



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

A report on

St John Lloyd Catholic Comprehensive School

**Havard Road
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA14 8SD**

Date of inspection: March 2022

by

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

About St John Lloyd Catholic Comprehensive School

Name of provider	St John Lloyd Catholic Comprehensive School
Local authority	Carmarthenshire
Language of the provider	English Medium
Type of school	Secondary
Religious character	Catholic
Number of pupils on roll	483
Pupils of statutory school age	483
Number in sixth form (if applicable)	.
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the secondary sector is 18.7%)</i>	18.3%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the secondary sector is 21.7%)</i>	24.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	3.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	3.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	October 2015
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	26-02-2013
Start date of inspection	28 March – 1 April 2022
Additional information	

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

The school's caring and inclusive ethos and firm commitment to keeping everyone safe are underpinned by the Gospel values which permeate all aspects of the school's work. There is a calm, co-operative and friendly atmosphere both in lessons and around the school. All members of the school community are valued, supported and respected.

The headteacher and senior leaders provide supportive and compassionate leadership which has helped to develop a strong sense of teamwork amongst staff. Leaders have ensured high levels of well-being and care, but they have not had enough impact on making the improvements required to important aspects of the school's work, including the development of teaching and assessment and provision for pupils' skills. Although leaders gather lots of information about the school's work, evaluation and improvement processes are not precise enough to drive the improvements needed in teaching.

The curriculum is a strong feature of the school and is tailored appropriately to provide suitable learning experiences for the full range of pupils. A comprehensive programme of enrichment activities enhances further the provision, making effective use of a range of partners. Pupils enjoy developing their Welsh language skills.

Staff show high levels of care and compassion towards pupils and help them develop a secure understanding of how to be safe. The pastoral team creates an environment where it is accepted that pupils make mistakes but supports these pupils to learn from them and develop their moral, social, and cultural awareness. The school works successfully with a wide variety of outside agencies to support every child and their families. Transition arrangements are strong and ensure that pupils have the best possible start in the school.

The majority of pupils make appropriate progress in lessons but there is too much inconsistency in how effectively teachers plan to promote strong progress. Overall, teachers' written feedback does not have enough impact on improving pupils' work. Professional learning has contributed to strong care, support and guidance, but it has not focused closely enough on developing classroom practice.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that senior leadership roles and responsibilities are balanced suitably and that leaders at all levels have the capacity to secure improvement
- R2 Strengthen self-evaluation processes so that leaders have an accurate view of the school's areas for development and they plan for improvement precisely
- R3 Improve the effectiveness of teaching and assessment
- R4 Strengthen the leadership of, and provision for, the progressive development of pupils' skills
- R5 Ensure that professional learning focuses on improving classroom practice

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress about 12 months after the publication of this report.

Main evaluation

Learning

In lessons, the majority of pupils make steady progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. They recall prior learning well and apply it in different situations such as when writing speeches or discussing the meaning of the Eucharist. The minority who do not make enough progress occasionally lack engagement and application. They struggle to recall or build upon prior learning, such as converting minutes to fractions of an hour or using the apostrophe. Those pupils with additional learning needs make good progress from their starting points.

Many pupils listen with attention and respect. Those who do not, miss information and instructions that would support their learning. Many pupils are happy to answer questions and, when encouraged to do so, articulate their views on topics such as the political, environmental, social, and economic impact of natural disasters. A few provide well-developed and perceptive responses about characters in novels, while a very few pupils make good use of sophisticated and extensive vocabulary, including subject-specific, to enrich their verbal responses. A minority of pupils prefer to remain passive in lessons and consequently miss opportunities to develop their verbal skills and to consolidate their knowledge and understanding.

Many pupils read with suitable understanding and to locate information. Around half can identify persuasive features in speeches by well-known figures including President Biden and Nelson Mandela. A few, more able pupils can appreciate the themes of memories and sense of loss in the poetry of Dannie Abse and Robert Minhinnick, and make intelligent inferences from non-literary sources. Overall, only around half of pupils use a suitable range of reading strategies to support their learning.

