



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

A report on

**Bronington Voluntary Aided Primary School
School Lane
Bronington
Whitchurch
Wrexham
SY13 3HN**

Date of inspection: June 2018

by

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

About Bronington Voluntary Aided Primary School

Bronington Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Wrexham, near to Whitchurch, in Wrexham local authority. There are currently 98 pupils on roll between 3 to 11 years old, organised into four mixed-aged classes.

No pupils speak Welsh at home. Around 3% of the school's pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average of 19%. The school identifies 15% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is lower than the national average of 21%.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2013. Estyn last inspected the school 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

During their time at the school, most pupils make good progress from their starting points and develop well as independent learners. They participate enthusiastically in their learning, express their ideas clearly and discuss their work confidently with visitors. Teachers provide stimulating experiences that engage most pupils' interest effectively. Pupils contribute well to decisions about how and what they learn and show a particularly caring attitude to their peers.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is supported well by the senior leader. Staff work together as a team effectively to improve pupils' standards and the school has a proven track record of bringing about improvements. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are capable mathematicians and confidently write at length. The governing body supports the school successfully.

| 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 Strengthen and refine the process of planning for improvement
- R2 Raise pupils' standards in ICT
- R3 Ensure that teachers' planning enables pupils to develop their numeracy skills progressively across the curriculum

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 literacy and numeracy skills at or above a level expected for their age. During their time at the school most pupils, including those that are more able, progress well and achieve good standards in nearly all aspects of their learning. Pupils who have additional learning needs make appropriate progress towards their individual targets.

Nearly all pupils listen attentively to adults and their peers, and follow instructions well. They develop strong oracy skills that support them well in all areas of learning, and are confident to share their ideas and thoughts. Many older pupils use an extended range of vocabulary and present their views in an engaging manner when talking about their work or their favourite subjects.

Nearly all pupils develop well as readers and show real enjoyment in reading, proudly reading their written work aloud. In the foundation phase, many pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds well to read simple texts and to decode unfamiliar words. Older key stage 2 pupils use their higher order reading skills, 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.

Across the school, most pupils develop their writing skills well and confidently write at length for a wide range of purposes across the curriculum. However, on occasions when writing independently, a notable minority of pupils struggle to present their work neatly or to use punctuation accurately. In Year 2, many pupils use a wide range of vocabulary to make their writing interesting when producing poems on animals. In key stage 2, most pupils write confidently and improve their work through redrafting. The quality of the language used by many key stage 2 pupils in their extended writing engages the reader well, for example when writing about the monster under the bed and describing life in Roman times.

Most pupils develop a solid knowledge of mathematical concepts and are confident mathematicians by the time they reach Year 6. Across the school, most pupils use effective strategies to solve problems. They calculate and explain the reasoning behind their answers quickly. Older foundation phase pupils work out the possible colour combinations of beans, linked to the story of Jack and the Beanstalk accurately. Many younger pupils count successfully to 10 and beyond and write simple number sentences using addition. By Year 2, most pupils use their measuring skills well to calculate the perimeter of animal enclosures as part of their topic work.

In key stage 2, most pupils develop a strong understanding of number values and apply a wide range of strategies to solve problems confidently. Most Year 3 and Year 4 pupils work out how many different sized tiles are needed for a Victorian floor accurately. Many key stage 2 pupils use formal calculation strategies well. Older pupils are able to check their answers and explain their reasoning clearly when working out the differing weights of specific ingredients needed to make a potion to treat gout as part of their work on the Tudors. However, in general, pupils do not apply their numeracy skills well enough across the curriculum.

