



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

**A report on**

**Blenheim Road Community Primary School  
Blenheim Road  
St Dial's  
Cwmbran  
Rhiwderin  
NP44 4SZ**

**Date of inspection: June 2018**

**by**

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

## About Blenheim Road Community Primary School

Blenheim Road Community Primary School is in Cwmbran in the Torfaen local authority. Since September 2016, the school and Coed Eva Primary School have formed the Federation of Blenheim Road Community and Coed Eva Primary Schools. Both schools share the same executive headteacher and governing body. Blenheim Road Primary was last inspected in March 2015. This is the first inspection of the school since the federation.

The school has 276 pupils, including 47 part-time nursery pupils. There are eight classes, including one mixed-age class. There is also a separate class for pupils who have additional learning needs or need additional support.

The three-year average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 35%, which is well above the national average of 19%. The school identifies that around 25% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is slightly above the national average of 21%. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity. A very few pupils speak Welsh at home or have English as an additional language.

The headteacher has been in post since 2014. She became executive headteacher of both schools in the federation in September 2016.

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

The school is a happy and nurturing community where the high level of care and co-operation between staff and pupils contributes successfully to pupils' wellbeing. Most pupils develop strong attitudes and behaviours to help them learn and many are developing well as confident and curious learners. During their time at the school, many pupils achieve appropriate standards in most aspects of their learning. They develop strong oracy skills that support them appropriately in all areas of learning, and are confident to share their ideas and opinions.

In most classes, effective curriculum planning identifies opportunities for pupils to use and improve their literacy and numeracy skills in other curriculum areas. However, this varies too much from class to class as pupils move through the school. As a result, all pupils do not make as much progress as they could in developing their writing, numeracy and Welsh language skills.

Senior leaders have established a clear vision for the federation. There is a clear leadership structure and all leaders undertake their well-defined roles and responsibilities effectively. Members of the governing body bring a rich mix of skills to their roles and provide purposeful support and challenge to the federation. Across the federation, leaders undertake a wide range of monitoring activities, but not all have strong enough evaluative skills to make specific judgements that support teachers to improve.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Improve pupils' numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum
- R2 Improve pupils' standards in Welsh
- R3 Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils achieve their learning objectives consistently in all classes and that the delivery of the curriculum provides pupils with balanced and consistent learning opportunities
- R4 Develop leaders' skills to ensure that they evaluate and identify specific areas for improvement more effectively when monitoring standards and the quality of provision

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### **Standards: Adequate and needs improvement**

Many pupils enter the school with literacy and numeracy skills below the level expected for their age. During their time at the school, many pupils achieve appropriate standards in most aspects of their learning. Pupils who have additional learning needs make appropriate progress towards their individual targets. However, the rate of pupils' progress varies too much from class to class. This means that a minority of pupils have too many gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Most pupils listen attentively to adults and their peers, and follow instructions well. They develop strong oracy skills that support them appropriately in all areas of learning, and they share their ideas and thoughts purposefully. Many older pupils use an extended range of vocabulary and present their views and questions in an engaging manner when talking about their work, or when conducting interviews for their school magazine, the 'Federation Life'.

Generally, many pupils make steady progress in developing their reading skills. By Year 2, most identify letters and sounds confidently and use appropriate strategies to read unfamiliar words. Many can read with appropriate fluency and have an acceptable range of vocabulary, but a few lack expression when reading. In key stage 2, pupils read appropriately to research information from non-fiction books and from the internet. Many read accurately and with good expression. They give concise summaries of their favourite books, describing the setting, characters and plot well, and they make sensible predictions as to how their current book will end. Many older pupils in key stage 2 use their higher-order reading skills appropriately, such as skimming and scanning, to find information quickly as part of their topic work. Many infer and deduce meaning when reading a story extract to describe the personality of a character. They use this information appropriately across the curriculum, for example when formulating questions to ask Henry VIII.

Generally, pupils make suitable progress in developing their writing skills. In the reception class, many pupils create simple sentences, for example when describing the singing mermaid as having 'soft hair and smooth scales'. In Year 2, many understand the importance of organising their writing with consideration for their audience, for example when writing a persuasive letter to encourage the reader to visit a beach in Swansea. In key stage 2, many pupils organise their writing well, and a minority of the more able produce effective pieces of extended writing, such as a newspaper report about the Second World War. Many pupils write succinctly and use specific vocabulary when recording their science investigations. However, across the school, a minority of pupils make frequent spelling errors in their work and do not always use basic punctuation and capital letters accurately enough. In many classes, pupils do not practise their writing skills consistently enough across the curriculum. As a result, pupils' progress in using their writing skills is underdeveloped.