The majority of pupils write accurately and produce appropriately structured writing for a range of purposes and audiences including speeches opposing vivisection and explanations of why Lourdes is important to Catholics. Pupils of all abilities often produce writing that lacks control or is not structured well enough. A minority have a limited sense of audience and make careless, repeated errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Few pupils proofread their work before they hand it to the teacher, although expectations for this are unclear. Lockdown has impacted on pupils' handwriting, so they do not always present their written work in a clear and coherent fashion.

In a few subjects, including mathematics, pupils develop their number skills suitably. In science, for instance, they calculate successfully the moment of a force. Many pupils construct line graphs with suitable scale and axes, and a majority label the axes appropriately. Although pupils generally plot points with suitable accuracy and draw lines of best fit, a few do not draw line graphs well enough or with attention to detail. A minority of pupils use graphs well to draw conclusions and explore their understanding when, for example, in personal and social education they explore the relationship between the subject of the x and y axes with limited information.

Many pupils show independence and flair in their artistic work and make good progress in bringing to life creative designs inspired by natural form. In addition, they show confidence in creating 3D tiles, drawing inspiration from both a visit to the National Botanical Gardens and the work of other artists.

Many pupils engage well with activities in Welsh lessons and around the school. They are enthusiastic about developing their Welsh language skills and make good progress from their starting points. More able pupils have a wide vocabulary. They can write extended responses accurately and engage in conversation in Welsh, for example about school life.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils feel safe and cared for, and play a full part in the Catholic life of the school. They feel supported and respected, and benefit from a nurturing environment.

Pupils and staff work together successfully to create a caring and supportive environment based on inclusion and equity. Pupils feel confident in discussing their feelings and emotions, and are proactive in accessing support such as 'Y Cwtsh Lles' and the school mindfulness programme. Most know how to keep themselves safe online, and have a good understanding of how to develop healthy online relationships.

Nearly all pupils feel that any pastoral issues are followed up promptly in a sensitive and positive way. They appreciate the school's restorative approach to dealing with incidents, which helps them to show respect for others, for example by allowing others to speak and remaining calm when people disagree with them.

Pupils feel that their voices are heard and that they have an impact on what and how they learn, for example by creating an 'emotional map' of the school, analysing how different environments can affect their feelings and emotions. They make a positive impact on school life, including helping to develop the 'Golden Ticket' approach of the rewards system. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds take on leadership roles that support their personal development well, such as the 'Youth SVP Group', which has led the Easter Egg charity appeal. The Student Council plays a purposeful role in school life, for example by consultation about changes to school uniform and helping to organise how pupils access the multi-use games areas.

In general, pupils develop their physical skills well and make healthy choices. They enjoy participating in physical activities during lessons and after school where they are available.

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons. The majority are quick to settle to work and are enthusiastic about their learning. They sustain concentration well and avoid distractions. A minority of pupils who lack confidence and independence need encouragement to persevere and look for solutions when they face difficulties.

Many pupils demonstrate an enthusiastic approach to group work and develop successfully the attitudes and behaviours that will help them to learn throughout their lives.

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 as part of inspection area 4 (care, support and guidance).

Teaching and learning experiences

As the school has welcomed pupils back from periods of lockdown, it has had a strong focus on improving their well-being through creating a safe and supportive environment in the classroom. Nearly all teachers develop positive working relationships with their classes. They know their pupils well and show high levels of care in the way that they endeavour to establish classroom routines that help them to re-engage with everyday school life. Overall, however, the school has not been consistently effective in developing classroom practice that helps pupils to make progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

In a minority of cases, teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. In these lessons, teachers are successful in creating a calm, purposeful learning environment. They plan lessons carefully, ensuring that tasks are matched to pupils' needs and are suitably challenging. They provide engaging resources and clear explanations, and use questioning appropriately to assess pupils' understanding.

Around a third of lessons have a few shortcomings, and as a result they are not consistently effective in securing progress. These shortcomings include limited questioning techniques, overly lengthy teacher exposition and the use of tasks that are not matched well enough to pupils' needs. In particular, teachers in these lessons focus too much on what pupils will do rather than what they will learn. This reduces the impact that these lessons have on pupils' engagement and progress.

