



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

A report on

St Winefride's R.C. School

**Whitford Street
Holywell
Flintshire
CH8 7NJ**

Date of inspection: May 2024

by

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

About St Winefride's R.C. School

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| Name of provider | St Winefride's R.C. School |
| Local authority | Flintshire County Council |
| Language of the provider | English |
| Type of school | Primary |
| Religious character | Catholic |
| Number of pupils on roll | 179 |
| Pupils of statutory school age | 142 |
| Number in nursery classes | 18 |
| 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 23.7%) | 35.9% |
| 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 13.2%) | 8.9% |
| Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home | * |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language | 8.4% |
| Date of headteacher appointment | 01/09/2013 |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable) | 01/03/2016 |
| Start date of inspection | 13/05/2024 |

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

St Winefride's Catholic Primary School is caring, nurturing and highly inclusive. Leaders and staff work tirelessly to create a warm and welcoming environment for pupils and their families, where they can 'learn and grow together in the love of Christ'. Leaders have established excellent relationships with parents and carers and over time the school has become the heart of the community.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and although many start with literacy and numeracy skills below those expected for their age, most make good progress and become confident and capable learners by the time they leave. Overall, most pupils develop literacy, numeracy and digital skills successfully. Across the school, pupils develop their physical skills well, for example through participating in daily exercise and in the numerous after-school clubs. Many pupils develop their expressive skills successfully during music sessions where they learn to play the violin and when they create their own dances based on a sea shanty.

Leaders and staff have developed a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all learners successfully. Teachers have a sound knowledge of Curriculum for Wales and use it well to plan exciting learning experiences that systematically build on prior learning. They ask appropriate questions to check pupils' understanding and move learning forward. Pupils contribute their ideas to their learning at the start of every topic. However, on occasion pupils do not have opportunities to make decisions about how they organise and present their work.

Nearly all pupils behave well and show consideration for others. They engage enthusiastically in their learning. Teachers use verbal feedback and pit stop plenaries appropriately to support learning.

The positive working relationships between pupils and staff ensure that pupils are comfortable in seeking help with their learning and well-being. The support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals is provided by highly skilled staff and is a strength of the school. The school provides a wealth of support to help pupils manage their well-being successfully. Overall, the attendance of pupils shows an improving trend across the school. However, despite the processes in place, attendance for a few pupils remains too low.

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership and is supported well by a dedicated team of staff and governors, who share her passion for the school and community. Leaders and governors reflect appropriately on what is going well in the school and what they need to do to continue to improve. They use financial resources well to secure improvements in the most important areas.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to make decisions about and be creative in their learning

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Many pupils enter school with skills below those expected for their age. However, during their time in the school, most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and those with ALN, make good progress from their starting points.

Pupils make good progress in developing their literacy skills. Most pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well as they progress through the school. Many younger pupils speak with enthusiasm as they discuss the characteristics of superheroes, listening carefully to their friends ideas when they decide on a name. Older pupils express themselves well, making valid points, and presenting reasoned arguments during class debates, such as considering if athletes should, or should not, be paid for their participation in the Olympic Games.

Across the school, pupils develop their Welsh language skills effectively. Many younger pupils respond enthusiastically to familiar questions, describe the weather and order their lunch in Welsh. In Year 2, pupils use Welsh to answer a range of questions, from the perspective of a member of the royal family, describing their preferences and giving reasons. Older pupils engage in simple conversations and respond confidently to a range of questions.

Most pupils across the school develop their reading skills well and show an enthusiasm for books and stories. Many younger pupils know the sounds of letters and use this knowledge successfully to read simple words. In Year 2, many pupils show enjoyment in reading and talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors. They recall the main events in recently read stories, describe the characters in detail and suggest alternative endings. As they move through the school, most pupils read with increasing fluency, recognising punctuation and using appropriate intonation. By Year 6, many pupils confidently discuss the books they are reading, they summarise the main points and refer to the text to make thoughtful predictions about what might happen next. Many older pupils enjoy reading an increasing range of genre and confidently explain what they enjoy about the books they choose to read.

During their time in the school, most pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. Most younger pupils develop their letter formation skills well and begin to write confidently through their play. As they progress, many write increasingly interesting texts that communicate their ideas clearly. In Year 4, pupils use prepositions, adjectives and imaginative adverbs to add interest to their work and engage the reader. Older pupils write emotive and descriptive diary entries based on their work on the second world war. As pupils move through the school, they use a planning grid confidently to plan and draft their work when writing descriptive pieces

about the second world war. Many pupils across the school write appropriately for a range of purposes. For example, they write a recipe for what makes a good friend based on their work on the Holy Spirit, or create factsheets explaining how famous people help others as part of their Religion Values and Ethics work.

