



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

A report on:

**Ely Presbyterian Church School
4-6 Archer Road
Cardiff
CF5 4FR**

Date of inspection: February 2016

by

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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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Publication date: 07/04/2016

Context

Ely Presbyterian Church School is a non-fee paying, co-educational independent Christian day school for pupils aged from three to 16 years old. It is situated in Ely, in western Cardiff. The school opened in 1974, closed in 2006, due to a lack of pupils, and reopened in 2014. There are currently nine pupils in the school.

The school has a small catchment area that covers the Ely estate. All pupils speak English fluently and none speak Welsh as a first language at home. Lessons are taught in English and the school does not aim to make pupils bilingual in English and Welsh.

The schools admissions policy is to accept all children of church members and other pupils whose parents want a Christian education and where the school considers it can meet their educational needs appropriately. Pupils who wish to join the school do not sit admissions tests.

The school's proprietor is also the headteacher of the school. He has been in post since September 2011. The headteacher works closely with two assistant headteachers who joined the school as teachers in 1976 and have been assistant headteachers since September 2011. There are six full-time and 11 part-time teachers.

The school's encourages pupils to 'treat all people as being equal in the sight of God'.

This is the school's first full inspection.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The current performance of Ely Presbyterian Church School is good because:

- Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding well
- Pupils' skills are well developed, particularly their reading skills
- Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to a supportive Christian community
- The curriculum meets the needs of all learners well
- Teaching across the school is of a high quality
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The school is a cohesive community that shares a strong common vision and purpose based on Christian values
- The governing body provides strong direction for the school's work
- The school has particularly effective partnerships with its parents and the church community, which make a positive contribution to pupils' standards and wellbeing

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the quality and consistency of curriculum plans for all subjects up to the end of key stage 3
- R2 Improve the consistency and quality in marking and whole school tracking to inform pupils' learning and ensure that they make good progress
- R3 Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning

What happens next?

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend the current development plan to show what action the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents at the school.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Pupils across the school are well motivated and fully engage with their learning. Most pupils work at a standard in line with or above their age and appropriate to their ability. As they move through the school, pupils extend their knowledge and understanding well.

Across the school pupils' skills are well developed. Pupils develop secure speaking and listening skills in many different contexts as they progress through the school. They listen to each other and the teacher carefully and respond to their comments well, building on them to enhance their learning. Most pupils speak clearly and confidently in class discussions and ask questions to clarify and extend their understanding. Many older pupils are eager to answer questions and think carefully before making reasoned responses. They explain their ideas clearly, speaking with confidence and using correct subject terminology such as absorbent and variables in science.

Nearly all pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. Younger pupils develop clear formation of letters and use their handwriting skills well to complete work, such as writing simple sentences in creative writing. Older pupils write well for a range of purposes, including comprehension, fiction and non-fiction tasks. In their extended writing, these pupils' writing structure, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation are of a high quality and at least of the standard expected for their age. Older pupils apply their writing skills well in subjects across the curriculum, for example explanation text in geography and comprehension text in scripture. Most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work.

Pupils' reading skills are particularly strong. Younger pupils read phonic patterns confidently and most older pupils are able to read with fluency and accuracy across a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Many pupils have well-developed reading strategies, which they use effectively when they encounter new vocabulary. Older pupils confidently question issues as they read, showing a strong understanding and engagement with the text.

Younger pupils' numeracy skills are at least in line with their ability and age, with a very few making rapid progress. They have secure number skills for adding and subtracting single digit figures accurately, calculating time, matching shapes in sets and sequencing numbers by two. Older pupils develop their number skills effectively in their numeracy lessons, and apply them well to real-life contexts. For example, they have a secure understanding of place value and the importance of accuracy for decimal places when calculating expenditure. Many pupils readily transfer their mathematical understanding to other subjects skilfully.

Wellbeing: Good

Standards of pupils' wellbeing are strong. Pupils have a secure understanding of the importance of healthy living and eating. They participate enthusiastically in a suitable range of physical activities.

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to a supportive Christian community and mix very well together across different age groups. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well supported. This is reflected in their high attendance rates and punctuality.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Behaviour is consistently good, both within lessons and around the school. Pupils show a particularly high level of respect, care and concern for each other and the adults in the school. Pupils develop strong social skills and understand how to work well together.

During lessons, most pupils readily share their thoughts and support each other co-operatively to develop their ideas and improve their understanding. Many pupils concentrate and persevere well throughout the lesson to complete their work. The majority of pupils develop the skills to improve their own learning appropriately. For example, they use their thinking skills well when answering open-ended questions.

All pupils take on worthwhile positions of responsibility and older pupils successfully support younger pupils with their learning. Pupils are effectively involved in the life of the wider community. They have beneficial opportunities to represent the school within the locality and to carry out valuable charity work for organisations such as the Cardiff Food Bank and Trussell Trust Clothes Bank.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The school's curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

The school's curriculum aims are clearly set out within the framework of the Christian ethos of the school. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of all learners well. However, planning in a few subjects, especially in key stage 3, is not detailed enough to ensure continuity and progression.

