



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

A report on

**St Monica's C.I.W. Primary School
Whitchurch Road
Heath
Cardiff
CF14 3JL**

Date of inspection: April 2019

by

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

About St Monica's C.I.W. Primary School

St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School is in the Heath area of Cardiff. There are 135 pupils on roll, aged from four to eleven years. There are six classes at the school.

The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free schools meals is around 26%, which is above the national average of 18%. The school identifies around 18% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is below the national average of 21%. Around 62% of pupils come from an ethnic minority background and 57% have English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

The headteacher took up her post in 2015. The school's previous inspection was in March 2012.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Pupils at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School receive very good quality care, support and guidance. This raises their levels of wellbeing and confidence effectively and creates positive attitudes towards learning. Consequently, most pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils with additional learning needs, including those with English as an additional language, progress well from their point of entry. Most pupils behave well and they are polite and courteous to each other and adults. Pupils experience interesting and engaging learning experiences across the curriculum. The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body have ensured the implementation of the vision for the school through strong, sensitive and supportive leadership of a very close-knit staff team.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

R1 Raise standards in Welsh

R2 Improve the handwriting and presentation skills of a minority of pupils

R3 Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their modelling and control technology skills fully

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

When they enter the school, pupils' skills vary considerably. The majority enter with very little experience of the English language. Most make good progress from their starting points as they move through the school. Pupils with additional learning needs make strong progress from their individual starting points. Pupils eligible for free school meals achieve well.

Across the school, many pupils develop their listening and speaking skills well and concentrate for sustained periods of time. Although the majority have a very limited vocabulary at the start, they make good progress in extending their vocabulary as they move through the school. In key stage 2, many pupils build well upon their skills to talk with increasing confidence about their work and a range of topics. For example, in a stimulating Year 6 lesson, pupils describe how they use similes, metaphors and personification in their literacy work. Pupils who have English as an additional language speak with growing confidence.

Many pupils develop good reading skills. By the end of the foundation phase, many read a range of texts effectively and use phonic strategies to build and pronounce unfamiliar words successfully. Many discuss the content of their books sensibly. By Year 2, pupils have a good recall of facts and enthusiastically discuss such books as 'Wonders of the World'. In key stage 2, many pupils read carefully and accurately. By the end of key stage 2, many read fluently and discuss a range of fiction books effectively. More able pupils use techniques such as scanning and skimming successfully to deduce answers from texts. Many use the internet purposefully to research topics.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop their early writing skills well and produce interesting pieces of work, such as simple explanations on the movement of the earth and sun and effective dinosaur poems. As they move through the phase, many develop their writing skills successfully. In key stage 2, many pupils generally present their ideas effectively and display a sound grasp of how to use paragraphs and accurate punctuation. Many write successfully in a range of forms across the curriculum, for example, when producing discursive writing on 'do we pollute space'. Older pupils create the next chapter in a story about 'The Street Child' imaginatively. However, a minority of pupils across the school do not write neatly or take enough care in the presentation of their work.

Throughout the school, pupils develop a useful understanding of basic Welsh words and phrases. They generally pronounce familiar words clearly. A majority read simple Welsh texts suitably, recognising a few common words and using their phonic skills to decode texts. Pupils' writing skills develop appropriately. However, many pupils lack the confidence to speak Welsh outside of designated Welsh lessons.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in mathematics. By Year 2, they add and subtract tens and units correctly and use coins to make specific amounts of money. They tell the time in analogue and digital forms confidently. Many measure lengths accurately, for example when measuring images of a plant to

the nearest centimetre. They apply their skills well in activities such as measuring ingredients to make a mother's day cake and creating a block graph to show pets owned by pupils in their class.

Most pupils continue to make good progress as they move through key stage 2. In Year 4, they measure perimeters of 2D shapes accurately, understand decimal places well and calculate fractions of given amounts of money. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils investigate confidently what impacts the width and depth of a moon crater by dropping a ball from varying angles on to a tray of sand and recording the depth and width of the crater created. Most measure, record and compare temperature trends successfully over a four-day period in various parts of the school. They apply their mathematical skills effectively to other areas of learning, for example, when creating a time line they order dates correctly to show important events during the Victorian era.