Overall, most pupils develop sound mathematical knowledge. They demonstrate their understanding of number effectively. For example, the youngest pupils work effectively to build number sentences based on one more and one less. By Year 2, pupils confidently use column subtraction to take away 1- and 2-digit numbers and they demonstrate a good understanding of symmetry when they identify symmetrical patterns in pictures. Older pupils utilise their number skills well when they calculate the cost of a trip to Paris and successfully communicate the process they have followed to arrive at their answer. Pupils apply their numeracy skills well in their work in other areas of the curriculum. For example, younger pupils use measure to compare sea animals, and pupils in Year 3 use 3- and 4- digit numbers to investigate food miles. Older pupils calculate the quantities of food and costs during rationing and consider how they might create cheaper recipes to save money.

Many pupils use digital devices confidently and develop their digital skills well. Younger pupils use their skills constructively in their learning. They develop early coding skills to control a programmable toy and use QR codes to save and share their work. Older pupils use their digital skills well to support their learning across the curriculum. For example, they use mobile devices to research and select information from a range of sources and to present their findings.

Across the school, pupils' physical skills develop well. For example, younger pupils develop their fine and gross motor skills when digging up worms for their wormeries. They run and jump with confidence and skilfully ride bikes. By Year 2, pupils create dances based on their work on sea shanties, copying movements and refining actions. Many pupils participate in daily exercise and the oldest pupils use a javelin and shot putt to refine their throwing skills in preparation for sports day.

Many pupils develop their expressive skills successfully when working with visiting artists and during music lessons. For example, younger pupils work together to improve their observation and modelling skills to create a lighthouse following a visit to the local beach. Pupils in Year 3 develop their knowledge and understanding of music through a weekly violin session and older pupils develop their line drawing skills to create their own portraits in the style of Guiseppe Arcimboldo.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

The positive and warm relationships that exist between staff, pupils and parents support pupils' well-being exceptionally well, and are a strength of the school. As a result, nearly all pupils feel happy, safe and secure in school. Pupils know who to go to if they need help, or have a problem, and they feel confident that staff will listen to them and address any concerns they have.

Pupils are proud of their school and talk positively about what it is like to be a pupil. Many pupils are eager to talk with adults and make visitors feel welcome. They enjoy sharing their many achievements and the colourful celebration of their work on display throughout the school. They speak confidently about their learning and

willingly share their knowledge and understanding of the school community with maturity and empathy.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Most pupils bring a healthy snack to school and drink water throughout the day. Nearly all pupils take part in regular exercise at school. Many pupils attend the numerous after-school sports clubs, such as netball, football and street dance, which supports pupils' healthy attitudes and well-being effectively. Most pupils understand the importance of staying safe online and the need to keep personal data and passwords private.

Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They settle quickly and engage enthusiastically in their work. Nearly all pupils enjoy the wide range of interesting learning experiences available. Most pupils show resilience and perseverance in their learning and collaborate well when working in pairs or groups. They listen respectfully to the views of others and take turns during discussions. For example, older pupils share their thoughts and opinions during a class debate about whether athletes should be paid for their participation in the Olympic Games. Many pupils show respect for the views of others, even when they differ from their own.

Pupils embrace worthwhile opportunities to develop their leadership skills through membership of the School Council, or one of the pupil leadership groups. Pupils who undertake these roles do so with confidence and enthusiasm. For example, Digital Champions are assigned to provide support to staff and pupils to utilise digital resources across the school, manage new software and run a digital after-school club. Members of the School Council take pride in their role and work diligently to improve the school by considering the ideas of their peers. They contribute effectively to secure improvements to the school, such as reviewing the Anti-bullying policy to ensure it reflects the needs of all pupils.

Overall, the attendance of pupils shows an improving trend across the school, with more pupils attending and arriving on time, compared to previous years. However, despite the processes in place, attendance for a few pupils remains too low.

Teaching and learning experiences

Across the school, teachers and support staff know their pupils well. Staff show care and kindness towards pupils, which ensures that most engage well in their learning. The strong and productive working relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school.

Staff make good use of the limited indoor spaces and extensive outdoor area, including the school's woodland area to develop independence and promote a positive attitude to learning.

Leaders and staff have worked together to develop a broad and balanced curriculum that meets pupils' needs and ensures that they make good progress over time. Teachers and support staff work collaboratively to plan learning around a range of engaging topics that develop independence and life skills.

Teachers have a sound knowledge of the curriculum and generally provide learning experiences that build successfully on prior learning. Teachers share useful success

criteria with pupils from an early age to support learning appropriately. They analyse a range of assessment information suitably to identify pupils' next steps in learning. In many lessons, staff use questioning, pit stops and plenaries appropriately to support or extend learning, to check understanding and address misconceptions.

Teachers have begun to provide opportunities for pupils to have an input into their learning, for example teachers have started to encourage pupils to contribute suggestions when planning topics and as a result, pupils are positively engaged in their learning. However, generally teachers over-direct pupils' learning, which limits their development as resilient, independent learners. They do not provide opportunities often enough for pupils to make choices about their learning or to be creative and imaginative. Teachers provide many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills systematically. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply these skills across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 use a template successfully to write a letter to King Charles explaining why they would make a good King or Queen of Wales.

Most teachers plan effectively to develop pupils digital skills for instance, older pupils use internet research to create high quality digital presentations about people who help others.

