



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

A report on

**Hawthorn Primary School
School Lane
Hawthorn
Pontypridd
RCT
CF37 5AL**

Date of inspection: December 2018

by

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

About Hawthorn Primary School

Hawthorn Primary School is in Hawthorn, Pontypridd in the Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. There are 248 pupils on roll, including 23 full-time and four part-time nursery pupils. There are six single-year classes and two mixed-year classes.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 34%. This is well above the average for Wales, which is 18%. The school identifies 21% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is in line with the national average. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs and a very few are in the care of the local authority. Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity and come from homes where English is the main language. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher took up her post in January 2010. The school's previous Estyn inspection was in January 2012.

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

Summary

Nearly all pupils feel safe, cared for and have a strong sense of belonging in Hawthorn Primary School. Pupils understand their role in caring for each other and know who to go to if they have any issues. The provision to support the most vulnerable pupils has an immensely beneficial impact on their personal development, their social skills and their progress in learning.

The headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership for the school. She shares a clear vision that is strongly focused on promoting the wellbeing and achievement of all pupils.

Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and of what pupils can achieve. They create a calm and courteous environment where pupils are well behaved and are respectful to each other. Teachers use pupils' ideas creatively to plan rich learning experiences. A particular strength is the work of the school to develop pupils' creativity.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Address the safety issue identified during the inspection
- R2 Make sure that self-evaluation and improvement planning lead to clear priorities and precise actions
- R3 Improve outdoor provision in the upper foundation phase

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils enter the school with skills that are below those expected of pupils of a similar age. Over time, most pupils make good progress and they achieve good standards in all aspects of their learning. Pupils who have additional learning needs make strong progress towards their individual targets.

In both the foundation phase and key stage 2, most pupils develop strong oracy skills that support them well in all areas of learning. They listen attentively to adults and to each other and they are confident in sharing their ideas and thoughts. In key stage 2, most pupils build well upon their skills to talk with increasing confidence about their work and a range of familiar topics. They listen carefully and build upon the views of others with their own suggestions. For example, a group of more able pupils speak with enthusiasm about the process of creating a school magazine, describing the process using sophisticated vocabulary in the correct context, stating that they, “curated the content”.

Most pupils show enjoyment in reading and are keen to read aloud to adults. Pupils in the nursery and reception classes develop their phonological understanding and use this knowledge in order to build words successfully. Most pupils in the foundation phase use their reading skills effectively, for example most Year 2 pupils read the class challenges set out for them well. This means that they understand what is asked of them and as a result, undertake these activities independently. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils have strong reading skills and discuss the books they read enthusiastically.

In the foundation phase, many pupils’ writing skills are developing well. In Year 1, the more able are writing longer sentences accurately. By the end of Year 2 pupils write a purposeful formal letter, for example to a cereal manufacturer complaining about the amount of sugar in its product. In key stage 2, most pupils write at length in a number of forms. More able pupils produce writing of high quality that is lively and engages the interest of the reader well. They have sound understanding of the structure of different genres and are using paragraphs effectively in their literacy work and across the curriculum.

Most pupils develop a sound knowledge of mathematical concepts as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, most pupils gain a strong understanding of number, and can apply their mathematical skills to wider purposes. For example, pupils in Year 2 extract numbers from a sentence in order to solve problems involving a rodeo hoe-down. They develop a sound grasp of time, money, measurement, shapes, fractions and angles. By the end of key stage 2 most pupils have a good understanding of the properties of numbers and mathematical concepts. They apply this knowledge well. For example, Year 6 pupils choose the most appropriate chart to use in order to display data. They plot the data accurately on a line graph and label the axes correctly to compare carbon emissions across the world.

Most pupils develop a good understanding of the Welsh language. They respond well to instructions and requests given in Welsh and are eager to use the language. By Year 2, more able pupils translate short paragraphs accurately and discuss the information sensibly. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils sustain a conversation in Welsh using familiar language patterns, extending their answers appropriately. They read simple texts with understanding and write short paragraphs about themselves that contain suitable detail.

