



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

A report on

St Illtyd's Catholic Primary School

**Jersey Road
Bonynmaen
SA1 7DG**

Date of inspection: December 2023

by

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

About St Illtyd's R.C. Primary School

Name of provider	St Illtyd's R.C. Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Roman Catholic
Number of pupils on roll	205
Pupils of statutory school age	153
Number in nursery classes	29
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%)	28.8%
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 13.2%)	28.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3.9%
Date of headteacher appointment	06/09/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	08/06/2015
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

Pupils at St Illtyd's Roman Catholic Primary School thoroughly enjoy coming to school and have a deep sense of belonging. 'With God's love, we play, learn and grow together' clearly reflects the aims of the school and underpins its Christian values. Nearly all pupils and staff feel safe and valued.

The headteacher has developed effective and confident staff. Her robust leadership and conscientious team have the pupils' well-being at the forefront of all that they do. The staff have created a happy and homely environment in which all pupils thrive. Most pupils feel cared for, supported, and, as a result, have positive attitudes to their learning.

Nearly all pupils' behaviour across the school is excellent. They are considerate and show respect to their friends and staff. All pupils are especially courteous to visitors. There is a strong culture of inclusion and diversity across the school, where pupils are given equal opportunity to be involved in all aspects of school life.

Most pupils make strong progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills and apply them well in other areas of learning. Often, from low starting points, pupils develop strong oracy skills in English. However, although the pupils enjoy learning Welsh, they do not always make enough progress in developing their Welsh language skills.

The school is developing a purposeful curriculum for its pupils. Staff provide pupils with interesting opportunities to build on their knowledge and to strengthen their understanding of their 'cynefin'. Most teachers plan interesting lessons to engage most pupils. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to contribute to their own learning and to develop skills to work independently. Opportunities for younger pupils to develop their curiosity and creativity in class and in the outdoor environment are underdeveloped.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' Welsh speaking skills
- R2 Ensure that learning experiences enable all pupils to improve their creativity and problem-solving skills and to develop as independent learners

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

On entry to the school many pupils' skills are below those expected for their age. Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals, make consistent progress from their starting points.

Soon after starting school, most pupils sit well and listen to stories and respond to instructions appropriately. The youngest pupils build successfully on their oracy skills and use them with increasing confidence in a variety of situations. For example, when making porridge more able pupils discuss how it looks and feels. By Year 2 pupils describe how soldiers are feeling confidently when studying photographs from the second world war. As pupils move through the school, most speak eloquently. They use a good range of vocabulary and language patterns to communicate in formal and informal situations, for example when sharing what the word 'hope' means to them in assembly.

Many pupils make suitable progress in developing their Welsh language skills. They contribute enthusiastically and expand their vocabulary sufficiently during daily 'drilio' sessions. On the whole, most pupils understand and respond appropriately to simple instructions and commands used in their Welsh lessons. However, across the school most pupils lack confidence when engaging in simple conversations.

Most pupils develop sound reading skills as they move through the school. Many of the youngest pupils develop early reading skills and by Year 2, they use phonic strategies effectively to identify familiar words correctly. They read suitably, use punctuation appropriately and are beginning to vary their tone of voice for effect. In Year 6, most are good readers and many use reading skills confidently to research facts about foxes, for example. However, pupils' knowledge of a range of authors and books is limited.

Most pupils develop their writing skills effectively as they move through the school. Younger pupils make marks creatively using different media and a few develop sound early writing skills. Many pupils progress to writing simple sentences to tell the story of Jack the dog successfully. By Year 2, many pupils use a good range of vocabulary and simple punctuation. By the end of their time at the school, many write maturely, at increasing length across the curriculum and develop a secure understanding of different forms of writing.

Pupils in Nursery and Reception are at an early stage of development with their mathematical skills. Many count objects to 10 with accuracy and a few pupils use simple mathematical language, such as, full and empty when filling containers and weighing objects with non-standard measurements. As they move through the school, nearly all pupils make strong progress in their understanding of number. For example, Year 3 calculate the average distance travelled by their home-made paper aeroplanes accurately. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils show a sound understanding of a range of mathematical concepts such as using their measuring skills to create mathematical art. Across the school, most pupils apply their skills well

in other aspects of their learning. For instance, older pupils apply their knowledge of angles confidently in their gymnastics lesson.

Most pupils' digital skills are developing effectively. The youngest pupils use a range of apps and programs confidently to enrich their work. In addition, they collect data confidently and present it on a bar graph, for example, to present different modes of transport observed around the school. As pupils move from Year 3 to Year 6, they combine their digital skills successfully to support their learning across the curriculum, for example when using a green screen to present their Nicholas Nickleby drama and by using a mathematical formula to sort the length, shape, and origin of leaves.

