



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

**A report on**

**St Cuthbert's R.C. Primary School**

**Letton Road  
Atlantic Wharf  
Cardiff  
CF10 4AB**

**Date of inspection: May 2023**

**by**

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

## About St Cuthbert's R.C. Primary School

Name of provider	St Cuthbert's R.C. Primary School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Roman Catholic
Number of pupils on roll	139
Pupils of statutory school age	115
Number in nursery classes	0
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 23.0%)	44%
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 16.1%)	6.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.9%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	66.1%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2009
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	10/03/2015
Start date of inspection	09/05/2023

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](https://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

St. Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Primary School provides an inclusive, caring and welcoming environment for pupils. All members of staff work closely together to celebrate the rich diversity of languages and cultures within the school community. As a result, all pupils feel valued, have high levels of well-being and develop their confidence well in a nurturing atmosphere. The school has highly effective practices for the integration of newly arrived pupils with no English into the school, which has had a positive impact on their well-being.

The school provides high levels of care, support and guidance for pupils. The school has clearly established rules, routines and high expectations of behaviour. These help pupils to consider and to manage their own behaviour well. Provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The emphasis on positive values and tolerance towards and respect for others is a notable feature across the school. The school makes very good use of the pupils' diverse cultural heritage to ensure that they have a good understanding of the need to respect one another.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. As a result, many pupils develop knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate for their age and ability. However, provision is varied and teachers do not always provide sufficiently challenging learning activities that build on pupils' skills systematically over time.

School leaders promote a culture of support, trust and care that creates a positive learning environment for pupils and staff. However, the school's self-evaluation and improvement processes are not focused sharply enough on evaluating the quality of teaching and its impact on pupil progress. Senior leaders and governors are in the very early stages of working collaboratively to ensure that self-evaluation processes are thorough.

## Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that self-evaluation and improvement planning focus suitably on strengthening pupil outcomes
- R2 Ensure that teachers use pupil progress information effectively to plan for sustained improvement for all pupils
- R3 Increase the effectiveness of the governing body in supporting the school and holding it to account

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Many pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well and this is a strength of the school. In reception class, many pupils talk freely about their experience, such as having a tea party in their role play area. Most listen carefully to staff and follow instructions accurately. Most Year 4 pupils listen to staff and each other purposefully. They share and build on their ideas. For example, when measuring a range of objects, they identify the most appropriate instrument to use accurately.

A majority of pupils develop their early reading skills well. In reception, most pupils learn to recognise letters and their associated sounds quickly. In Year 1, many pupils read simple words and phrases confidently. Many pupils in Year 3 discuss suitably the stories they are reading and talk about the characters with sustained interest. Many older pupils read texts aloud and with increasing fluency and a majority of infer and deduce texts confidently.

Over time, most pupils develop sound writing skills. In reception most of pupils begin to hold writing implements and begin to form letters carefully. In Year 1, many write words, phrases and simple sentences suitably, for example when responding to an image of the Royal Family. By Year 4, many pupils understand how to structure different forms of writing correctly such as letters and recounts. Most write sequences of sentences logically and use capital letters and full stops accurately. By Year 6, many pupils structure their writing suitably for a range of purposes. For example, they write a news bulletin in chronological order and structure persuasive letters with a range of useful points and a conclusion. They redraft and improve their writing skilfully. However, a minority of do not develop their writing well enough or spell familiar words accurately enough. Throughout the school, most pupils apply their writing skills at a similar level across the curriculum.

In the first few years of school, many pupils develop their Welsh language skills quickly and effectively. In reception, pupils greet adults in Welsh confidently and enthusiastically. By Year 2, many pupils develop good recall of useful sentences and phrases. Older pupils often extend their sentences purposefully.

Most pupils develop their number skills effectively. In reception, pupils work on number bonds to 10 and begin to add and subtract using everyday objects to support their counting. In Years 2 and 3, most pupils consolidate their skills effectively. They develop a good understanding of even and odd numbers and solve simple fraction problems successfully. Many older pupils use different strategies appropriately for addition, subtraction, and to multiply and divide numbers in a range of contexts such as solving multi-step problems. By Year 6, many pupils have secure numeracy skills. They use their understanding of time to organise timetables and calculate the duration of films. However, a minority of older pupils do not develop their numeracy skills well enough. Many pupils transfer their mathematical skills suitably into other contexts. For example, reception pupils carefully measure the size of the wheels using non-standard units of measurement.