Most pupils develop their information communication and technology (ICT) skills well. The youngest pupils use a range of applications to support the development of their language, number and fine motor skills. During the foundation phase, pupils begin to learn about how to keep themselves safe online. For example, a Year 2 pupil explained why she could not give her password. By the end of key stage 2 most pupils are proficient in making use of ICT to produce reports, presentations, animations, and films. They have a very good understanding of how ICT can support their learning and the importance of online safety.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe, cared for and have a strong sense of belonging. They understand their role in caring for each other and know who to go to if they have any problems. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They play cooperatively, take turns and support each other when playing games and socialising at break times. In classrooms most pupils behave responsibly, they move around the rooms safely and sensibly. They show respect and care for the ideas of others when working in pairs and groups. However, a very few pupils are occasionally disruptive in lessons and show less consideration for others.

Pupil voice is a developing aspect of the school. Around a fifth of pupils are members of one of five different representative groups, including Criw Cymraeg, the eco squad and school council. The Criw Cymraeg encourages pupils to use the Welsh language as much as possible around the school, for example when asking for food in the tuck shop that they run. Pupils are also involved well in decisions about how and what they learn. For example, in Year 6 pupils helped plan the class topic 'Snapshots', comparing environmental issues across the world, including a focus on the carbon footprints of China and Wales.

Nearly all pupils know how to keep themselves healthy through diet and exercise. For example, in a physical education lesson Year 5 pupils planned well as a group a new game for younger pupils. They had a good understanding of what makes a good active game and the importance of physical activity on health.

Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning and focus well on tasks for an extensive period of time. They show determination when faced with challenging tasks. For example, a small group of pupils in the foundation phase showed persistence when helping each other to create a word caterpillar to order the days of the week. Most pupils work independently and collaboratively in order to face challenges confidently. For example, each class worked on a school project to develop individual class art works based on pieces of classical music. The pupils are very proud of what they achieved and the finished pieces are all very different and highly creative.

Overall, pupil attendance compares well to that of similar schools. However, persistent absence is higher than that of similar schools. Also a very few pupils are late to school each day.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They engage pupils effectively and challenge them successfully to improve their learning. Teachers have good working relationships with pupils and employ effective behaviour management strategies well that help the pupils settle quickly in class. This creates a calm and courteous environment where pupils behave well and respect each other's contributions. Learning support assistants engage purposefully with pupils and work effectively within and outside of the classroom. Nearly all teachers are consistent in sharing useful lesson objectives and success criteria with the pupils. They encourage pupils to recall previous knowledge in order to build on this prior learning effectively. Nearly all staff question pupils skilfully in order to draw out and further develop pupils' responses and to gauge their understanding. For example, staff in the intervention class, which is a class used to support the most vulnerable pupils, use an animated video clip to engage the pupils well. They ask probing questions about the characters from the clip, and explore how the pupils think they were feeling.

Most teachers give clear instructions that allow pupils to understand their tasks quickly and accurately. This means that most pupils are capable of staying on task and working independently for prolonged periods, which helps to make them resilient learners. Teachers are particularly good language role models and extend pupils' vocabulary successfully. They develop the use of correct and challenging terminology well with all pupils, for example discussing symmetrical objects with nursery pupils and fronted adverbials with Year 6 pupils.

However, in a few lessons, the pace of learning is too slow, the objective of the lesson is unclear and expectations are too low. This results in a few pupils not being focussed on their work and not making sufficient progress during lessons.

Feedback from the teachers to the pupils is simple and effective. The quality of the written and verbal feedback supports pupils well to identify their next steps in learning. Pupils have comprehensive opportunities to assess their own work and to discuss their work with a partner. As a result, pupils of all ages talk knowledgeably about their work, what's good about it and what needs improving.

The school has a coherent approach to the planning of the curriculum that has a positive impact on developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Long term planning over two years focuses on the new curriculum for Wales's Area of Learning and Experience. Each area of learning is developed per term resulting in a broad and balanced curriculum which builds systematically on pupils' previous learning. Teachers use pupils' ideas creatively to plan rich learning experiences in a range of interesting topics, such as Year 2's Wild West theme. Teachers ensure that pupils learn about the culture and heritage of Wales, for example through their visits to a local coal mine and through their study of the Aberfan disaster.

