



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

A report on

Ysgol Santes Fair, St Mary' s Catholic Primary School

**Longford Road
Holyhead
LL65 1TR**

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Santes Fair, St Mary' s Catholic Primary School

Name of provider	Ysgol Santes Fair, St Mary' s Catholic Primary School
Local authority	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Catholic
Number of pupils on roll	143
Pupils of statutory school age	114
Number in nursery classes	22
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 21.3%)	18.1%
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 22.2%)	23.7%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2015
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	07/02/2014
Start date of inspection	28/11/2022

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

Ysgol Santes Fair is a caring school, which encourages pupils to be happy and enjoy school, whilst learning in a warm and inclusive environment. Pupils participate readily in the tasks provided for them and use effective strategies and resources to learn productively. This is due to the purposeful working relationships that exist with most of their teachers and other staff.

Where learning is particularly successful the teaching is engaging, vibrant, exudes positivity and staff have high expectations of pupils. However, the quality of teaching and the planning of the curriculum is not effective in every class. Additionally, the impact of teachers' feedback on the next steps in pupils' learning is inconsistent across the school.

Most staff provide strong support, care and guidance for pupils in all aspects of school life. This encourages pupils to focus responsibly on their individual learning and well-being. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable, and they are motivated to become ambitious and capable learners. As a result, they develop good speaking, listening reading and creative skills. They also develop suitable writing skills and their digital and numeracy skills across the curriculum are satisfactory. Staff use areas of the extensive school grounds effectively. However, the provision of learning experiences in the outdoors for younger pupils is underdeveloped.

The headteacher leads the school with the pupils' care and well-being at the heart of his vision. He is motivated to succeed for the benefit of pupils and the school's community. The senior leadership team, most of the staff and the governors share his nurturing philosophy. They aim to ensure that the school is a positive learning community that promotes beneficial opportunities for pupils.

Leaders evaluate the school's work thoroughly, using well-planned self-evaluation processes, which lead to effective development plans. These monitoring practices lead to relevant training opportunities for staff to develop their skills through purposeful professional learning courses.

Recommendations

- R1 Address the site safety issue, identified at the time of inspection
- R2 Ensure that the quality of teaching and the planning of learning experiences is effective across the school
- R3 Plan collaboratively to improve pupils' numeracy and digital skills
- R4 Ensure that the quality of teachers' feedback targets the next steps in pupils' learning effectively
- R5 Improve the quality and provision of learning experiences in the outdoors for younger pupils

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress.

Main evaluation

Learning

On entry to the school, the majority of pupils have literacy, numeracy and social skills below those expected for their age. During their overall time at the school, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress and achieve well.

Most pupils listen attentively, speak clearly, and express their ideas sensibly. Younger pupils discuss their work with adults and their peers enthusiastically, such as when they pay each other for fruit and vegetables in the outdoor role-play shop. Most older pupils communicate clearly in English and they offer answers and express opinions maturely. For example, in Year 6, most pupils discuss confidently how to use hieroglyphics to create their own codes.

The reading skills of most pupils are developing effectively. By the time pupils are seven years old, many read fluently and accurately, and decode unfamiliar words correctly. The oldest pupils in the school read complex texts with good understanding. They are confident readers, and they search for information from various texts and appropriate websites purposefully to enrich their work across the curriculum. For example, they research Mayan society and compare their eating habits with how we eat today.

Most younger pupils develop fine motor skills effectively, such as when they paint carefully with brushes. This helps them to progress well with their early writing skills. Many pupils progress quickly from mark making in the youngest classes to forming letters, words and sentences by the time they move to Year 1. A majority also spell correctly and punctuate carefully. By Year 2, many pupils make good progress and use varied vocabulary and language patterns to write stories and poems. For example, they describe their holidays on postcards to inform others of their experiences.

In the Year 5/6 class, many pupils write effectively in a range of contexts. They arrange their work correctly and show a firm understanding of sentence structure and punctuation. They create imaginative pieces in different genres, write formal letters correctly and use alliteration and personification well to improve their work. For example, in this class pupils create a set of detailed facts on the historical kingdom of Benin and describe its bas-relief sculptures and plaques accurately. However, the standard of pupils' extended writing skills upon leaving Year 2 does not develop well enough until they reach the top of the school.

The progress that most pupils make in developing their Welsh oracy skills as they travel through the school is appropriate. Most pupils use suitable phrases regularly in everyday situations and they answer with satisfactory responses during discussions with teachers and each other.

By Year 2, many pupils understand and use mathematical principles effectively. They use numbers confidently, collect information and record their results in simple tables and charts. Most have a good understanding of the properties of different shapes and

a good example of this is when pupils create symmetrical patterns of flags and insects. They measure the length of their own feet accurately with a range of measuring equipment and experiment with capacity when using scoops to fill cup-cake holders. Many pupils use their mathematical skills well in authentic tasks, such as comparing the sizes of different fruits after studying an African story.