Most pupils develop their information communication and technology (ICT) skills confidently. In the foundation phase, most use simple programs to draw repeating patterns for a school mural and collect images for a given theme. By Year 2, most use word-processing packages successfully to share information. In key stage 2, most pupils use their ICT skills successfully to write, edit and re-draft their work. They create effective multimedia presentations which incorporate pictures, sound and texts. Most pupils create and use databases and spreadsheets successfully. However, pupils do not develop their modelling and control technology skills fully. Nearly all pupils understand how to keep safe on-line.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Across the school, nearly all pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They are enthusiastic and they sustain their concentration for significant periods. They listen attentively to their teachers' instructions, settle quickly and move between tasks sensibly. They work well in pairs and groups and support each other effectively. Most pupils show determination and resilience when tackling new experiences, for example, as they explore how the earth and planets move. Most pupils participate eagerly in class discussions and enjoy learning. They display curiosity and perception and participate eagerly in a wide range of interesting learning opportunities. They are happy to share their work and proud of what they have produced. For example, pupils in Year 4 collaborate successfully with Irish pen pals to discuss their writing tasks.

The behaviour of most pupils in and out of classes is very good. They are very polite and courteous towards staff, each other and visitors. Pupils care for each other sensitively and play together harmoniously. They actively promote the school's family ethos by supporting others on the school yard and organising various play activities.

Most pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of effective citizenship through their awareness of the values promoted by the school, which include tolerance and fairness. Older pupils explain the importance of these values in a mature and sensible manner. They are very proud of their school and the values it promotes.

Nearly all pupils feel safe, happy and valued at school. They demonstrate a high level of respect for their teachers and know whom to turn to if they need support. Most pupils have confidence in the school to deal with any issues that arise and there is a strong feeling of mutual respect between pupils. For example, the pupil translators' team provides sensitive support for those pupils who are learning English for the first time. They provide advice on how the school day runs, where to go and what to do at certain times of the day

Many pupils take on responsibilities conscientiously and they display a sound understanding of the importance and purpose of their roles. For example, they act as house captains, young interpreters, office administrators and as an events team. In addition, the eco committee has set up a vegetable patch to attract wildlife to the school grounds. These roles help pupils to play an active part in the day-to-day running of the school.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking water and keeping fit. As well as regular exercise lessons they participate enthusiastically in the daily mile and attend a wide range of sporting clubs, such as football and rugby, to improve their physical strength and stamina.

Most pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and they are punctual at the start of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers generally have high expectations of each pupil and they make effective use of a variety of stimulating teaching methods to engage pupils' interests successfully. Teachers' presentations are usually lively and they encourage pupils to achieve as well as they can. Many teachers give clear instructions and share learning objectives well with pupils. Many teachers set a brisk pace of learning and use questioning techniques carefully to develop pupils' thinking skills. Staff know the pupils very well and there is a highly constructive and supportive working relationship between them across the school. Successful co-operation between teachers and teaching assistants ensures effective support for individual and specific groups of pupils. Teachers provide useful and purposeful oral feedback, which helps pupils to know what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and make effective use of the assessments to set targets for individual pupils.

The school has an engaging approach to learning that provides pupils with a stimulating curriculum. Throughout the school, teachers provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to direct their own learning, such as through the homework planner which pupils have helped to devise. This is successful in developing pupils' independent learning skills. The principles of the foundation phase have been embedded firmly with prominent focused tasks in the learning areas, which set an appropriate level of challenge for pupils' age and ability. Teachers plan interesting learning activities for pupils, such as a Victorian day in the foundation phase and research work on space and the planets in key stage 2.

Opportunities for pupils to make regular visits to local places of interest, such as Cardiff castle and the National Museum of Wales, support the school's curriculum well and enrich pupils' learning experiences successfully. The wide range of extra-curricular clubs supplements the curriculum effectively. For example, the film and drama clubs help to promote pupils' creative skills well.

Teachers use their understanding of the new curriculum for Wales purposefully to shape the learning experiences they provide for pupils. For example, when planning they consider very carefully how these experiences contribute to the four purposes of the curriculum. The school plans successfully for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Although teachers actively promote the use of ICT in various areas of learning, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their modelling and control technology skills.

Provision for the Welsh dimension ensures that pupils are given rich and interesting experiences to develop their understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, pupils study Mary Jones and her Bible, Beddgelert, Cantre'r Gwaelod and Welsh folk songs. The school celebrates Welsh traditions well, for example, through the annual St David's Day Eisteddfod. The school develops pupils' basic Welsh language skills appropriately, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and improve their Welsh skills, especially outside of designated Welsh lessons.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The headteacher has established a caring, supportive and very inclusive ethos that permeates the life of the school. She has created a strong relationship with parents and carers who are regular visitors to this warm and welcoming school. Parents value the regular newsletters and meetings, which provide them with detailed information on the work of the school and their children's progress.