Most pupils build a sound knowledge of an appropriate range of mathematical concepts by the time they reach Year 6. Across the school, many pupils develop suitable skills in number, shape and data handling and use their numeracy skills

appropriately in a few areas of the curriculum, particularly in science. For example, in Year 2, many pupils can measure the lengths of shadows correctly and analyse pupils' heart rates after different activities. In upper key stage 2, most pupils calculate the sugar content in servings of soft drinks and measure the absorption rate of different rocks and correctly calculate the average. Most pupils can plot appropriate graphs to display their scientific results. However, in a minority of classes, pupils do not apply their numeracy skills well enough across the curriculum.

Many pupils develop a sound range of ICT skills. Pupils in the foundation phase know how to add a picture to text and present their work appropriately. For example in Year 2, pupils create presentations about respect and care for others and add simple sentences to postcards. In key stage 2, pupils search the internet for information and know how to import text, illustrations and sounds into their electronic presentations effectively. Many pupils use simple programs to create graphs and present data and they are beginning to use simple databases appropriately. They use quick response codes confidently to access websites and nearly all pupils know how to keep themselves safe online.

The majority of pupils make adequate progress in developing their skills in Welsh. However, a few lack enthusiasm to learn the language and do not use much Welsh outside of their Welsh lessons. Pupils in the foundation phase respond appropriately to a range of instructions and can ask and answer simple, practised questions well. In Year 4, many pupils can ask confidently about the time and respond using half past, quarter past, quarter to and the numbers to 12 within Welsh lessons. By Year 6, the majority of pupils ask and answer simple Welsh questions and are steadily building their vocabulary over time. The majority write short paragraphs about their hobbies and holidays that contain suitable detail, following taught language patterns. Across the school, the majority of pupils read simple texts with increasingly accurate pronunciation and with a basic understanding of the topic. However a minority of pupils' Welsh reading skills are underdeveloped.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Most pupils develop strong attitudes and behaviours to help them learn. They are proud of their school, talk enthusiastically about their learning and generally enjoy the topics they study. Pupils co-operate well with one another and work effectively to fulfil tasks independently. For example, reception and Year 1 pupils work co-operatively on enhanced activities during 'do it yourself' time. Most pupils show respect towards one another in class and value each other's contributions to discussions. Most pupils concentrate well on tasks. Many persevere when they face difficulties, take a positive approach to challenging work and are willing to 'have a go'. As a result, many pupils are developing well as confident and curious learners.

Nearly all pupils accept responsibility readily and talk enthusiastically about their roles. A particularly strong feature is the role of the school's 'elite leadership group'. They share their skills confidently with other pupils and lead learning walks related to the schools values. Groups of pupils across the federation work productively to produce the termly 'Federation Life' magazine that celebrates what they learn in school with the wider community. These few pupils demonstrate a strong sense of curiosity and are eager to explore new things and to ask and answer questions to deepen their understanding in order to create new articles. Younger pupils enjoy

having a turn to be 'helpwr heddiw' and older pupils support other pupils and teachers as 'Criw Cymraeg'. As a result, pupils develop a basic set of simple Welsh phrases appropriately. Play leaders, as well as members of the school council and the schools eco-council, play a valuable role in school life, for example in developing the forest school area.

Most pupils show a strong emphasis on encouraging fairness, equality and tolerance of others. In their role as super ambassadors, pupils promote the school's values well, for example by sharing the value of the month in whole-school assemblies. Most pupils display values such as respect, tolerance, and friendship to each other well.

Most pupils behave well in their classes and as they move around the school. They respond well to adult directions and understand the school's approach to behaviour management. They are polite to visitors and considerate to one another. A very few pupils struggle to maintain the high standards of behaviour during lunchtime in the canteen.

Most pupils work in small groups and on their own successfully. Vulnerable pupils and those in need of additional support benefit greatly from the school's nurture provision. As a result, most of these pupils are better able to manage their feelings and their behaviour and, consequently, their levels of self-esteem and confidence improve well.

Nearly all pupils share their feelings readily with teachers, and have confidence that they will act on findings quickly. This has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing. For example, pupils in 'Blenheim Buddies' have access to a 'worry box' to help them deal with different emotions.