Many of the older pupils demonstrate sound mathematical skills, and the more able pupils develop sophisticated strategies to resolve problems, such as using co-ordinates in four quadrants confidently. They analyse data accurately and present it purposefully in various forms. For example, many pupils compare a range of temperatures using positive and negative numbers on charts and graphs effectively. However, although many pupils have an effective understanding of mathematical concepts, they do not apply their numeracy skills to the same standard when applying their skills across the curriculum.

Most pupils have satisfactory digital skills. Younger pupils use camera functions to create computer-based designs efficiently and use an interactive board proficiently to order and count numbers. By the end of their time at school, most pupils create multimedia presentations and manipulate texts effectively when scripting and filming woodland adventure stories. However, many pupils do not create databases and spreadsheets confidently and do not interrogate data with enough understanding.

Most pupils develop imaginative artistic skills. For example, older pupils create a mural on the locality based on the work of the Welsh artist Rhiannon Roberts. In addition, most pupils develop their creative skills purposefully, such as designing wall art with mud paint and leaf art during the school's outdoor and well-being week.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils feel safe, secure and valued by staff. They embrace the school's strong ethos of respect and tolerance and conform well to the high expectations of behaviour. This helps to ensure that pupils act with respect and consideration towards each other and adults.

Nearly all pupils are happy and demonstrate a positive attitude towards school and their learning. They participate in lessons willingly and enjoy their learning experiences in a nurturing, caring and purposeful environment. Nearly all pupils have a very clear understanding of the school's rules and explain well as to why they are important and what happens if they do not adhere to them.

In classes and around the school the behaviour of nearly all pupils is exemplary and they move between classes and other areas in a polite and controlled way. They are well-mannered and show kindness and respect to all adults and each other. The elected 'Mary's Messengers' support this atmosphere of tranquillity. The school's 'Guardian Angels' also contribute to this mindset and help to provide pupils with a sense of ownership and responsibility for their own well-being. For example, they have led the furnishing of the 'Cornel Cwtsh' near the older pupils' classes, to provide a space for pupils to relax and reflect.

Nearly all pupils collaborate well on tasks and demonstrate respect for the opinions and views of others. They listen to and consider the contributions of others carefully,

making thoughtful responses that support others' feelings. They relate well to their peers and demonstrate this through being polite and considerate when in class and during playtimes. For example, during lessons nearly all pupils make very good use of their learning partners, who change on a regular basis, to support each other's learning. This is purposeful and it reinforces pupils' readiness to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of looking after their own well-being. For example, they understand the importance of making healthy eating choices and the need to remain physically active. They make good use of the equipment on the yard at breaktimes, which encourages their independent learning. For example, they design their own adventure play area confidently, using tyres and planks, to build their own adventure trail. This develops their balance, physical and co-operation skills successfully.

Nearly all pupils draw on strategies to support their emotional well-being effectively. For example, pupils use model characters that convey positive messages, to remind them of their own confidence and resilience, when persevering with their work. Most pupils are adept at looking for new ways to succeed when they face challenges. They use coping mechanisms well, which focus on embedding well-being strategies in their daily lives, when faced with difficult tasks. They work with their peers effectively to solve problems before seeking support from adults. For example, they use the 'Meddwl, Mêt, Miss' strategy purposefully during lessons when working on their tasks. As a result, nearly all pupils understand the importance of maintaining positive attitudes to their work and they persevere and demonstrate resilience when completing tasks.

Most pupils know that adults listen to their views and consider them carefully in decisions that affect them. Many pupils, including those with ALN, undertake leadership roles and responsibilities willingly. They play a productive part in the school's life and work as members of the various pupil voice groups. Representatives undertake their work enthusiastically through a variety of activities and, by doing so, make a valuable contribution to the school's life and work. For example, digital leaders help pupils to develop their use of apps correctly and contribute to pupils' understanding of online safety across the school.

Nearly all pupils show compassion for others intuitively, such as through supporting local charity events. For example, they help organise the successful Harvest Mass coffee morning and bake cakes for the event. Through their actions, the school is able to contribute financial support towards good causes around the world. As a result, most pupils develop well as ethical and well-informed citizens. It increases pupils' awareness of the importance of their actions towards creating a caring and tolerant society.

Teaching and learning experiences

The professional relationship between most staff and pupils is strong. On the whole, staff know the pupils well and provide purposeful activities to meet their needs, including those who need support with their work. Teaching assistants provide these pupils with beneficial support and know when to intervene and when to allow them to complete their work independently.

Most of the teaching is effective. The lively pace of most lessons engages pupils' interests well and motivates them to persevere and succeed. However, where lessons are not effective, introductions are too long, teaching is static and lacks positivity, and there is limited engagement with pupils during tasks.

