



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

A report on

**Cogan Primary School
Pill Street
Cogan
Nr. Penarth
Vale of Glamorgan
CF64 2JS**

Date of inspection: May 2018

by

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

About Cogan Primary School

Cogan Primary School is in the Cogan area of Penarth in the Vale of Glamorgan local authority. There are 206 pupils on roll between 4 and 11 years of age, organised into seven classes. The school also has a hearing resource base for children from the local authority. There are currently six children registered in this class.

On average over the last three years, just over 11% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is below the Wales average of 19%. The school identifies 18% of its pupils as having special educational needs. This includes those in mainstream classes and in the hearing resource base. This is just below the Wales average of 21%. A very few pupils have statements of special educational needs.

Most pupils are white British and speak English at home. A few pupils come from a minority ethnic background and many of these pupils speak English as an additional language. A very few speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher took up her post in 2014. The school's last inspection was in February in 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

Cogan Primary School is at the heart of its community. It provides a safe, welcoming and stimulating learning environment for its pupils. The well-respected and highly-skilled headteacher leads the school confidently. She encourages her experienced and established staff to research and to try out new approaches, while at the same time maintaining learning experiences of high quality for pupils. This enables nearly all pupils to make at least good progress during their time at the school, and supports more able pupils to achieve high standards, particularly in writing. Most pupils become confident young citizens, who respect others, understand and celebrate diversity, and enjoy learning.

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

Recommendations

R1 Raise standards of Welsh oracy in key stage 2

R2 Improve pupils' ability to influence and to lead their own learning

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to effective leadership and inclusion, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make at least expected progress during their time at the school and a minority exceed their targets. Most pupils in the hearing resource base achieve well in relation to their starting points and a few make particularly good progress. Many pupils, particularly the more able and most confident, recall previous learning well and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding effectively to new experiences and situations.

Most pupils listen attentively and express themselves clearly, using an extensive vocabulary for their age. Most reception pupils speak enthusiastically about their activities. By Year 2, many offer convincing explanations and the more able refer to evidence when constructing an argument, for example, by using sentence starters, such as 'experts believe...' These strong communication skills continue to build in key stage 2, where most speak maturely about their work. For example, in Year 6, pupils explain Lady Macbeth's influence over Macbeth after reading an excerpt from the play. A majority of pupils greet others in Welsh and understand basic instructions. Foundation phase pupils respond enthusiastically to Welsh 'hot seating' activities and singing. They ask and answer simple questions about themselves and familiar topics. Many key stage 2 pupils express their likes and dislikes, but most cannot sustain a basic conversation in Welsh, and do not extend their answers by giving a reason or adding further detail.

The reading skills of most pupils enable them to access all aspects of the curriculum successfully. Most use phonic and other strategies well to decode unfamiliar words and read at or above the expected level for their age. Reception pupils love listening to stories. They answer questions about a story's content or characters enthusiastically and make plausible predictions about what might happen next. Year 2 pupils read and follow instructions competently, for example when working out how to approach a mathematical investigation. Most key stage 2 pupils read fluently and many read at above expected levels. They develop useful research skills through their topic work and formulate intelligent questions to ask one another about the fiction they are reading. The most able have particularly strong skills, using techniques such as skimming and scanning intuitively to deduce answers from texts. Pupils' Welsh reading skills are developing satisfactorily. A majority read simple, well-known texts with mainly correct pronunciation, and can explain the content competently.

Most pupils write well for a variety of purposes in language lessons and across the curriculum. In the reception class, nearly all pupils understand that writing conveys meaning, and more able pupils write short, imaginative pieces inspired by a favourite book. By Year 2, many recognise the features of particular genres and use them in their own work. For example, they write suitable emails and letters to the manager of the local branch of a multi-national restaurant persuading the company to reduce the use of plastic straws. Standards in writing by the end of key stage 2 are particularly high, with more able pupils producing skilfully planned and structured pieces containing a wealth of adventurous vocabulary to engage the reader, create descriptions and convey emotions. In most classes, pupils' handwriting and

presentation are neat and they show pride in their work. Most Year 2 pupils record simple sentences in Welsh. However, pupils do not write in Welsh independently enough at key stage 2, and rely too heavily on writing frames.

