



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**Report of visit  
Level of follow-up: special measures**

**St Alban's R.C. Primary School  
Mona Place  
Tremorfa  
Cardiff  
CF24 2TG**

**Date of visit: July 2013**

**by**

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



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**The monitoring team**

Eleanor Davies	Reporting Inspector
Mike Maguire	Team Inspector

## **Outcome of monitoring visit**

St Alban's R. C. Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2011.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from any further follow-up activity.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards in English and mathematics**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school continues to use effective strategies to raise pupils' standards in English and mathematics. Teachers' assessments show a consistent trend of improvement in pupils' outcomes in both subjects over last four years.

All pupils in year 6 have good reading skills. They enjoy reading across a wide range of genres and discuss the use of non-standard English in the work of modern poets with understanding and insight. Pupils at the end of the Foundation Phase read with confidence and enthusiasm.

In the Foundation Phase the standard of work in pupils' books shows clear improvement. Pupils write persuasively and present their work well. The standard of spelling is good and most pupils use capital letters correctly.

The standard of work of work in pupils' books at the end of key stage 2 demonstrates that the trend of improvement has been sustained in 2013. The standards of pupils' written work are equally high in all subjects.

In the Foundation Phase, the standards achieved by pupils in mathematical development are good. They use their skills well to solve problems. In key stage 2, pupils use their mathematical skills well across a range of subjects, especially in science. They interpret data carefully in analysing the results of a wide range of investigations.

Teachers' assessments of the standards of pupils' work at the end of key stages in 2013 are an accurate reflection of the quality of pupils' work in books. Individual learner profiles identify accurately what pupils achieve and what they need to do to improve. The assessment and tracking of pupils' progress is a strength of the school and shows that teachers and senior management know the strengths and areas that their pupils need to develop well.

## **Recommendation 2: Improve pupils' ability to use their communication, numeracy, ICT, thinking and problem solving skills**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school plans well for the development of pupils' skills. Pupils now have good and frequent opportunities to apply their skills for a wide range of purposes.

Most pupils enjoy their work, behave well and keep on task in lessons. They talk enthusiastically about what they can do and the improvements that they have made in the standard of their work. Overall, they work effectively on their own, in pairs or as part of a group. As a result, pupils are skilled in applying their knowledge to new situations and use their good communication, thinking, information and communication technology (ICT) and problem solving skills well across the curriculum. They use their ICT skills well to analyse and present the results of scientific experiments and investigations.

Nearly all pupils listen well and speak confidently and knowledgably about their work, expressing opinions clearly. They make good progress in reading and read for a wide range of purposes. Older pupils in both the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2 read fluently and with good expression.

Pupils throughout the school write well for a range of purposes. For example, pupils in year 6 carried out a scientific investigation into the impact of exercise on pulse rate. They analysed and evaluated the results carefully. As a result of their findings, they then wrote persuasively to the headteacher asking for more time to be spent on sports and exercise so that all pupils could improve their physical fitness, health and well-being. Most of the pupils' letters provided convincing arguments, backed by the evidence that they had collected.

## **Recommendation 3: Continue to improve pupils' attendance**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Pupils' attendance continues to improve. Over the last three years it has improved by almost two and a half percentage points. However, the improvement still does not compare favourably with the attendance of pupils in other similar schools in previous years. Most pupils arrive in school punctually but there are a few persistent latecomers.

The school has established thorough systems to improve the attendance of pupils. Attendance is monitored carefully at whole school, class and individual level. Good attendance is encouraged through a series of rewards for pupils and families. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about the forthcoming 'attendance disco' arranged to reward pupils for good attendance. These rewards and incentives have had a positive impact on pupils with a few achieving 100% attendance. First day responses and texts to parents highlight the importance of ensuring that all pupils attend school regularly and on time. The school follows up any non-attendance of pupils rigorously.

**Recommendation 4: Plan a curriculum that meets statutory requirements and provides opportunities for pupils to practice their skills across all subjects**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school's curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to practise a range of appropriate skills in relevant learning contexts. It covers the full range of areas of learning and subjects and takes appropriate account of pupils' skill development.

Opportunities for pupils to learn about the Welsh dimension are now well developed. Pupils make visits to different locations in the local and the wider area to support their work, for example, Cardiff city centre, the Millennium Stadium, Castell Coch, St Fagans and Llancaiach Fawr. They also participate in many activities such as the eco week to promote the importance of environmental sustainability. Many pupils can discuss environmental issues such as the possible impact of building a wind farm in the vicinity.

The school is exploiting the outdoor learning environment well with a good range of activities that support pupils' learning. The recent creation of a 'Big Pit' and 'Forest Schools' area in the grounds enriches pupils' outdoor learning experiences.

Thorough evaluations of planning documents by teachers are helping them to further refine their plans and the links to pupils' skill development.

**Recommendation 5: Provide high quality professional development opportunities for all staff**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school continues to provide a wide range of professional development activities for all staff. These activities involve staff attendance at training courses, whole-staff training on relevant school priorities, visits by staff to other schools and the sharing of good practice between staff within the school.

Good quality training is helping all staff to develop a positive culture of collaboration within the school. As a result, members of staff are developing an eagerness to improve their teaching and to raise pupils' standards of achievement.

Professional development activities are having a positive impact in the school in a number of areas. In particular, members of staff have linked their assessments of pupils' work appropriately with the development of learner profiles. These profiles enable staff to group pupils more effectively and to better tailor work to pupils' individual needs.

**Recommendation 6: Improve strategic leadership at all levels**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Good progress has been made regarding the future leadership of the school. The acting headteacher has recently been appointed to the permanent headteacher post.

She provides the school with good continuity and a significant degree of stability. The headteacher together with the two assistant headteachers, make a very effective senior leadership team. The team has a clear vision for the school with a very strong focus on standards.

The leadership team's high expectations of what staff and pupils can achieve have a very positive impact on teaching and learning. The team provide staff with good direction, guidance and opportunities to keep up to date with recent developments. There is now a commonality of approach amongst staff with a clear and strong emphasis on improvements in literacy and numeracy.

There is a very positive ethos and team spirit within the school. The regular leadership team meetings, staff meetings and sound performance management arrangements contribute to this effectively. Roles and responsibilities of staff are in the process of being restructured so that they better meet the current needs of the school.

The Interim Executive Board continues to meet regularly and has resolved difficult and complex historical staffing matters effectively. Together with the local authority they provide good support for the work of the school.

**Recommendation 7: Embed self-evaluation processes that involve all staff and are based on a rigorous review of first hand evidence**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school now has a thorough process for identifying its strengths and areas for development. Staff use a wide range of first-hand evidence effectively including a detailed analysis of the performance of pupils, classroom observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and seeking the views of pupils and parents. As a result, the school has produced an accurate self-evaluation report.

All staff have a detailed understanding of the performance of pupils, including specific groups of pupils, and how this compares with the performance of pupils in other similar schools. Leaders and managers use data very well to monitor and challenge the school's performance.

The views of pupils and parents have been gathered on several occasions during the past year. This has enabled the school to analyse views and changes to these views over time. The views of parents will be sought on formal occasions next term when the planned Parents' Council is established. This will build upon the current practice of using parent questionnaires.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to build on the progress made, the school now needs to:

R1 Continue to improve pupils' attendance