Across the school, many pupils develop appropriate skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils in the foundation phase log onto Hwb to access a range of applications with confidence to support their learning in mathematics and spelling. Most pupils in key stage 2 develop their internet research skills well and present the information suitably. Older pupils choose appropriate ICT software to make a presentation on plastic pollution in the sea and to make a short animated film clip linked to their lessons. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of using spreadsheets and databases are less well developed.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their skills in Welsh and have very positive attitudes to learning Welsh. Pupils in the foundation phase respond well to a range of instructions and can ask and answer simple questions confidently. By Year 6, most pupils sustain a conversation in Welsh, extending their answers appropriately. They read simple texts with understanding and generally accurate pronunciation. Many write short paragraphs about their hobbies and holidays that contain suitable detail, following taught language patterns.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners who enjoy their time in school. They participate fully in lessons, display positive attitudes to learning and develop valuable, independent learning skills. For example, Year 6 pupils talk passionately about their topic on plastic waste in our seas and the damage this is causing to our environment. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and show a particularly caring attitude towards their peers. They show high levels of respect for the views of others and work well with a partner or as part of a group. Nearly all feel safe in school and know how to keep safe online.

Most pupils understand how to keep healthy, and they confidently talk about making healthy choices. However, pupils' snacks at break times are not always healthy. The introduction of 'fruity Fridays' by the healthy schools' committee is beginning to promote healthy eating successfully. Nearly all pupils enjoy playing football, running and skipping at lunchtimes and understand the benefits of regular exercise.

Nearly all pupils show enthusiasm for the opportunities to contribute to school life. The impact of their suggestions, such as the Criw Cymraeg in supporting pupils' use of Welsh, is helping to raise standards. They take on responsibilities such as being part of the school, eco and healthy schools councils willingly and with pride.

Most pupils persevere with tasks and confidently take on new challenges. They assess their own work and that of their classmates accurately. Key stage 2 pupils talk knowledgeably about feedback on their work, and clearly value the input, and act on points identified for improvement quickly.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching in the school is good. Most teachers plan stimulating activities that develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding successfully. This includes beneficial trips to places linked to curriculum topics, such as the zoo. Visitors to the school further enrich pupils' learning experiences. In key stage 2, an actor dressed as someone from Tudor times brought pupils' history studies to life. The school enables older key stage 2 pupils to stay at an outdoor education centre, where they develop their independent learning skills effectively.

Teachers take suitable account of pupils' interests at the start of topics. Most pupils have regular opportunities to make decisions and choices about what and how they learn during class activities, which motivates them well. Pupils in the foundation phase have a clear input into their activities across the areas of learning. These 'rainbow challenges' are at varying degrees of difficulty and are chosen from pupils' suggestions. When they complete the task, pupils place a wooden lollipop stick in their named pot. This enables teachers to check pupils' understanding quickly and fosters independent learning successfully.

Teachers and other adults know pupils well and generally have high expectations for pupils' behaviour, which they manage calmly and effectively. In nearly all classes, teachers question pupils skilfully to check on their progress and to challenge them to think more deeply. They use positive praise well to encourage pupils to persevere.

Many teachers and support staff encourage pupils to extend their thinking and evaluate their own work and that of their peers constructively. This is particularly effective for older pupils as they think carefully about the strategies to use to take the next step in their learning. Most teachers use assessment information well to cater for the differing ages and abilities in their class. This supports vulnerable pupils effectively and extends and challenges pupils that are more able successfully.

Teachers and support staff work as an effective team to support pupils' learning. In the foundation phase, support staff lead small group activities, both within the classroom and in the outdoor learning areas, well. In general, teachers plan and provide a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning. This supports pupils to make good progress in their independent learning.

Most teachers are beginning to respond well to recent initiatives to bring about more consistency to aspects of teaching and learning, particularly when planning literacy across the curriculum. However, in general, planning for pupils to apply their numeracy skills systematically across the curriculum is less well developed.

Regular Welsh lessons across the school help pupils of all ages to understand the importance of learning Welsh. In addition, teachers and the 'Cryw Cymraeg' ensure that there are enough opportunities for pupils to practise their Welsh in informal situations around the school. This fosters pupils' enjoyment of the language effectively. Staff provide a number of interesting activities to enrich pupils' knowledge about the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, foundation phase pupils study Welsh saints and older key stage 2 pupils study the Welsh artists, make clay love spoons and sew bunting as part of the school's celebration of St David's Day.