Most pupils understand which foods help keep them healthy, and many talk knowledgably about this, such as when Year 1 pupils create a healthy eating menu for the hungry caterpillar. Many pupils know about the importance of exercising regularly to live healthily and are enthusiastic about their physical education lessons.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement**

Overall, the quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. Most teachers build and sustain effective working relationships with pupils. This allows pupils to feel confident to ask questions and to share their ideas in the classroom. A majority of teachers plan and deliver suitably engaging lessons that help pupils to make appropriate progress in developing their skills and understanding. However, a minority over-structure learning activities and this limits pupils' ability to develop independence and often reduces their enthusiasm. A majority of teachers plan learning that challenges pupils competently. Many use questioning techniques well to help pupils to develop their understanding of new concepts and ideas. However, a minority of teachers do not always devise suitable activities to ensure that pupils achieve the learning objectives of the lesson effectively enough.

Many teachers give pupils useful verbal and satisfactory written feedback on their work. This generally allows pupils to understand how well they have completed a task and what they could do to make it better. However, the way that teachers apply

these strategies varies too much from class to class. A majority of teachers provide a few helpful opportunities for pupils to assess their own or other pupils' learning. However, these strategies are still at an early stage of development in many classes.

The school's curriculum provides mainly engaging opportunities for pupils' learning. For example, pupils in the nursery make different types of porridge as part of their work on the Goldilocks story. In many subjects and learning areas, curriculum planning supports the development of pupils' skills as they progress through the school. However, teachers do not always implement these plans well enough. As a result, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and improve their skills in important curriculum areas, such as their English writing.

The foundation phase curriculum focuses well on developing pupils' skills in language and mathematical development. It follows the ethos and principles of this phase of learning well. As a result, many foundation phase pupils are eager to explore and learn to work with concentration to complete activities. For example, Year 1 pupils use the 'do-it-yourself' system of choosing independent learning activities confidently and then work diligently towards finishing these enhanced and continuous tasks. However, the school's curriculum arrangements do not give pupils a suitable balance of opportunities across all areas of the foundation phase.

The school's provision for developing pupils' ICT skills is effective. Throughout the curriculum, many pupils partake in worthwhile activities to develop these skills. For example, pupils in key stage 2 develop useful research skills when finding and recording the different prices of food items in a range of supermarkets.

The school has a coherent structure for teaching Welsh, underpinned by a clear long-term plan. This identifies systematically the language patterns for staff to use with pupils as they progress through the school. Teachers use this competently to give pupils interesting opportunities to write in Welsh. However, not all teachers implement the plans well enough or give pupils enough opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills. As a result, pupils' language development does not progress as swiftly as it could. Outside of the Welsh sessions, adults greet pupils in Welsh and use suitable, simple Welsh commands throughout the day. However, they do not ensure that pupils respond consistently enough. The school provides valuable opportunities throughout the curriculum for pupils to learn about modern-day and historic Wales. For example, pupils consider and write successfully about the life of St David and Santes Dwynwen. They research the city of Cardiff, finding out useful geographical information, such as its current population.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is a happy and nurturing community where the high level of care and co-operation between staff and pupils contributes successfully to pupils' positive wellbeing. The school's ethos supports pupils effectively in developing their social and moral understanding. Staff know the pupils well and respond positively to their social and emotional needs.

All staff encourage and ensure good behaviour among pupils and have robust and fair procedures for dealing with any incidents, where they occur. The school conducts particular sessions for parents to raise their awareness of the procedures that staff use to encourage positive behaviour. As a result, cases of misbehaviour and exclusions have dropped significantly over recent years.

Whole-school tracking of pupil performance and attainment is effective, and systems allow staff to analyse clearly the progress of specific groups and individuals. School leaders and teachers use the information from the tracking system well to target support appropriately for identified pupils, particularly those with additional learning needs. Teaching assistants work well in classrooms to support pupils' learning. They are effective in implementing a wide range of worthwhile intervention programmes that enable these pupils to make sound progress.

All pupils with additional learning needs have an education plan that includes clear and measurable targets. Staff review these plans regularly with parents and their children, ensuring that all have a clear understanding of their child's targets and the support provided. The school works well with a range of specialist services, such as the team around the family, the behavioural referral team and the educational psychology service, to secure additional, timely resources to support pupils with a range of needs. These arrangements ensure that targeted pupils make sound progress in relation to their abilities.

The school provides beneficial programmes to support vulnerable pupils, including those with social and emotional needs. There is nurture provision for identified pupils, which raises their self-esteem and confidence significantly and helps them to engage effectively in daily school life. The school maintains effective partnerships that support pupils in their personal, social and emotional development. For example, pupils in Year 6 visit the local secondary school regularly to support their transition.