Most pupils achieve high standards in mathematics lessons. Their strong numeracy skills enable pupils to carry out purposeful activities in relevant contexts across the curriculum. By the end of the foundation phase, many handle number bonds to ten well, and apply this skill confidently to add money and calculate change. They measure accurately in metres and centimetres when carrying out an investigation in science and look for patterns when comparing the length of pupils' legs and the distance they can jump. In key stage 2, pupils solve problems using very large numbers competently. For example, they use their understanding of fractions to compare the numbers of fans who watch football matches. Many pupils apply their numeracy skills particularly well in science lessons, creating scatter graphs to look for correlations and drawing accurate line graphs to present information about climate in geography.

Pupils make steady progress in ICT. Foundation phase pupils use an appropriate range of hardware confidently, including tablet devices, voice recorders and digital flip cameras. Reception pupils develop a secure understanding of direction to control a programmable toy, while Year 1 pupils create digital pictures to illustrate their stories. Year 2 pupils appreciate the benefit of using technology to send and receive information quickly by email. Key stage 2 pupils use ICT across the curriculum well. They use suitable internet sites sensibly and extensively to select relevant information and use various presentation packages skilfully to communicate their findings. Many use technology to control models that they have made from plastic bricks, and pupils are developing their ability to create and use simple databases and spreadsheets.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and are comfortable and happy in their surroundings. They have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe within and around school, and online when using the internet. Most show kindness and consideration to one other, with many older pupils acting as mentors for younger pupils. This 'guardian angel' initiative helps younger and vulnerable pupils settle into school and develop confidence, particularly during playtimes and lunchtime.

All pupils develop very good working relationships with staff and with one another in an atmosphere of inclusion and mutual respect. Behaviour is good in nearly all lessons, during assemblies and at playtimes. Nearly all pupils are eager to meet new visitors and keen to talk about their learning and achievements. For example, Year 3 pupils do not hesitate to volunteer to take part in role play activities alongside a visiting actor playing Boudicca, as part of their studies of the Celts.

Pupils' understanding of right and wrong is secure and most speak maturely and sensitively about issues relating to tolerance and equality. A particular strength of the school is the way in which all pupils work productively with others, whatever their background or additional learning need, and take the opportunity to learn from one another. For example, pupils from the hearing resource base participate fully in mainstream lessons alongside other pupils. Mainstream pupils use radio amplifiers

sensibly and many use some words and phrases of sign language naturally to support their friends' understanding of lessons.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of living healthily, including the need to drink water regularly, to make healthy food choices at lunchtime and to use the fruit tuck shop at playtimes. They take advantage of regular opportunities to join in physical activities during the school day, and many enjoy the wide range of sports clubs and sporting events that take place after school and during the year.

Most pupils are interested in their work and many concentrate for sustained periods when completing tasks. Many are motivated to learn and take pride in tackling work that challenges them and makes them think deeply. For example, foundation phase pupils discuss excitedly the fact that the blue whale's heart is the same size as a car, while pupils in upper key stage 2 challenge the accuracy of bargains and discounts that supermarkets use to target shoppers.

Many key stage 2 pupils take on additional responsibilities willingly. They appreciate the opportunities they have to contribute to the smooth running and improvement of the school environment, for example by designing and building a sensory garden as part of a creative schools project. They take particular pride in their work to raise money for local causes, including sponsoring the training of a police dog, and to support projects around the world. However, currently, pupils do not have enough influence over their own learning and the school's curriculum.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching is good overall and most teachers set high standards for behaviour and the quality of work. Teachers plan a wide range of learning experiences that stimulate pupils and challenge their thinking. They make particularly good use of the school's close community to provide pupils with a relevant curriculum that draws effectively on local history and geography and reflects the school's cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity. This develops pupils' understanding of their place in the immediate locality and their influence over it. It also leads effectively into studies of the environment that extend their global awareness, such as when Year 2 undertake research and take forward action on the use of plastic straws, and Year 6 study the global impact of a volcanic eruption and dust cloud in Iceland.