Staff track and monitor pupils' progress carefully as they move through the school. They use this information purposefully to identify those pupils who are not making the progress they should and they provide them with effective support to bring them back on track. For example, skilled teaching assistants deliver very helpful intervention programmes to ensure that those pupils with English as an additional language make accelerated progress.

There is a range of valuable provision to meet the needs of pupils who have additional learning needs. They are identified at an early stage and the co-ordinator tracks and monitors their progress carefully. Skilled teaching assistants provide high quality support to ensure that pupils with a range of needs integrate well into the daily life of the school. Each pupil has a personal programme with clear and specific targets for improvement. Pupils and teachers, together with parents, regularly review progress in meeting these targets. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school has effective arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. There are regular opportunities for physical education and pupils participate in the daily mile. There is a good range of after-school clubs which offer sporting, dance and musical activities. These help to develop pupils' physical, social and creative skills well.

Pupils help to devise class and school rules and there are good opportunities for them to make choices about their learning activities. For example, they worked with senior members of the locality on an interesting 'Greater Love' project, which involved tracing and recording the names of those died during the First World War. There are several active and enthusiastic pupil voice groups, such as the events and tech teams, a group of interpreters, playground buddies and the criw Cymraeg, which

contribute purposefully to the life and work of the school. In addition, the eco committee was recognised for its work in developing a vegetable patch to attract wildlife to the school.

The school fosters successful working relationships with several outside agencies and seeks appropriate advice when necessary. For example, the police liaison officer delivers regular workshops on healthy choices, alcohol and drug awareness in order to improve pupils' understanding and resilience.

There are purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, the school identifies a value each month and representatives of various faiths visit the school regularly to speak to pupils. Teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and significant events around the world. The school has also established strong links with other countries, such as Ireland, Finland and the USA.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, based on a firm commitment to enhance the wellbeing of all pupils in a supportive and inclusive environment. She sets a clear strategic direction for the school and establishes high expectations, which she shares well with the entire school community. As a result, all members of staff understand their roles clearly and work effectively to maintain and improve pupils' standards and wellbeing. For example, they plan activities together and this ensures that lessons successfully meet the needs of pupils.

The headteacher has established effective arrangements to meet the very diverse needs of pupils, who often have little or no previous experience of education or of English. For example, to meet the needs of certain groups of pupils the school employs staff who are fluent in their language. The school takes very good account of local and national initiatives to enable these pupils to make good progress and provides purposeful support for their families. These are strengths of the school.

The headteacher is successfully building the leadership capacity of staff at all levels and effective performance management arrangements support the process thoroughly. The headteacher encourages all members of staff to develop professionally, for example, by enabling curricular team leaders to monitor and report on progress and by empowering teaching assistants to deliver literacy and numeracy sessions for those pupils in need of additional support. Close links with other schools and institutions are having a positive impact on the professional development of staff and on the quality of the provision. For example, links with the local cluster of schools help to ensure consistency in teacher assessments and collaboration with a local church group has produced a purposeful reading project for a specific group of pupils.

All members of staff have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There are robust and thorough systems to evaluate and review progress. These include a careful analysis of pupil performance, listening to pupils, scrutinising their books and undertaking lesson observations. As a result, the school has thoughtfully identified its current priorities, such as improving standards in Welsh, enhancing the quality of teaching and responding to pupils' request to develop their wellbeing further.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They visit regularly to monitor the impact of new initiatives, such as those to support pupils and their families and pupils' contributions to the school's decision-making process. They have a secure understanding of how pupils' performance compares with that in similar schools. This enables them to hold leaders to account for the standards that pupils achieve. Governors carefully scrutinise expenditure to ensure that it is linked appropriately to school priorities.

The school has enough suitably qualified and experienced staff to teach a broad and balanced curriculum. It makes effective use of their expertise and experience and has a good record of sharing its specialist expertise with schools in Cardiff, Europe and the USA. As a result, staff enhance their knowledge of current teaching strategies, such as the use of electronic tablets and apps, and they apply them successfully to develop pupils' collaborative learning strategies.

The school makes effective use of the pupil development grant by providing a wide range of targeted intervention programmes that raise the standard of pupils' reading, communication and numeracy skills.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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