Most pupils develop and apply their digital skills effectively. From a young age, they begin to use their digital skills constructively in a rich range of learning experiences. By Year 6, many pupils have a good range of digital skills. They select purposefully from a variety of presentation tools effectively to suit the need of the activity. For example, they select a publishing tool to present the impact of World War 2 in Year 6. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. They make and share age appropriate videos within the school community.

Overall, and from their individual starting points, many pupils make good progress in many areas of learning. This includes pupils who are eligible for free school meals, pupils who have English as an additional language and pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Most younger pupils develop their artistic and creative skills well. This is particularly true of the youngest pupils, who create role-play in a wide variety of contexts. For example, reception class pupils co-operate well and follow recipes to create dirt cupcakes in the outdoor kitchen area. However, as pupils progress through the school, their creative skills do not develop sufficiently well enough.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and feel safe within its inclusive and caring ethos. They know who to turn to and are comfortable to discuss any concerns with members of staff knowing they are listened to. In this nurturing environment, nearly all pupils engage well in their learning and develop confidently as individuals.

Nearly all pupils are friendly and courteous and show a high level of respect and tolerance to their peers and staff. This is a notable feature. Across the school, during lessons and at breaktimes, pupils behave well and respond suitably to adults. Pupils successfully regulate their emotions and attempt to remain calm when situations become stressful. Most pupils across the school show interest in their work and engage well with their tasks. They are confident when attempting tasks and keen to learn about and explore unfamiliar areas of learning. For example, the youngest pupils create their own beach environment with sand and other natural materials. Most work well collaboratively, showing appropriate consideration and respect for the views of others when completing activities. Most pupils sustain concentration and successfully avoid distractions. Younger pupils are developing the skills to reflect on the success of their learning suitably and they build on this well as they move through the school. Older pupils can reflect and improve their work independently and respond beneficially to feedback from teachers. For example, in Year 6 they use instant feedback during in their literacy lesson to improve their imaginative writing on the battle linked to the play Macbeth.

Generally, pupils like the various activities provided to support their wellbeing that allow them to reflect on their physical and mental health, for example when discussing the benefits of outdoor exercise on their mental and physical health whilst developing their ball skills. Most pupils are developing well as ethically informed citizens. They take on a range of leadership roles conscientiously, such as the 'Mini Vinnies' who organise a community winter clothing collection successfully.

Nearly all pupils understand how to keep healthy and safe. They have a strong awareness of how to stay safe online and of being a responsible digital user. They confidently make healthy choices when choosing snacks during the school day.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school is beginning to create a suitably broad and balanced curriculum, although opportunities to develop pupils' creative skills are limited, particularly with the older pupils. A range of relevant topics capture pupils' interest well. For example, pupils in Year 6 learn about life during World War 2 and develop empathy and understanding for the lives of people in these times. The majority of teachers provide opportunities for pupils to contribute their ideas and suggestions effectively to shape topics and to sustain interest. Teachers promote Welsh culture effectively. The school celebrates cultural diversity and a strong sense of community relentlessly. This unites pupils and provides a strong sense of belonging.

The school's provision to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills is effective. Staff provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6, for example, develop a coding programme to learn Welsh language patterns in a fun, engaging way.

Nearly all support staff across the school develop strong professional relationships with pupils. They show care and kindness and manage pupils' behaviour positively. For example, when pupils experience a difficulty in their work or play, staff provide pupils with time to reflect and problem solve. This promotes pupils' independence skills well. Staff provide a range of play provision for younger pupils that successfully develop their skills across the curriculum. They interact and support pupils enthusiastically. For example, they provide encouragement for pupils to develop their gross motor skills effectively when using scooters and balance bikes.

The school enriches its curriculum with a range of visits to the local area and further afield. Teachers plan a variety of interesting activities and rich experiences for them, which reflect the nature and context of the school and its place in the local community very successfully, such as the local nearby barrage, National Museum and Cardiff Castle.

Most teachers use effective questioning to challenge pupils and deepen their understanding. They use assessment activities beneficially when responding to pupils' work. In the most effective practice, teachers share purposeful feedback, both verbally and in writing, to assess the quality of pupils' learning and identify next steps promptly. These strategies help pupils understand how to improve their work to make further progress in their learning. A few staff are beginning to use a range of assessment strategies, such as pupil progress meetings, to reflect on pupils' work. However, this is at an early stage and is not currently having a significant impact on accelerating pupils' learning across the school. The school's end of year reports to parents are effective and inform them beneficially on their children's progress and experiences in school.

