



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

**Report following monitoring
Level of follow-up: Significant Improvement**

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

Date of visit: November 2021

by

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

Outcome of visit

St Alban's RC Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Establish stable and effective leadership

The acting headteacher in place at the time of the core inspection was appointed as the permanent headteacher in March 2020. This has ensured stability for the leadership of the school following a long period when the school was led by a series of temporary leaders. Since taking up her role, the headteacher has fostered a supportive and caring ethos where staff and pupils feel valued and cared for.

The headteacher has worked effectively with the deputy headteacher and the middle level leadership team to address the recommendations from the core inspection. She has supported the development of the leadership skills of staff across the school well, for example through the provision of good professional learning opportunities for teachers and learning support assistants. Senior leaders have established rigorous processes, including monitoring the quality of teaching to improve aspects of their work such as school self-evaluation and the safeguarding of pupils. This has led to more consistent practice across the school in these important areas. All staff understand how their roles contribute to improving the outcomes and wellbeing of pupils.

Following the core inspection, officers from the regional consortium provided professional learning to help governors to understand their roles more fully. This has improved the level of challenge that the governing body provides to the school leadership. The governing body has been strengthened with the appointment of a new chair and new governors who are experienced in aspects of education. Governors have clear roles and responsibilities and visit the school regularly to take part in useful activities such as reading with pupils. The headteacher and the chair of governors are working with the local authority to address the deficit budget.

R2. Ensure that evaluation processes focus firmly on pupils' skills and identify the most important areas for improvement

The headteacher has provided good opportunities for members of the senior leadership team and subject leaders to develop their skills in monitoring the school's provision and evaluating the impact that it has on pupils' outcomes. This has enabled them to take an active part in measuring the progress that the school is making in addressing the recommendations from the core inspection. The school improvement partner and network specialist for literacy from the regional consortium have supported the work on improving the school's evaluation processes well. They have modelled effective practice during joint observations of teaching and learning with school staff. These activities have provided opportunities for teachers to learn about effective evaluation processes. The monitoring of guided reading has shown leaders

what is going well and has identified the next steps for teachers and pupils. In addition to observing classroom practice, leaders and teachers carry out a wide range of evaluation activities, including listening to learners, scrutinising pupils' books and analysing pupils' reading and mathematics progress information.

The ALNCo has carried out a comprehensive evaluation of the learning and wellbeing needs of all pupils in the school. Following this, the school has put in place provision that matches pupils' individual needs more effectively. As a result, nearly all pupils now engage well with the learning experiences that the school provides. Most have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour in class and around the school has improved.

Nearly all teachers and support staff take part in evaluation processes that help to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Priorities for improvement include developing and implementing the curriculum for Wales and improving pupils' speaking skills. Leaders and teachers recognise that there is still work to do on the recommendations from the core inspection, such as improving pupils' reading skills.

R3. Ensure that teachers adapt activities to meet the needs of all learners and build on pupils' existing skills and knowledge

School leaders and officers from the regional consortium have provided professional learning to help teachers plan for appropriate progression in pupils' skills. Leaders work with staff to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the needs of pupils and how to plan learning experiences that support all pupils to make good progress. Teachers use of the literacy and numeracy frameworks is helping them to develop a good understanding of progression in pupils' skills across the curriculum.

Teachers plan short term topics, which allow pupils to experience a range of activities and enables them to adjust provision appropriately to meet the needs of learners. The school also provides a wide range of additional opportunities for pupils to experience through its 'university programme', including drama and boxing. As a result, most pupils enjoy their learning and engage well in activities and lessons. They talk enthusiastically about their work and the wider opportunities that the school provides.

Leaders have developed clear principles for teaching, including a set of non-negotiable approaches that are used consistently by nearly all staff. These are supported by a framework to encourage leaders and staff to reflect on the quality of their teaching. Leaders, supported by the school improvement partner, have used this framework well as the basis for lesson observation and feedback to staff. As a result, most staff are developing a good understanding of effective teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.

Leaders and staff use assessment information appropriately to determine the needs of pupils and plan for their next steps. For example, teachers use a numeracy assessment tool to identify possible gaps in pupils' understanding and then plan for learning experiences that address these shortcomings.

Most teachers work effectively in lessons to gather information on pupils' understanding of key skills and knowledge. Teachers and support staff gather useful

feedback from pupils about their learning. Most teachers use this information effectively to plan subsequent learning activities closely linked to the needs of pupils. Staff often refer to pupils' learning from previous sessions and provide appropriate challenge and support to move learning forward.