In another third of lessons, there are notable shortcomings in classroom practice that prevent pupils from making suitable progress. In these lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. They plan undemanding activities that do not provide pupils with sufficient challenge or help to develop their independence. As a result, the pace of learning is too slow.

Pupils receive appropriate verbal feedback in the majority of lessons. In a few instances, teachers' feedback helps pupils to make substantial improvements to their work. Overall, however, teachers' feedback has too limited an impact on pupils' progress. Many teachers do not provide pupils with enough specific guidance as to how they can improve their work. They too often reward modest effort with excessive praise and respond positively to work that is unfinished or incorrect.

The school has appropriate systems for tracking and monitoring pupil progress. This helps them to identify pupils who are underachieving in specific subject areas, although strategies to support these pupils are insufficiently robust. Reports to parents are suitably regular and provide helpful information about how well pupils are engaged in their learning. However, they do not provide sufficiently personalised targets for improvement.

The curriculum offers a wide range of learning experiences that meets the needs of all pupils. This provision is enhanced through a rich variety of informal learning opportunities in collaboration with a range of partners. Carefully planned provision for

personal and social education ensures that pupils develop successfully the skills and understanding to be healthy, confident and ethical citizens.

The school has responded appropriately to the impact of lockdowns to develop a helpful literacy immersion programme for a small group of targeted pupils. However, the wider curriculum provision does not support sufficiently the progressive development of pupils' skills. Consequently, meaningful opportunities to improve both literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are limited.

The provision for Welsh fosters a positive attitude towards the Welsh language and culture. This helps pupils to make good progress in their Welsh language skills. Leaders have developed a clear vision for Curriculum for Wales and are exploring approaches towards curriculum design. However, this vision is not sufficiently understood across all curriculum areas.

Care, support and guidance

St John Lloyd Catholic School welcomes pupils from a wide range of communities and backgrounds. Underpinned by clear Gospel values, which recognise the dignity and value of the individual, the school provides a high level of care, support and guidance to pupils and staff. Pupils have confidence in the ability of staff to support them well and, as a result, nearly all feel safe in school.

The inclusive ethos where pupils and staff feel valued and safe is palpable. Centred around good relationships and care for each other, the school celebrates the fact that each individual is unique. This helps pupils to develop their understanding and empathy for those with additional learning needs and protected characteristics. All pupils benefit from opportunities to develop an understanding of right and wrong, and to explore their spiritual and ethical beliefs.

Staff work effectively with a wide variety of external partners such as the police and youth service to support the safety and well-being of pupils. In addition, the school implements a range of strategies to help pupils keep themselves safe when online, from exploitation, and when making lifestyle choices.

Arrangements to keep pupils safe are clear and robust. The school responds to safeguarding concerns promptly and diligently and makes the necessary referrals to outside agencies. It follows appropriate procedures to ensure the suitability of staff and others who are in contact with pupils, and maintains accurate and current records. All staff receive regular training for safeguarding and child protection and are clear about the school's practices for safeguarding pupils. In addition, the school's arrangements for the digital security of pupils and staff are comprehensive.

The school provides a wide range of support for pupils' emotional, physical, and mental well-being. For example, all pupils engage in a programme to develop their emotional literacy and the school undertakes helpful 'Monday Check-ins' for all pupils at the start of each week. This helps pupils to recognise and address their own feelings and understand those of their peers. Leaders place high importance on supporting the well-being of vulnerable pupils. Helpful guidance is offered to any pupils and their families who require it. The 'Y Cwtsh Lles' nurture provision supports pupils successfully to improve their emotional and mental health.

The school investigates promptly any alleged incidents of bullying. It keeps detailed records and utilises school staff, external partners, and restorative approaches well to support the pupils involved. Processes for dealing with behaviour in lessons are helpful, although not all teachers adhere to the behaviour policy well enough. As a result, the pastoral team is not always able to determine the catalyst of difficult behaviour or address it successfully.

Well co-ordinated and valuable careers guidance helps both pupils and parents explore future choices. In addition, pupils with additional learning needs receive beneficial specialist advice and guidance.