In the lower foundation phase, staff plan well for the effective use of the outdoor area to develop pupils' learning skills effectively. In upper foundation phase, pupils have very few opportunities to engage in learning outdoors as the area is underdeveloped.

Teachers incorporate the literacy and numeracy frameworks in their planning successfully and, as a result, pupils are able to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in a range of contexts across the curriculum. For example, Year 4 pupils write sensitive and detailed diary entries of children working in coal mines.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school's care, support and guidance for pupils promote their wellbeing very well. As a result, pupils make good progress in their academic, social, moral and emotional development. Staff have in-depth knowledge of the pupils' needs and provide a safe, nurturing and supporting environment that develops their confidence and self-esteem substantially.

The school has comprehensive systems in place that track and monitor pupils' progress. Staff make effective use of data to identify pupils that would benefit from the wide range of effective intervention programmes that are available. The provision to support the most vulnerable pupils has an immensely beneficial impact on their personal development, their social skills and their progress in learning.

The additional learning needs (ALN) coordinator has a very good understanding of the wide range of additional needs of individual pupils across the school. A clear and concise provision map outlines the range of support provided for groups of learners and is shared with staff. The ALN co-ordinator, class teacher and support staff meet regularly to monitor the progress of individuals and groups. They also meet with parents and involve pupils suitably during the annual review process. The school works effectively with outside agencies to provide specialist support for pupils as needed.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well by the broad and balanced curriculum, assemblies, and extra-curricular visits. A particular strength is the work of the school to develop pupils' creativity. For example, pupils were presented with pieces of music and inspired by these collaborated to produce art work to reflect their class topics. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for all pupils to voice their opinions and to have a positive influence on the life of the school. The school has a strong ethos based on its core aims to build independent, skilful, imaginative, resilient, successful learners for lifelong learning. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and regular exercise.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet the requirements. However, a safety issue was raised with the headteacher and chair of governors.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership for the school. She has established a clear vision that is strongly focused on promoting the wellbeing and achievement of all pupils. She has high expectations of all pupils and provides a

caring and stimulating learning environment. The vision is evident throughout the school and the core aims of ensuring that pupils enjoy learning is an integral part of the ethos. As a result, most pupils are engaged in their learning and make good progress.

The deputy headteacher and the senior leadership team carry out their responsibilities conscientiously and support the head teacher successfully. They lead the staff well and ensure that they develop effectively in their own professional learning. The staff have detailed job descriptions and performance management procedures hold all staff to account successfully. They work skilfully as a team and support each other well to develop different areas of the curriculum, for example to introduce focused reading sessions. This has had a positive impact on reading standards throughout the school. Teachers also work well with other schools, for example to plan for the new curriculum. They have adapted their teaching and learning strategies effectively to support pupils' to work collaboratively. Nearly all pupils work well together and as a result are resilient and ambitious learners.

The school works highly effectively to engage with parents and the wider community. They regularly ask parents for ideas on how they can help their children at home. In addition, the school also provides an interesting range of activities to involve parents. For example, they provide workshops on online safety and ideas for eating healthily.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and carries out its responsibilities effectively. The headteacher shares valuable reports with governors about pupil performance and progress. They challenge senior leaders appropriately about how they use the school's budget to improve teaching and learning. However, their contribution to the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning process is limited.

The school has suitable processes to evaluate its performance and to plan for improvement. Leaders analyse information on pupil performance and the quality of provision from a comprehensive range of sources, including questionnaires completed by pupils, parents and governors. They respond well to the outcomes and act on them accordingly, for example, the school development plan is displayed in the main entrance. Leaders monitor and evaluate standards and provision appropriately. However, the priorities for school improvement are too vague. As a result it is difficult for the school to measure progress accurately.

Leaders respond well to local and national priorities. They work effectively to provide relevant and current strategies to support pupils' learning. For example, planning for the implementation of the Digital Competency Framework (DCF) is well underway.

Leaders ensure that school improvement priorities are funded appropriately. For example, the school has established a highly effective intervention class to develop basic skills and support the wellbeing of learners. This class provides a stimulating learning environment and is well resourced. The school makes effective use of the pupil development grant.

Copies of the report

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

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

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

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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