The school promotes and celebrates the Welsh language and culture appropriately. Opportunities for pupils to learn and use the Welsh language are developing suitably. Staff model the Welsh language well, frequently using simple greetings, phrases and daily instructions during the day. Teachers ensure that there are many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of equality and diversity, for example by baking a Nigerian cake and learning about the work of Martin Luther King.

Teachers use visits in the locality and further afield to enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils visit Dangerpoint to develop their understanding of how to keep themselves safe at home and the community. During residential visits, older pupils benefit from rich learning experiences that raise their awareness of a wider world outside of their community, and build resilience and teamwork.

Teachers provide many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to engage with their local community. Younger pupils visit the local church to learn about baptism and older pupils complete a litter pick as part of their work on protecting the planet. Staff provide an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and after-school clubs such as netball, football and street dance. Teachers positively build on this work by encouraging pupils to participate in a wide range of beneficial opportunities that inspire them and raise their aspirations such as opportunities to work with the Children's University.

Care, support and guidance

St Winefride's Catholic Primary School is a highly inclusive, caring and compassionate community where pupils and their families feel welcomed and valued. The quality of care, support and guidance for pupils is a strength of the school. The warm and trusting relationships that exist ensure that pupils thrive and make good progress during their time at the school.

The school provides many valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral and ethical beliefs and this is an integral part of daily life in the school. As a result, nearly all pupils know right from wrong and reflect on their choices appropriately. Pupils show compassion, respect and empathy towards each other and the wider community through their involvement in a range of well-being and charitable activities.

Teachers and highly skilled support staff work together to provide effective support for pupils with ALN. Leaders have established robust procedures for identifying pupils who need additional support. They work closely with staff to ensure that provision is tailored to individual needs to ensure pupils with ALN make good progress and participate fully in school life. Highly skilled staff use a wide range of approaches and interventions well to support the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and their well-being. Arrangements to monitor pupils' progress are comprehensive and staff ensure that provision is appropriate and enables progress. The newly devised 'drop in' sessions for parents of pupils with ALN work well to support effective communication between home and school and strengthen links with outside agencies.

All staff understand pupils' needs well and respond sensitively to them. They ensure that the school provides a wealth of high quality interventions that support pupils well to develop strategies to regulate their emotions and make progress in their learning.

The school's wide range of pupil leadership groups provides opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills. For example, the Criw Cymraeg take great pride in their role as Welsh language ambassadors, promoting the use of the Welsh language throughout the school. This provides them with a real sense of leadership and responsibility. There is a strong emphasis in the school on fundraising for charities that support developing countries. Through this work, pupils develop their understanding of social responsibility as they learn about the circumstances and needs of others.

The school has established strong relationships with many organisations in the local community for example, performing as a choir within the Parish. These opportunities build pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem effectively.

The school works with families and outside agencies encourages pupils to attend school regularly and on time. However, overall, rates of attendance are too low.

The school has robust policies and procedures in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe. All staff understand their responsibilities and contribute to the strong safeguarding culture of the school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides highly effective leadership that has a positive impact on pupils and their families. Leaders effectively communicate their vision for an inclusive school community, where pupils are at the centre, and have the support they need to 'learn and grow together in the love of Christ'. This strong sense of purpose is shared by all and is reflected in every aspect of the life of the school. The headteacher is

well supported by a team of dedicated staff and together they ensure that St Winefride's is a primary school at the heart of the community.

Through clear communication and compassionate support, leaders and staff have established excellent relationships with parents. They understand the needs of pupils and their families well and work successfully together to support their needs. Parents value the kind and caring ethos the school promotes. They appreciate the regular and informative communication they receive from staff. Parents particularly value the timely way the school shares their child's progress with them.

Leaders work well to address school and national priorities. They have embraced ALN reform exceptionally well and ensure that the school meets the needs of nearly all pupils. The school's approach to addressing the impact of poverty is effective. Leaders make good use of the pupil development grant to provide pupils with tailored support. As a result, many pupils from low-income households engage well in school and make good progress.

Governors know and understand the school and its community well. They are highly supportive and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors visit the school regularly and undertake a suitable range of monitoring activities with the headteacher, such as learning walks and listening to learners. As a result, they have a clear understanding of current priorities and the impact of improvements. Governors fulfil their statutory duties fully, actively promoting healthy eating and drinking, and supporting the school's safeguarding culture well. The headteacher and governing body manage the school's finances effectively, allocating resources appropriately in line with the school's priorities for improvement.

Leaders and governors carry out a wide range of suitable monitoring activities throughout the year to evaluate the work of the school. Leaders analyse the information gathered effectively to inform their development planning. They have a good track record of securing appropriate improvement for example, to improve pupils' digital and numeracy skills.

Leaders successfully create a positive culture of professional development and provide beneficial opportunities for staff to work with each other and observe practice to strengthen their professional practice, knowledge, and skills. Teachers benefit from worthwhile opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in local schools, to develop a consistent approach to supporting pupils with ALN. Leaders ensure that arrangements for performance management link to individual staff development needs and school priorities. As a result, staff are well supported to develop the skills they need to become confident practitioners and thrive in their role within the school.

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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