachers ensure skills are planned progressively across the curriculum so that experiences build on previous learning effectively. The school provides a wide range of activities to enrich the curriculum. Visits from the Fire Service and Police provide worthwhile opportunities for younger pupils to learn about people who help them whilst older pupils benefit from a wide range of visits. For example, they visit the Imperial War Museum in London to deepen their understanding of what it was like to live during the Second World War.

All staff foster highly respectful working relationships with pupils and create positive conditions for effective learning. They manage pupil behaviour sensitively, ensuring that they meet the needs of pupils, including those with ALN, well. Teachers demonstrate strong curriculum knowledge, have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and meet pupils' learning needs successfully through appropriate challenge and support. As a result, nearly all pupils make good progress from their starting points.

Teachers from Nursery to Year 2 provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their natural curiosity through a range of interesting activities. They promote independent learning effectively and talk to the pupils about what they are interested in. Using this information and their curriculum knowledge they plan challenges that allow pupils to apply their skills independently in a range of contexts. As they move through school the opportunities for pupils to have input into what and how they learn decreases gradually. As a result, planning for older pupils does not always allow them to apply their skills independently across the curriculum as well as they could.

In the majority of classes, teachers ensure that pupils have the skills they need to improve their own and each other's work successfully. Many teachers provide pupils with valuable feedback during lessons. However, in the older classes this is less well developed. Feedback is not always challenging enough to enable pupils to improve their work as well as they could. This restricts pupils' ability to take responsibility for improving their own work independently. Teachers use assessment well to identify and plan carefully for the next steps in pupils' learning.

Teachers develop pupils' language skills effectively. They extend pupils' vocabulary successfully and use questioning skilfully to clarify pupils' understanding. Most staff use simple Welsh phrases in the classroom purposefully, for example, when giving instructions to pupils. Many staff use a range of international languages as a normal part of everyday teaching effectively. Pupils are encouraged to learn words and phrases in different languages naturally. This language rich culture is a strong feature of the school.

Care, support and guidance

The school's values culture is a strength and high levels of respect and kindness permeate the school. The whole-school approach to health and well-being is effective. Nearly all pupils engage well in the wide range of learning experiences on offer. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to exercise through physical education lessons and a variety of extra-curricular activities, for example the school running club. The school makes appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

The school supports the development of good teamworking skills through participation in local football, netball, and cricket tournaments as well as running competitions.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. The school's arrangements for early identification, intervention and support are effective. The newly appointed additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) liaises promptly and appropriately with staff to address barriers to learning. The school liaises with parents and pupils suitably to arrange support around their child. The ALNCo engages appropriately with specialist services to support staff to identify appropriate strategies to support individual needs. They access the training they need to provide specific programmes such as those best suited to pupils with dyslexia. The school monitors the progress of pupils with ALN and staff plan the next steps for learning appropriately. The school is highly inclusive and takes steps to ensure that all pupils participate in the full life of the school. For example, during collective worship, Makaton is used to ensure all pupils are involved.

The school promotes spiritual, social and cultural development very well. This is a strength of the school. The school's provision to develop pupils as active citizens through participation in the Pupil Parliament activities is effective. Year 6 pupils are good role models for the younger pupils, taking on responsibilities around the school. Younger pupils purposefully influence what and how they learn.

Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on their values and the beliefs of others through daily acts of Collective Worship, for example when exploring

the Christmas story in relation to refugees. The school promotes diversity and inclusion well, celebrating the variety of languages and cultures within its community.

The school ensures that its curriculum is accessible to all pupils, including those affected by socio-economic disadvantage. They benefit from an extensive range of stimulating trips and visitors to the school. This deepens pupils' understanding of the wider world successfully. The school positively challenges gender stereotypes, for example, through the current curriculum work on the 'Antarctic Fire Angels', pupils are following the progress of a former pupil who is skiing to the south pole to inspire women and girls to achieve their ambitions.

Staff communicate well with each other to support pupils. This includes understanding their roles in keeping pupils safe and maintaining the school's strong inclusive ethos. The school monitors attendance and punctuality effectively. Arrangements for safeguarding give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has established a clear vision for learning, placing the well-being of pupils at the core of the school's work. The headteacher encourages staff to model behaviours and values that are based purposefully on the school's caring ethos. This ensures that all pupils achieve high standards and become well informed, future guardians of the world. As a result, leaders ensure that there is a highly effective, caring and supportive culture, embraced by pupils and staff.

The governing body supports the school well. Governors play an active role in the life of the school, using their wide range of experience and expertise successfully to support the school effectively. They receive useful and informative reports from the headteacher. They are involved in school self-evaluation activities, such as learning walks, and they engage with external improvement partners effectively. They are well informed about national priorities and work closely with the school to address these, for example supporting the implementation of Curriculum for Wales and particularly the provision for international languages.

The headteacher ensures that self-evaluation processes are highly inclusive and that staff at all levels know that their opinions are valued. Staff training days are used valuably to create a shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, improvement planning does not always prioritise the improvements that will have the biggest impact on pupils' skills well enough.

Leaders have created a positive culture and ethos to promote and support the professional learning of all staff. Professional development links well with the school's key areas for improvement and supports staff appropriately to develop their own skills. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, support staff have developed their Welsh language knowledge, and this has had a positive impact on pupils' Welsh language skills. The headteacher develops leadership capacity effectively, for example supporting staff to gain the qualifications needed to become a headteacher. Arrangements for managing staff performance are clear and effective.

There is a strong culture of collaboration. For example, a whole-school approach to planning enhances staff's understanding of progression. Opportunities to ensure that

highly effective practice in the school is shared and implemented across the school are at an early stage of development. For example, the highly effective planning for independent learning in Years 2 and 3 is not fully embedded in all classes.

School leaders and governors manage their school budget well. Careful financial planning ensures that the school has sufficient funding to deliver short term and long term plans effectively.

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' well-being, 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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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