Planning for the development of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is at an early stage of development. This limits the systematic development of pupils' ICT skills.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy, caring and inclusive community that places a strong emphasis on fairness and the importance of honesty and equality. Pupils benefit from positive and encouraging working relationships with staff. This helps to ensure high levels of mutual respect and consistently good behaviour. The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills. For example, pupils work

alongside an artist to create a sculpture to enhance an outdoor area used for quiet reflection.

The school's procedures for tracking and monitoring pupil progress and wellbeing are thorough and effective. They enable teachers to clearly identify the needs of individuals and groups of pupils at an early stage, and to put appropriate provision in place. The school provides beneficial support in class, and where appropriate, bespoke withdrawal support for individual pupils with additional learning needs. Staff ensure that this additional support is flexible and closely matched to individual pupil's needs. A team of committed teaching assistants provide high quality support to vulnerable pupils, ensuring they are well cared for and that they progress well towards their targets. Individual education plans are clear and written in partnership with staff, parents and, where appropriate, specialist services.

The school shares helpful information with parents through a range of methods such as regular newsletters, a text-based class reward system and the school website. The school offers worthwhile evening workshops for parents on literacy and numeracy, helping them to support their child at home successfully.

The school promotes pupils understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe, suitably. However, it has not made sufficient progress in addressing the unhealthy snacks that pupils eat during break times. The outside play areas are well developed and include a trim trail and large areas of grass where pupils play football and run around on at break times.

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

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher, staff and governors share a common sense of purpose and succeed in creating a caring, inclusive community for pupils. Senior leaders work closely together with a clear focus on raising standards and improving provision. Arrangements to distribute leadership responsibilities amongst the small team of staff are beginning to support school improvement successfully, for example the recent formation of subject teams. Regular, systematic monitoring by senior leaders provides valuable information for staff on the strengths in teaching and learning and areas for improvement. The school takes good account of local and national priorities, including a focus on raising standards in Welsh and developing pupils' independent learning skills. Senior leaders ensure that staff are kept well informed on day-to-day issues and the on-going work of the school. However, not all staff are clear as to their role in supporting school improvement.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and well organised, and makes highly effective use of a small number of sub committees to support its work. The knowledge that governors gain through working on the standards committee and finance committee enables them to challenge the school well. The involvement of governors as members of the new subject teams is particularly effective in supporting the monitoring role of the governing body. The link between pupils and the governing body is strengthened by the attendance of pupils at governing body meetings when, for example, they wish to request funding for specific projects such as the purchase of playground equipment.

The process of self-evaluation to support school improvement is well established. Staff use data well to identify areas where standards need to improve, for example when strengthening pupils' reasoning skills. They make good use of first-hand evidence provided through lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work to inform areas for improvement effectively. The headteacher involves staff, governors and pupils in self-evaluation discussions successfully. She seeks the views of parents through annual questionnaires and responds to their views promptly. Most recently, this has informed changes to the provision of homework and to providing parents with more information on the curriculum through information evenings on supporting reading and mathematics. The self-evaluation report is a detailed document with strengths and areas for development clearly identified. However, the link between the outcomes of self-evaluation and planning for the school's development are not always clear in all aspects.

The school has a good track record of securing improvements. For example, standards in Welsh and mathematics have risen, and the attainment of the more able pupils has improved. The school development plan is comprehensive and includes clear monitoring roles for governors and pupils. However, whilst it identifies the main areas for improvement accurately, it does not always break these down well enough into clear, specific actions to be taken.

Senior leaders ensure all staff have valuable opportunities to engage in professional development. This effectively supports the implementation of new initiatives and the school's work to bring about improvement. Effective working with the cluster of local schools supports staff in developing pupils' involvement in leading their own learning.

The school deploys staff well to make best use of their experience and expertise. This is effective in supporting the teaching of music, Welsh and physical education. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively, and this enables them to provide high quality support, particularly for pupils with additional needs.

The headteacher and governors work closely together and monitor spending rigorously. They have succeeded in reducing the deficit budget significantly. The school accesses grant funding from a range of sources and uses this to support vulnerable pupils well, and to enrich pupils' learning experiences, for example the development of a wildlife and pond area and a quiet area for pupils to sit and reflect.

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:

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| 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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