Teachers and leaders use their growing understanding of the developing Curriculum for Wales well to shape the experiences they provide. For example, when planning, they think carefully about how well the learning opportunities they offer contribute to pupils making progress towards achieving the four purposes of the curriculum.

Teachers and support staff understand the benefits of taking learning outside the classroom and into other parts of the school building and grounds. Staff use the rich and varied outdoor environment creatively and purposefully to enhance pupils' experiences and to provide variety and challenge in the curriculum that work in a classroom may not offer. This is a particular strength in the foundation phase, for example, when pupils develop their understanding of the properties of 3D shapes by building large structures in the playground, and when they learn to give precise directions to move their friends around a hundred square in preparation for programming an electronic toy.

Mutual respect among staff and between pupils and adults is an important feature of nearly all classrooms. This helps to create a calm, hard-working atmosphere in which pupils focus on their tasks well and do their best. The very established and experienced staff know the pupils and their families very well and they use this knowledge sensitively to provide a curriculum that meets their needs and provides a good level of challenge, particularly for more able pupils in many classes. The questioning skills of most teachers encourage pupils to think and reason carefully. However, on a very few occasions, teachers' expectations of what pupils can accomplish are not high enough and this detracts from the quality of pupils' work and presentation, and leads to a loss of focus in activities that do not stretch them sufficiently.

The school pays good attention to developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Teachers use the literacy and numeracy framework and, increasingly, the digital competence framework to support their weekly planning and to ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to apply and consolidate their skills across the curriculum. A very few teachers use Welsh well in their classrooms and this encourages pupils to use the language themselves. However, overall, staff do not use enough Welsh themselves or ensure that pupils receive sufficient rich opportunities to hear and speak Welsh. This means that pupils do not use the language well enough, particularly in key stage 2.

Teachers share learning outcomes and realistic success criteria with pupils in most lessons. As lessons progress, teachers provide pupils with helpful feedback that usually links closely to appropriate success criteria. This helps pupils to focus well on the skills they are practising. It enables them to understand how well they are doing and reminds them to think about their work and to improve it as they go along. Teachers expect pupils to reflect on their achievements at the end of a learning activity and, increasingly, these link to pupils' individual targets in their target and learning logs. However, pupils do not routinely contribute to setting success criteria for their learning or identifying their own next steps. This limits their opportunities to become truly independent learners.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is an extremely caring community, which fosters excellent working relationships between staff, pupils, parents and the wider community. This helps to create an inclusive environment in which everyone shows mutual care and respect. A particular strength is the way in which pupils from the hearing resource base integrate seamlessly into the full life of the school. These pupils learn in mainstream classes, where adults and pupils consistently use signing and other visual communication techniques sensitively and confidently to support verbal communication. As a result, pupils from the resource base flourish alongside other pupils. They make good and often excellent progress from their individual starting points. Specialist staff work highly effectively with their mainstream colleagues and with a range of specialist services to ensure exceptional provision for these pupils.

The provision to integrate all pupils, including those with additional learning needs and pupils with English as an additional language, strengthens the school's values of tolerance and respect. The school cultivates pupils' appreciation of all aspects of diversity, and this means that nearly all pupils work alongside one another

exceptionally well. There is a culture of mutual understanding, and pupils and adults actively support each other. The school reinforces this message effectively by placing a specific emphasis on children's rights. A worthwhile range of pupil voice groups helps to make playtimes a happy experience for everyone, and this helps to provide opportunities for all pupils to use the extensive outside provision at break and lunchtimes.