Most pupils develop sound creative skills as they move through the school. They develop a good range of techniques to create charcoal observational drawings and to use natural resources from the school grounds to create botanical art in the style of William Morris. Many pupils develop their confidence and engage enthusiastically when performing in an opera and, jointly with other schools in music concerts. Most pupils develop physical skills with increasing confidence. They take part enthusiastically in lessons and extend their skills well by attending the school's clubs. Overall, most pupils' critical and problem-solving skills are less well developed.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

All pupils speak highly about their school as a safe, supportive, and happy environment. Nearly all pupils develop positive working relationships with the staff and with each other and appreciate the staff and the roles they play in their lives. The way in which pupils interact with each other and with all staff is a strength. All pupils' behaviour is excellent and they are courteous and friendly to staff and visitors. These positive attitudes and the culture of openness makes people feel part of the school's 'homely' community immediately.

Most pupils show a strong awareness of how their contributions towards creating a caring school matter. They are considerate towards each other in class and as they walk around the school, standing to one side to let their peers walk by. On the yard, for example, playground buddies spend valuable time with younger pupils to develop sound friendships and to support them sensitively. This has a beneficial effect on the pupils' happiness and safety. Over time, pupils thrive and develop into mature and caring individuals.

Most pupils are developing as exceptional ethically, informed citizens. They embrace all opportunities to help others in need, such as the Minni Vinnies 'reverse advent calendar' activity where all pupils make a small contribution to distribute to other children in the community. They contribute to a local food bank and national and international charities. As a result, nearly all pupils develop a strong sense of empathy. They embrace all new pupils and give them a warm welcome when they arrive at the school. Most pupils are aware of the needs of other pupils and enjoy celebrating their nationalities and cultures to make them feel at home. This has a positive effect on the pupils' happiness as they become more confident and settle into school life.

Nearly all pupils enjoy learning and are highly engaged in lessons. They are proud of their achievements and share their learning experiences enthusiastically. Nearly all pupils listen carefully and follow instructions successfully in lessons and when moving around the school. They collaborate maturely, make positive contributions to discussion, and show a good level of respect for the contributions of others. Most pupils are beginning to improve their own work and contribute to what they want to learn. However, most pupils do not develop their independent learning skills well enough as they rely too much on staff to direct their learning.

Many pupils feel that staff listen and support them with their well-being, relationships, and personal development. They have a strong awareness of how to keep themselves safe online and in their own community. Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the impact of healthy eating and regular exercise. Older pupils engage enthusiastically in competitions with other schools and many pupils develop their skills further in a range of extra-curricular activities such as the football and netball club. More recently, many younger pupils attend the 'mini movers' fitness club, which contributes successfully to the development of their fitness and social skills.

Most pupils undertake responsibilities willingly and suggest ideas to improve the school. Overall, the school's pupil leadership groups are developing suitably. They are beginning to make worthwhile contributions to the wider life of the school. For example, the school council have created a child friendly behaviour and anti-bullying policy and ensure that the play environment and equipment is safe to use during break times. Other groups, such as the eco council, promote sustainability well by growing and selling vegetables and organising 'litter picks' in the local park.

Teaching and learning experiences

Across the school, staff form excellent working relationships with pupils built on mutual respect and trust. They have successfully created a supportive ethos which promotes high standards of behaviour.

The school is developing a suitable curriculum to stimulate and build on pupils' knowledge and reflects the nature of school's context successfully. Staff provide a range of interesting topics across the areas of learning and experience. In addition, planned activities create a strong sense of belonging to the local area, which ignites pupils' interest in learning more about the history, heritage and culture of Wales and the wider world. For instance, pupils learn about the proposed cable car development on a local hill and the potential impact on the environment as well as the effect of the copper industry on Swansea. Staff adapt learning experiences to reflect the changing and diverse nature of the school.

The school provides a wide range of educational visits that enhance the breadth and depth of learning experiences. They use visitors successfully to teach pupils about the importance of good oral hygiene and life-saving techniques. These activities, support pupils to become healthy, confident individuals. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to learn about the world of work by collaborating with an international leisure and entertainment company. This experience contributes well to raising pupils' awareness and aspirations around future careers, helping them to

make informed choices. Staff provide a range of purposeful extra-curricular activities to extend pupils' creative and physical skills.

Across the school, teachers plan purposeful learning activities to develop pupils' skills and ensure that they make good progress. As a result, pupils apply their oracy, writing, numeracy, and digital skills confidently in other areas of learning. Although staff plan carefully for pupils to develop their reading skills progressively, they do not develop the pupils' 'love' for reading or their knowledge of a range of authors suitably. Most staff are beginning to use simple Welsh phrases and give simple instructions suitably in planned lessons. However, the school's work to improve pupils' Welsh is underdeveloped.

Most teachers organise their classrooms effectively and create a positive learning environment. Teachers give clear explanations in lessons that enable pupils to undertake their work confidently. Where teaching is most effective, pupils share their ideas and support each other well through purposeful questioning. Most teachers plan successfully to meet the learning needs of pupils and provide them with worthwhile challenge. Overall, teachers tend to over-direct learning. The overuse of structured lessons and activities restricts most pupils in becoming independent learners.

Teachers from Nursery to Year 2 do not plan experiences for younger pupils to develop their creative and problem-solving skills often enough. As a result, pupils do not develop well as curious and independent learners. Across the school pupils do not develop their learning outdoors, independently or with purpose.