Most teachers use feedback effectively to help pupils to understand what they have done well and what they need to improve. They model examples of good work and identify and address misconceptions. For example, in the reception class, teachers model the sounds that letters make to help pupils to understand the relationship between letters and sounds.

Teachers share learning objectives and success criteria with pupils. These are often differentiated but are not always specific enough to the task. This means that they do not always help pupils to reflect well enough on their learning and develop their own understanding of what they need to do next.

R4. Improve pupils' reading skills

Leaders, teachers and learning support assistants have worked diligently to improve provision for developing pupils' reading skills across the school. The network specialist for literacy from the regional consortium has provided effective professional learning for all staff to improve the planning and teaching of reading skills.

Leaders and staff use a range of formative approaches, including the national personalised assessments and phonics screening to analyse the strengths and areas for development for pupils' reading skills. A minority of pupils have made slower than expected progress with reading skills and teachers have identified the aspects of reading that need improvement across the school. Leaders have implemented a structured approach to phonics teaching in the foundation phase.

Most staff, including learning support assistants, use guided group reading sessions effectively to develop pupils' reading fluency and understanding. They select texts that are well matched to the interests and abilities of pupils and use questioning carefully to develop pupils' comprehension skills. A good range of follow up reading tasks enable pupils to explore texts independently. For example, pupils choose key similarities and differences between the Earth and Mars to create a Venn diagram. Nearly all pupils engage well during these sessions and are challenged appropriately.

Teachers across the school use class novels to ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to listen to adults read aloud. This helps to develop pupils' engagement with and understanding of more challenging texts. Pupils enjoy these sessions and respond enthusiastically to the shared texts, often expressing their opinions in their class reading journals.

The school, supported by the diocese, has invested in new reading resources to ensure that pupils experience a wide range of high-quality texts. These books are available for them to take home or to read in the school's popular 'reading café'.

As a result, of this range of whole-school approaches, a majority of pupils are beginning to make good progress in improving their reading skills, and most are developing a love of reading.

R5. Raise levels of pupils' attendance

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

The school has embedded a range of useful procedures to monitor and improve pupils' attendance. A designated member of staff along with the cluster attendance liaison officer ensure that pupils who are absent from school are identified quickly, and appropriate action is taken. They meet regularly to discuss individual concerns and to identify appropriate support. Staff from the school often visit families to offer support prior to carrying out more formal procedures.

The school communicates the importance of good attendance to parents regularly, for example, in newsletters and text messages. School staff feel well supported by the local authority education welfare officer, who reacts quickly and effectively to any concerns raised.

The school provides a free breakfast club which is available to all pupils and is well attended. Prior to the pandemic, staff provided a minibus service to collect and bring pupils to school. This had a positive impact on the levels of attendance for those pupils accessing the service. The school intends to resume this service once current staff members are qualified to drive the minibus.

Staff have created opportunities for pupils to become involved in promoting good attendance across the school. Members of the 'Rights Respecting Group', carry out weekly visits to classrooms to report on attendance and to reward success. Pupils who have demonstrated improved attendance or have achieved full attendance are awarded a golden ticket, allowing them to enjoy a hot drink with the headteacher. This approach has had a positive impact on raising pupils' aspirations to attend school regularly.

R6. Address the safeguarding concerns identified during the inspection

The school has addressed the safeguarding concerns that were raised at the time of the core inspection fully. Teachers have put in place a comprehensive programme to ensure that they provide pupils with regular opportunities to learn how to stay safe online. This is now a strong feature of the school's work. The school keeps detailed risk assessments and has introduced an electronic recording system to help leaders and teachers to monitor pupils' wellbeing. The school's safeguarding processes now meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Work to address the concerns raised during the core inspection about the poor state of repair of the demountable classrooms has been slow. The demountable building previously used for pupils with additional learning needs has been removed from the school site, but the larger demountable building remains in place. This is not a useable teaching and learning space due to its poor condition so pupils in Years 5 and 6 are currently accommodated in the main building. This means that there is a smaller indoor classroom area for pupils in the foundation phase. The headteacher has regularly communicated the urgency of the situation but the completion date for

the work is summer 2022. During the monitoring visit the intermittent bad odour in the corridor of the main building was still present.

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