## Care, support and guidance

St Cuthbert's Primary School is an inclusive school with a warm, homely and welcoming feeling. Pupils and staff promote a positive ethos in its key values 'United in Faith, we live, Love and Learn' and nearly all adhere well to this ethos. The strong relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are a positive feature of the school. A team of dedicated staff respond sensitively to pupils' social and emotional needs.

Provision for pupils' well-being is a strong feature of the school. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and sensitively support their needs in order to reduce any barriers to learning. For example, the bespoke nurture provision provides a range of worthwhile interventions for any pupil that requires additional support to allow them to learn.

The provision to support pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is worthwhile. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) and her team ensure that pupils' needs are identified and that the tracking and support for individuals and groups of pupils with ALN begin promptly after identification. They plan a range of purposeful literacy, numeracy and social programmes that impact positively on pupils' well-being and progress. The school works closely with external agencies who provide emotional, health and social needs, where appropriate.

Whole-school acts of collective worship make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The school's curriculum provides suitable opportunities for pupils to appreciate the views of others and explore their own views. The school ensures that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities take on leadership roles effectively on a variety of purposeful groups. As a result, the school provides pupils with worthwhile opportunities to lead and make decisions to improve the school. For example, the Criw Cymraeg choose Welsh books of interest for the school library after successfully winning the 'Den Dreigiau.'

The school provides worthwhile opportunities to promote the Welsh culture and language. For example, pupils participate in the school Eisteddfod celebrations and Urdd sporting events. There are a number beneficial after-school clubs that enhance pupils' experiences and enjoyment of school. For example, Spanish club provides an opportunity to develop their language skills further and the science and technology club provides opportunities for pupils to take part in experiments and practical problem-solving activities.

The school places a strong emphasis on providing a rich and varied range of activities that support the curriculum and engage pupils in their learning. For example, they use the locality effectively visiting local parks and landmarks. Staff provide opportunities for a residential trip further afield that provides pupils with new experiences such as team building activities.

Staff enable pupils to develop an empathy for the challenges that face members of the local community. They use the diverse experiences of pupils at the school positively so that they develop respect and understanding for diversity. For example, pupils celebrate 'refugee week' and pupils share personal experiences effectively.

The school promotes good attendance and adopts a suitable range of strategies to monitor and address poor attendance. The weekly visit from the cluster attendance officer actively identifies and visits families to promote. A strong sense of safeguarding is embedded in all aspects of the school's work. Staff have a sound understanding of all procedures and receive appropriate training regularly.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and senior leaders share a clear vision for the school, with pupils' well-being at the centre. There are good professional working relationships between staff and the headteacher. The school's positive, friendly and nurturing ethos means that all pupils and their families are welcomed, valued and supported. The partnership between the school and parents is a strength. Parents are proud that they and their children are part of a warm, inclusive school community.

Nearly all teachers take on additional responsibilities to develop their practice enthusiastically. The school works constructively with external partners to secure improvement for identified priorities. For example, the school's provision and learning outcomes in Welsh have improved as a result of effective partnership working between the subject leader for Welsh and the local education officer. Leaders provide a suitable range of appropriate in-house and external professional development opportunities for all staff. Over time, teachers have worked with other local schools to develop aspects of teaching and learning and their leadership roles.

There are suitable arrangements to manage the performance of staff that link effectively to the school's priorities for improvement.

Leaders have developed a strategic plan for the gathering of first-hand evidence to inform self-evaluation across the work of the school. This draws upon a range of activities, such as looking at pupil books, learning walks, lesson observations and pupil progress meetings. However, these monitoring activities are not effective enough in identifying a few of the shortcomings within classes. As a result, leaders are not always aware of the gaps in provision or priority areas for development and the progress made by a few pupils is varied.

The school has identified suitable whole-school priorities for improvement, although senior leaders do not always use the outcomes of monitoring activities or evaluate the impact of improvement plans on pupil progress well enough.

Until very recently, school governance has been unstable. Overall, the governing body has not acted effectively enough as critical friends to the school. Recent changes to the governing body have strengthened its capacity. Governors are beginning to understand the key issues facing the school and are developing a better understanding of the school's current performance. However, this is at an early stage of development. Leaders prioritise safeguarding throughout the school. As a result, the culture of safeguarding is a strong feature of the school. Governors ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking.

The headteacher's financial management of the school is effective. Similarly, suitable use is made of grants, such as the Education Improvement Grant, which contributes



towards employing teaching assistants who deliver successful intervention programmes for specific groups.

## 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](http://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](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

© Crown Copyright 2023: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 13/07/2023