The school promotes positive relationships with parents. It provides appropriate information about their children's progress and also gives parents valuable support. For example, staff deliver workshops that help parents to understand the school's approach to developing pupils' speech and language skills.

All pupils have worthwhile opportunities to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, for example through regular assemblies. Whole school celebrations, including Christmas concerts, the Eisteddfod and sports days, provide valuable opportunities to promote pupils' cultural development and the school's community ethos. The school promotes music appropriately through the federation choir.

There are appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. This helps pupils to make sensible lifestyle choices, for example about the need to eat healthily and to drink water to stay hydrated. The school provides pupils with a range of opportunities to consider their health and wellbeing through regular physical activities. A good range of equipment in the playgrounds, such as trim trails, climbing frames and the multi-use games area, encourages pupils to enjoy active play. However, the number of opportunities for extra-curricular physical development is limited.

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

**Leadership and management: Good**

The executive headteacher and her senior leadership team have worked purposefully with staff, pupils, governors and the local community to establish a clear vision for the federation. This aligns with the four core purposes of the developing new curriculum for Wales and reflects the school's commitment to meeting the needs of its pupils within the national priorities in Wales.

The federation has a clear leadership structure and all leaders have well-defined roles and responsibilities. Sharing responsibilities in teams at all levels provides many staff with purposeful opportunities to develop their leadership skills from early in their careers. Many staff have a secure understanding of their roles in taking forward strategic priorities. Most meetings focus well on important matters of teaching and learning, professional development, the sharing of good practice and consideration of progress towards action plan targets. Members of the pupil leadership team play an important part in helping to make improvements and contribute effectively to the federation's self-evaluation processes. For example, they observe lessons and report back sensitively about the strengths and areas for development they see in pupils' learning behaviours, including their focus, determination and perseverance.

Members of the governing body bring a rich mix of skills to their roles in order to provide support and challenge to the federation. Governors work purposefully alongside teachers and pupils to gain a useful insight into the day-to-day work of both schools. This helps them to ask school leaders relevant questions and to probe their decision-making, and to contribute effectively to self-evaluation processes.

Across the federation, leaders undertake a wide range of monitoring activities, including focused learning walks, lesson observations, scrutiny of teachers' planning and talking to pupils. This enables leaders to identify most strengths and areas for improvement, which they share with relevant members of staff. However, a minority of leaders do not yet have strong enough evaluative skills to make specific judgements that support teachers to improve. For example, their work tends to judge provision and does not always focus well enough on evaluating pupils' standards. As a result, the pace of improvement, particularly in Blenheim Road Primary School, has not always been quick or purposeful enough.

Leaders address areas for improvement in the federation development plan well. There are common plans for the whole federation as well as specific ones for each school, based on their individual priorities for improvement. Plans and responsibilities are detailed, but success criteria are not always measurable enough to enable leaders to judge progress accurately. Overall, leaders have a good track record of making improvements. For example, the school's focus on cultivating pupil voice means that this is now a strength across the federation.

The federation has comprehensive systems to monitor and assess the performance of teachers. Each teacher has an annual review of their performance using information from a wide range of monitoring activities. However, in a few instances, leaders do not follow up on actions for improvement well enough. Support staff take part in useful annual meetings to assess their performance and consider their professional learning needs. Leaders ensure that teachers' performance management objectives link well to whole school priorities along with individual teachers' areas to improve.

The executive headteacher encourages staff to undertake a wide range of professional development activities, including gaining recognised qualifications and undertaking action research projects relevant to the needs of pupils. For example, a reception teacher has investigated approaches to teaching writing to young children, which has enhanced provision and standards in the foundation phase. Teachers from both schools work effectively in groups of three within each year group to share good practice, for example in improving pupils' wellbeing. Leaders create beneficial working relationships with other schools. For example, leaders have visited another local school to improve their work in developing confident and resilient pupils.

The federation manages its resources efficiently and effectively. The business manager, senior leaders and the governing body work closely together to monitor the budgets and to plan spending in line with current priorities. They ensure the careful use of grants to achieve the best outcomes for targeted pupils, for example by using the pupil development grant to provide relevant interventions that improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and social and emotional development. The federation generates considerable additional income, for example from providing training to staff from other schools. Leaders use this additional funding creatively, for example to support a family engagement officer and a behaviour support officer, who have had a notable impact on improving pupil attendance and parental engagement.

Both schools in the federation are well resourced in most areas. The bright, airy, purpose-built accommodation on both sites provides very good indoor learning environments. Most staff use the extensive outdoor areas well to enhance learning and provide exciting and stimulating experiences for pupils.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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

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