Many teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and nearly all pupils make good progress. The school is making suitable progress towards co-ordinating the planning for pupils' skill development at a whole-school level, although this is not fully embedded across the curriculum.

The school makes beneficial use of facilities in the local community and further afield to enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, the school uses the local leisure centre for pupils' swimming lessons and visits a local environmental education centre to develop their understanding of recycling and conservation and a science centre to support their science and numeracy studies.

Pupils develop an appropriate understanding of sustainability through the curriculum, for example by studying stewardship in scripture. They also have a strong understanding of their place in the world through their study of other countries in geography and their support for charitable organisations overseas. This work includes fundraising to sponsor the education of learners in different African countries.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching has a positive impact on the good standards that pupils achieve. All teachers have strong and supportive working relationships with pupils. This helps to create a purposeful working atmosphere that supports pupils' learning particularly well.

In many lessons, pupils make good progress. In these lessons, teachers plan an interesting range of activities to stimulate pupils' imagination and engage them positively in their learning. Teachers have high expectations and use questioning effectively to extend pupils' understanding. They have good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of their pupils' strengths and areas for development. This enables them to respond particularly well to their individual learning needs.

However, in the few lessons where pupils make satisfactory progress, this is because teachers' expectations are too low and learning activities do not always match the needs of pupils of differing abilities.

Many teachers provide pupils with useful oral feedback as they complete tasks during the lesson. Pupils' work is regularly marked. In the best practice, teachers provide comments that inform pupils how to improve their work and these are followed up. However, there is no whole-school approach to assessment.

Reports to parents are informative and provide clear information about pupils' subject-specific skills and what they need to do to improve as well as their attitudes to learning and their personal development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. Learning experiences and daily acts of worship help pupils to reflect in a worthwhile way on their lives and beliefs. Effective opportunities exist to encourage pupils' involvement in the life of the church and the wider community. These range from coffee mornings, where pupils serve the members of the church and wider community, to talks from older members of the community about the Second World War. Together with teachers' knowledge of pupils and high expectations of their behaviour, these activities help to develop pupils' values of fairness, social responsibility and respect well.

Across the curriculum, the school successfully develops pupils' understanding of healthy living. This includes a focus on food and nutrition in science and teaching the importance of exercise in physical education lessons. In addition, year teachers provide strong pastoral support and guidance for pupils on these and other issues on a daily basis.

The school's provision for identifying and monitoring the needs of pupils with additional learning needs is secure. Arrangements include the provision of one-to-one support, where appropriate, and effective dialogue with year teachers to ensure full access to the curriculum.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a very caring community where pupils and staff have a strong sense of mutual respect. Pupils value the opinions of others and there is a high level of trust and appreciation between staff and pupils. This helps the school to promote pupils' learning and their social development particularly well.

The full school community, staff and parents, place a strong emphasis on valuing the diversity of others and ensuring pupils develop both caring and tolerant attitudes. For example, pupils develop a thorough understanding of social and cultural diversity by supporting charities such as 'The Samaritan's Purse'.

The school has suitable resources that are well matched to pupils' needs, including a science laboratory and a computer room. Many classrooms and corridors have attractive topic information or displays of pupils' work, which celebrate their achievements and support their learning well.

Full use is made of the school site to provide appropriate outdoor spaces for pupils, with the recent addition of more outdoor toys for pupils to use at playtime. The winter allotment is a valuable addition to the outdoor environment.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

The school is a cohesive community, in which the governing body, staff, pupils and parents share a common vision and purpose based on Christian values, successfully underpinning all aspects of school life. Together, they have a strong sense of purpose, which is driven by high aspirations for pupils to achieve their best and the expectation that they will do this. This makes a very positive contribution to the high standards that pupils achieve and their consistently good behaviour.

The school's leadership structure is appropriate for its size and context and ensures efficient day-to-day management. The responsibilities of all staff are outlined clearly in staff terms of reference. These are specific to the different roles in the school. They provide a suitable outline of key responsibilities and are an appropriate basis for accountability. Staff understand their roles and fulfil them effectively. Although the school does not have a conventional performance management system, the performance of staff is generally managed suitably for the school's context to help staff to improve their practice. Underperformance is addressed effectively where identified.

The school has a useful structure of regular meetings that focus well on improving outcomes. These meetings provide a suitable balance between information-sharing and opportunities for all staff to contribute effectively to the school's future direction. For example, the regular 'Forum' meetings, which focus on key areas of the school's work such as improving the quality of learning, enable staff to discuss and share ideas about best practice and how to include this in their planning. These meetings link appropriately to the school action plan to help drive forward school improvement. However, in a few meetings, agreed actions are not routinely recorded. This makes it difficult to monitor progress effectively.