The school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs is a strength. The additional learning needs co-ordinator and the learning support team know the pupils with additional learning needs well and provide well-considered support. They monitor carefully the progress these pupils make against their individual targets, and support the well-being of vulnerable pupils sensitively.

Leadership and management

St John Lloyd Catholic School is a caring community. Leaders ensure that staff and pupil well-being is a priority and have responded sensitively to the challenges faced by the school during the past few years. They work well to promote important values such as kindness and tolerance and staff collaborate effectively to support pupils. Leaders have developed a staff well-being pledge and strengthened provision to support pupils' well-being. Although leaders work well to promote the school's safeguarding culture and keep pupils safe, they have not prioritised improving the quality of teaching and provision for skills well enough.

The roles and responsibilities of senior leaders are understood well by staff but are not equitable. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher responsible for teaching and learning have too many whole-school responsibilities. Coupled with their administrative duties, they do not have sufficient time to undertake all aspects of their roles. Leaders and staff have a comprehensive programme of meetings to share information and discuss aspects of the school's work. While these meetings consider the needs of pupils, they do not focus well enough on learning and teaching.

Performance management arrangements are understood by staff and have helped to develop some aspects of provision but, overall, the process lacks the precision and rigour needed to drive improvements in classroom practice.

Middle leaders welcome the support and encouragement provided by the senior team. They understand their role to support and care for pupils and provide interesting learning experiences. However, around half of middle leaders are not sufficiently clear about how to drive improvement in teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

The headteacher, business manager and governing body have a comprehensive oversight of the school's finances. The school has a licensed deficit budget but is forecast to break even during the next financial year. The business manager monitors expenditure carefully and manages the use of grant funding well.

The governing body has a sound understanding of its responsibilities and has established an appropriate committee structure to organise its work. Governors receive useful reports from the headteacher and business manager to help them provide appropriate scrutiny of financial, curriculum and staffing matters. Governors value the opportunity to link with faculties and these arrangements help them to develop their understanding of the school's work. Governors are developing appropriate arrangements to ensure that the school promotes healthy eating and drinking.

Communication with parents is good and leaders and staff keep parents well informed about school life. The school continues to look for ways to strengthen links with parents. Recently, a small group of parents have taken the opportunity to complete a financial education qualification to develop their own skills and provide support to their children.

The school has recently renewed its approaches to self-evaluation. Leaders have taken suitable account of the views of pupils and parents and have reintroduced useful activities to gather first-hand evidence such as learning walks, lesson observations and work scrutiny. However, leaders do not distinguish between the features of teaching and learning well enough or evaluate them with rigour or precision. They do not triangulate their findings from the various self-evaluation activities. As a result, these processes do not enable leaders to identify strengths or areas for improvement clearly or accurately enough. The school has not recognised important weaknesses in provision to support the progressive development of skills or aspects of teaching that are poor. In addition, they do not evaluate sufficiently well the effectiveness of teaching with respect to its impact on pupils' progress, or the impact of leadership and professional learning on teaching. As a consequence of these shortcomings, leaders have a far too positive view of leadership, provision and standards across the school.

As a result of the weaknesses in self-evaluation, the school's improvement priorities are too broad. The priorities are not informed by a suitably precise understanding of strengths and areas for development, so leaders do not identify specifically what needs to improve. Planning is not sharp enough and does not include useful success criteria or milestones, against which to judge progress.

Faculty and other self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are captured in relevant 'On a page' synopses. Although these summaries outline helpful information to describe the various areas of focus across the school, in general, they have similar shortcomings to other aspects of the school's improvement processes.

In a few aspects, such as care and well-being, the school's processes have resulted in improved provision. However, in general, improvement activity has not been effective, for example in improving teaching or leadership. Overall, self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are not sufficiently robust.

Leaders have created a culture where staff feel part of a close-knit, supportive community. Professional learning activities have supported staff well in developing a coherent and consistent approach to improving pupils' well-being. However, the school's approach to professional learning has not focused sufficiently closely on improving teaching and the sharing of good practice. In addition, the school does not evaluate its professional learning robustly enough. As a result, it has had insufficient impact on the effectiveness of classroom practice.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent 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 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 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, where appropriate
- visit a broad sample of lessons, 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 (<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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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