In most classes, pupils are beginning to assess their own work, so that they know how well they are doing. All teachers provide pupils with regular, suitable verbal feedback but written feedback for older pupils does not support pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Care, support and guidance

The school knows its pupils, their backgrounds, and the local community very well. All staff place a high priority on the well-being of all pupils and this focus is a key aspect of the school's provision. As a result, behaviour across the school and respect for all is excellent. The school's culture of safeguarding and the inclusive, caring ethos towards all pupils is a strength. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The newly appointed ALN co-ordinator is developing effective provision for pupils with ALN. The school is beginning to track pupils' progress carefully to identify and plan provision for individuals and groups of pupils. As a result, the school plans literacy and numeracy activities purposefully to support the learning of pupils with ALN and, as a result, these pupils make good progress from their starting points. Staff support well-being extensively and the tailored social and emotional literacy programmes have a notable impact. The lead nurture teacher uses a range of interventions in an imaginative way, particularly the partnership with a local learning dog scheme that improves the well-being and engagement of vulnerable pupils. Staff work closely with parents and external agencies to promote the importance of good attendance and to address any persistent absences thoroughly.

The school benefits from strong links with the local church to support pupils' spiritual development. Pupils discuss and reflect on their own beliefs and values including those of other faiths confidently. They have a comprehensive understanding of religious and moral issues, and events that are happening in the wider world. Staff provide relevant opportunities for pupils to distinguish between right and wrong successfully. The school reinforces pupils' community values by involving the pupils in supporting local charities. They donate games and toys to other children in the community at Christmas and to a charity to reduce poverty linked to the church. This is a strength of the school.

The school's pupil leadership groups are beginning to take on responsibility and make decisions about the school. Pupils interview prospective staff and improve the outdoor environment for pupils during play and lunchtimes.

The school provides a wide range of activities for pupils to stay healthy through regular physical activity and lessons to raise pupils' awareness of eating healthily and understanding how to look after themselves. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to access a range of competitive sports, for example, pupils compete in the cluster sporting events in athletics and football. Visits from the local police officer deepen pupils' understanding of how they can keep themselves safe in their own community and online.

Teachers' plan engaging and relevant educational visits. These experiences contribute successfully to developing pupils' understanding of society and the world. Opportunities to develop pupils' sense of their Welsh identity are developing well through cultural events, taking part in the school Eisteddfod and by visiting local places of interest. There are many opportunities for pupils to perform at school, in the local community and in key venues such as the Grand Theatre and the Brangwyn Hall. These experiences develop pupils' self-confidence, pride in themselves and their ability to work with others. Through close links with the community and valuable opportunities in school, many pupils develop a sound understanding of how to run a business, such as, creating and selling products made of honey.

Leadership and management

Leaders ensure that the school provides a caring and inclusive environment. They have a clear vision for the school based on valuing every pupil and giving them opportunities to thrive and be successful. The headteacher is committed, passionate and provides strong leadership. Alongside her deputy, staff, and governors she has created an effective team, which ensures that pupils' well-being is a priority. They work conscientiously to meet the needs of all pupils to ensure that economic disadvantage does not impact their pupils' educational attainment.

Since her appointment, the headteacher has successfully built the leadership capacity across the school. She has developed staff's confidence and enabled them to develop their roles and responsibilities purposefully. The performance management of all staff is co-ordinated carefully and links closely to school improvement priorities. These have a positive impact on developing staff expertise and on improving pupil outcomes. Recent, whole-school training for the development of pupils' digital skills has successfully improved their ability to use these skills in all areas of their learning. In addition, the focus on improving pupils' social skills and

engagement in their work has impacted positively on the pupils' readiness to learn. The school works closely with other schools in its cluster and supports trainee teachers from local colleges well to develop their practice. The school benefits from this partnership and it has impacted positively, for example, on developing the leadership and the mentoring capacity of teachers.

Leaders undertake a wide range of monitoring activities that help them evaluate the quality of the school's work purposefully. They use a comprehensive set of approaches to gathering first-hand evidence including, learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' books, and monitoring pupils' progress. As a result, leaders have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and areas identified for improvement, such as, the standards of pupils writing have been addressed successfully. However, occasionally, areas in need of improvement, such as Welsh language skills do not continue as priorities long enough to raise the standards of teaching and learning.

Governors support and challenge leaders appropriately. They undertake their statutory duties effectively, ensuring that the school has suitable arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. Governors are beginning to contribute suitably to the school's self-evaluation processes and are developing a sound understanding of the school's main strengths and areas for improvement. By undertaking learning walks they are beginning to evaluate the work of the school well. The governing body monitors the school's finances carefully and challenges leaders regarding financial management and the use of grants rigorously. Governors ensure that the school uses the pupil development grant to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and to support the emotional development of vulnerable pupils. Governors work with school leaders to promote a robust safeguarding culture.

Partnership between the school and parents is a strength and the school is at the heart of the community. New parents speak highly of the welcome given to them and their children when they arrive at the school. Parents value the regular communication they receive from the school and feel they are well informed. Recently, the school has introduced a few workshops and activities for parents to enable them to work alongside their children and to support the children at home.

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:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

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

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