Where the teaching is most effective, pupils receive a range of experiences to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. For example, in the Year 5/6 class the teacher provides stimulating opportunities for pupils to research the lives of Welsh princes. As a result, they write formal letters accurately to support their plots for releasing captives from Beaumaris Castle. Effective teaching in the nursery and reception classes ensure that pupils mark make to plan birthday parties and use a caterpillar stimulus to promote healthy eating successfully. Additionally, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils write postcards about Holy Island and use co-ordinates on a map to identify local landmarks purposefully. However, across the school, teachers do not challenge pupils to write extended pieces often enough.

Most teachers and support staff help pupils make good progress in their speaking, listening and reading skills through purposeful tasks. For example, the youngest pupils use extended vocabulary well during an imaginary Christening for 'Jane the doll' at the local church. In Year 6, pupils talk about the history of Black people intelligently, such as Rosa Parks and Betty Campbell. However, although most teachers provide a range of experiences to support pupils to make progress in their skills, planning does not build systematically on these skills effectively from one year to another. Many pupils do not make enough progress in applying their skills coherently across the curriculum, especially their numeracy and digital skills.

Provision for personal and social education develops pupils' understanding of their well-being and identity successfully. The curriculum gives good consideration to global events and the diversity of the world. Teachers also plan activities that reflect the cultural heritage of Wales successfully and most staff promote the advantages of learning Welsh effectively.

Most teachers are beginning to plan a variety of engaging experiences, in line with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales, which motivate most pupils to make good progress from their starting points. For example, teachers provide stimulating activities that promote pupils' interest in their local area after following a trail to the summit of Mynydd Twr.

Most teachers encourage pupils to contribute suggestions sensibly when planning topics. They use these views well as part of pupils' learning experiences, such as buying ingredients for a sandwich at a local shop for a fictional character's tea party. As a result, pupils are excited to share their experiences with others. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about having their ideas integrated into tasks that help them build a bug hotel. Teachers plan well for pupils to investigate possible future career paths and the world of work. For example, older pupils explore workers' roles in a tidal energy hub, planned for the nearby coastline.

Teachers use assessment activities appropriately when responding to pupils' work. In the most effective practice, teachers share skilful feedback orally to challenge and assess the quality of pupils' learning and target any needs promptly. However,

practices to respond to pupils' work are not consistent across the school. This hinders the understanding of pupils of what they need to do to improve their work and progress to the next step in their learning. At the end of the year, parents and carers receive suitable annual reports on their child's progress.

The school provides a calm and interesting learning environment indoors where all areas are used purposefully to support pupils' learning. Staff across the school create attractive displays and learning areas inside the building to stimulate pupils. Staff use the outdoor areas that are available appropriately, such as the woodland area and the prayer garden. However, there is a lack of stimulating and regular outdoor provision and learning experiences, especially for pupils up to Year 2.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring community where staff encourage pupils to contribute positively to its supportive and friendly ethos. The beneficial relationships between most staff and pupils, and between pupils of different ages, are a strong feature of the school. Nearly all teachers and support staff understand pupils' needs well and they respond with sensitivity to the pupils' emotional and social needs. This supportive and warm atmosphere helps nearly all pupils settle in easily to school life and it contributes significantly to their happiness in school and their overall well-being. This ensures that pupils feel secure and ready to learn.

Through a range of pupil voice groups, the school is beginning to develop opportunities for pupils to participate in decision-making at a school level and to influence what and how they learn. All pupils have a 'one-page profile' that outline their interests, how they prefer to be supported to learn and the areas that they are working on to improve. These profiles strengthen the school's understanding of each pupil and help staff further support pupils' learning and well-being.

The provision for pupils identified as having ALN is strong. The school's effective co-ordinator, along with well-trained support staff, ensures that there is good identification, tracking and support for individuals and groups of pupils. The ALN co-ordinator works closely with local schools to ensure consistency in the provision offered to pupils by staff. Teachers and support staff develop a deeper understanding of the needs of all pupils through comprehensive pupil progress reviews. Additionally, the school works effectively with a range of specialist services to secure additional, timely resources to support pupils with a range of needs. These arrangements ensure that targeted pupils make good progress.

The school provides an interesting range of visits and visitors to support the curriculum and engage pupils in their learning. This includes visits to the nearby airbase where pupils construct flight control towers and investigate aerodynamics using model planes. In addition, pupils contribute to a shoebox appeal, which promotes their understanding of the importance of values, such the right to a life without hunger and thirst. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' social skills and cultural understanding.

The school provides good opportunities to celebrate Welsh heritage and culture. These include studying the life of Aneurin Bevan, the founder of the NHS, and other

famous Welsh personalities from artistic and sporting backgrounds, such as Shirley Bassey and Gareth Thomas.