The governing body provides strong direction for the school's work. Governors understand their roles extremely well and act successfully as critical friends of the school. They provide an appropriate balance between their challenge and support role. The governing body knows the school particularly well and the issues that affect it. Governors monitor robustly important aspects of the school's work such as finance, planning, policy, performance and staffing.

The school complies with all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school's leaders and the governing body generally have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. Since Estyn's last visit to the school in January 2014, the school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen its self-evaluation and planning arrangements, although this is not yet fully embedded in all aspects of the school's working life.

The school self-evaluation report is largely evaluative and generally realistic, with aspects that require improvement identified appropriately. However, lesson observations are not used well enough as part of first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching and learning in the report. For example, although the report does provide a suitable evidence base of pupils' progress in standardised tests over time, it does not evaluate pupils' progress from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work.

Senior leaders' regular lesson observations largely contribute effectively towards improving consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. The evaluation of lessons includes judgements on standards and aspects of teaching, such as classroom management, content and assessment. However, overall, the focus on linking the quality of teaching to its impact on the progress that pupils make during the lesson is not clear enough.

The school action plan is a largely suitable basis for improvement. It focuses on four strategic objectives that align with the school's self-evaluation report. These include raising standards and improving provision and the quality of leadership. Outcomes from senior leaders' lesson observations contribute suitably to the school's action plan for improvement. The plan identifies an appropriate range of actions, with clear lead responsibilities, timescales and monitoring arrangements. However, the plan does not include specific success criteria against each of the four objectives and related planned actions. This makes it difficult to monitor progress over time and evaluate the impact of these actions effectively.

Overall, the school has made variable progress on the key areas for action identified in Estyn's January 2014 visit to the school. Steady progress has been made in increasing the rigour and challenge in teaching to match the high expectations in the best practice in the school. However, progress towards strengthening schemes of work to ensure continuity and progression across the curriculum for all year groups has been more limited. Although marking and reports to parents are now more consistent in quality and help pupils to improve and make progress, there is still too much variation in the quality of assessment of and for learning.

Partnership working: Good

The school's arrangements for partnership working make a positive contribution to pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The school has particularly effective partnerships with its parents. Many parents, as well as their child's extended family, are directly involved in the school's work. They successfully undertake volunteer roles ranging from classroom teacher through to maintenance and caretaking responsibilities. The hard work and support that parents provide for the school engage them effectively in their child's learning. As a result, the school is a close-knit community, with a shared understanding of its aims and philosophy. This has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

The school works closely with its church community and benefits greatly from this partnership. This is evidenced, for example, in the financial and material support the church and its congregation provide for the school. The expertise of the eldership of the church also helps the school significantly as they make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. For example, they use their professional background in education to fulfil successfully a range of roles such as volunteer specialist subject teachers.

The school liaises well with a variety of organisations to widen pupils' learning opportunities. This includes talks from the local fire service and police covering topics such as road safety and stranger danger as well the school's active support of the international Christian development organisation 'The Leprosy Mission'. These activities contribute effectively to developing pupils' sense of responsibility, social and life skills.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources and deploys its staff suitably to deliver the curriculum effectively.

The majority of staff have experience working in the independent sector beyond the school, although only a minority have qualified teacher status. Staff benefit from a range of professional development opportunities, which are identified appropriately through the school's mentoring programme and reflect whole-school and individual priorities. Recent activities include participation in whole-school professional development training on aspects of improvement planning and individual or shared peer observations to promote best practice in teaching and learning. Currently, sharing good practice is not extended beyond the school.

The headteacher, together with senior leaders and governors, monitors the school's finances robustly. They allocate expenditure carefully to meet the school's day-to-day running costs and identified priorities.

The school makes skilful use of its resources to achieve good standards and high levels of wellbeing for its pupils and provides value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Michelle Gosney	Reporting Inspector
Denise Wade	Team Inspector
Lisa Pritchard	Peer Inspector
Paul Scudamore	Independent School Standards (Wales)Inspector
Linda Haines	Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms

Core subject indicator (CSI)	This relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.
Level 1	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade D to G.
Level 1 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G.
Level 2	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade A* to C.
Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C including English or Welsh first language and mathematics
Level 2 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C.
Level 3	This represents the equivalent of an A level at grade A*-E.
Level 3 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to two A levels at grade A* to E.
Average wider points score	This includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the relevant age, for example at aged 16 or at aged 18.
Capped wider points score	This includes the best eight results from all qualifications approved for use in Wales at aged 16.
Proprietor	The term 'proprietor', as defined in the Education Act 1996, means the person or people responsible for managing an independent school and can include a sole proprietor, governing bodies, trustees or directors. The ways that independent schools are governed and owned varies a great deal. A proprietor or trust may own a school or the school may have a governing body that appoints a headteacher. Some schools have a combination of these.