The school has a strong relationship with the local community that supports the learning and well-being of pupils well. For example, the school works effectively in partnership with parents and local businesses to develop its outdoor resources, such as the adventure trail area and woodland trail. Additionally, the aftermath of the pandemic has restricted the school's ability to sustain a well-constructed programme of after-school activities.

The school supports pupils' well-being by working effectively with a range of external agencies and the local community police officers. The school also draws effectively upon local and national well-being provisions. For example, teachers use well-being strategies effectively to encourage pupils to look after their mental health. For those pupils who require further emotional and well-being support, there is a specifically trained member of staff at the school and this provision is very effective in addressing the needs of pupils who may feel anxious during the school day.

Community links are effective. The strong links with the local church help pupils to understand issues relating to right and wrong and encourage pupils to reflect on a wide range of ethical and moral issues sensibly. For example, the school encourages pupils to help others by raising money for different local and national charities. This helps them to begin to understand important issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion and develops the values of empathy, courage, and compassion effectively.

The school's processes for monitoring attendance are efficient. However, they are not improving attendance at the moment. Staff communicate well with each other to support pupils and understand their roles in keeping pupils safe. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are appropriate and give no cause for concern. However, an issue related to site safety was brought to the attention of school leaders during the inspection.

Leadership and management

The headteacher places great emphasis on ensuring that pupils feel happy and that they focus positively on enjoying their time at school. He places the care and well-being of pupils at the heart of his vision. Staff take pride in the school motto and most staff take great care to support the implementation of this vision. This positive mindset by most staff and the effort by leaders to create an ethos of co-operation has a purposeful effect on pupils' attitudes to learning and their support of each other.

Governors support this philosophy, and on the whole, staff act purposefully on leaders' expectations. Even though strained working relationships among staff have limited the effectiveness of collaborative working in recent years, leaders strive to create and embed a caring and inclusive ethos among all staff and pupils.

On the whole, arrangements to distribute leadership roles are effective. Leaders hold staff to account for the quality and impact of their work and they act upon concerns when necessary. Leaders attempt to create consistency in the school's practices to ensure that all staff focus on providing agreed practices for the benefit of pupils. This includes a readiness to improve the quality of teaching and to embed a common

understanding of professional values among staff. However, this is not moving on as quickly as expected, especially in terms of effective teaching, teamwork and high expectations.

Leaders have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. There is a clear link between self-evaluation activities and improvement planning. As a result, leaders prioritise their findings effectively and set reliable targets to move the school forward, such as improving pupils' numeracy skills. Leaders also share the school's culture of safeguarding with all staff purposefully.

Leaders' processes to evaluate the effectiveness of provision are based on a wide range of first-hand evidence. Quality improvement systems include discussions with pupils about their work and well-being and monitoring the impact of teaching as part of performance management arrangements. Leaders gather the views of other partners effectively, consider the views of parents and act sensibly on any findings. For example, the school listened well to parents on how to show them what their children learn in school and introduced an app to accomplish this more effectively.

Leaders ensure that relevant training opportunities are available to staff to support their professional development. These link well with the school's priorities for improvement and support staff to develop skills that they use effectively to improve pupils' outcomes. For example, leaders organise effective training for staff to develop pupils' communication and emotional skills.

The school visits other local schools to share effective practices and this supports school improvement beneficially. As a result, staff are provided with productive opportunities that develop their professional knowledge and their leadership skills. For example, the ALN co-ordinator works effectively with a network of co-workers to develop the expectations related to ALN reform.

Leaders ensure that staff make good use of the building and allow pupils to design support areas, such as the 'Cornel Cwtsh'. The school uses its expansive outdoor areas appropriately, such as a woodland and adventure trails. However, there is a lack of regular outdoor provision and learning experiences for pupils up to Year 2. Resources for these pupils in the outdoor area do not enrich their experiences successfully enough to enhance their skills further.

Leaders allocate resources effectively and use the pupil development grant sensibly to provide support programmes, purchase equipment and fund local visits. They are beginning to address national priorities such as implementing the Curriculum for Wales appropriately, for example through the use of the local community as stimulus for learning, such as the Roman fort in the grounds of St Cybi's church.

The input of governors, through sub-committees and the full governing body, creates suitable improvements across the school. The governors are supportive of the school and hold the senior leadership team to account as critical friends. The headteacher informs governors accurately about pupils' learning and they consider how to improve provision thoughtfully, such as the funding and development of a woodland trail. Governors promote effective practices to ensure that pupils eat and drink healthily and leaders advise parents on the importance of nutritious food in their lunchboxes. Governors monitor the budget regularly and ensure that decisions on

expenditure align with the school's priorities for improvement, such as developing intervention support for all classes.

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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