The school has highly effective procedures to track and monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing. Teachers and leaders use this detailed information particularly well to identify pupils' educational, emotional and social needs at an early stage. Skilled learning support assistants provide valuable support, including well-tailored intervention programmes. All pupils identified with additional learning needs have individual education plans that are concise and clear. They contain specific and measurable targets that provide good levels of challenge. Pupils and their parents review progress in meeting the targets regularly. As a result, this group of pupils makes good and often excellent progress from their individual starting points, and pupils at risk of falling behind often catch up with other pupils and move out of intervention support quickly.

Staff know their pupils and families exceptionally well. Highly supportive relationships exist between parents and the school. Parents, governors and the wider community take part regularly in many aspects of school life, and volunteers commit significant time to supporting a wealth of valuable activities, including cookery, gardening, reading and outdoor learning. In addition, the school provides beneficial workshops to enable parents to support their children's reading, writing and numeracy. Teachers keep parents particularly well informed about their children's progress. There is an active parents' association that raises funds to support activities such as theatre trips, visits and work that enriches pupils' curriculum experiences.

The school works particularly effectively with the local community. Pupils develop a very clear understanding of local history and an appreciation of the culture and heritage of Wales through, for example, their studies of the nearby Cogan Pill house. In addition, the school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their role as enterprising global citizens, for instance, by raising funds to provide toilet facilities for families in parts of Asia and Africa as part of the 'toilet twinning' scheme.

There are strong opportunities for all pupils to take part in the creative arts, for example working with local artists to create colourful mosaic murals that enrich the learning environment. All pupils participate in performances, including regular, well-attended parents' assemblies that celebrate pupils' work and provide a stage for all pupils to perform. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities and clubs make a very positive contribution to pupils' wellbeing and fitness. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of sports clubs, for example working with a local rugby club or learning to play lacrosse. An effective partnership with a sustainable transport charity has been successful in promoting pupils' enjoyment of cycling, scooting and walking. The school has strong arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. For instance, pupils grow their own vegetables in the school garden and have regular opportunities to prepare and cook healthy meals.

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

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher is an accomplished, professional role model who has high expectations of everyone in the school community. Together with the deputy headteacher, she has established an exemplary, inclusive vision that all staff share. There are clear expectations from leaders that pupils, teachers and learning support assistants work hard and do their best. As a result, the school has maintained high standards in nearly all areas over an extended period of time.

Members of the governing body have a rich mix of skills and experience that they use highly effectively to hold leaders to account and to fulfil their role as critical friends of the school. The governors' committee structure is cohesive and efficient. Governors make a notable and active contribution to the school's self-evaluation processes, for example by completing their own analyses of the school's performance data and monitoring the school's provision at first hand in order to inform their policies and procedures and their questions for leaders of the school. They are active in bringing about improvements to the fabric of the school, for instance in overseeing the conversion of the former caretaker's house to create much-needed office space and meeting rooms.

The school has a clear and effective leadership structure, which is proportionate to the size of the school and provides the capacity for staff to be creative and innovative. For example, teachers identified that the progress of Year 3 pupils slowed as they transferred from the foundation phase curriculum into key stage 2. With effective support from school leaders, the Year 3 teacher re-invigorated the provision in her classroom, established learning areas for enhanced provision and focused group teaching and embraced foundation phase principles. Early evaluations show that the re-energised learning environment has improved pupils' wellbeing and confidence, and provided a smoother and more extended transition into key stage 2.

The school has a well-established and highly effective culture of strategic planning for improvement. Priorities for improvement are manageable, proportionate and sustainable. They focus sharply and appropriately on supporting teachers to improve their classroom practice. For example, a new approach to lesson observations enables teachers to focus more precisely on the learning and progress of specific pupils, rather than just on teaching. This transformed focus to peer observations of lessons gives teachers more productive opportunities to reflect on their own practice in accelerating pupils' learning.

Self-evaluation procedures are thorough. They take robust account of a wide range of monitoring evidence and stakeholders' views to inform priorities for improvement accurately. The school improvement plan, together with the clear three-year overview, is practical, realistic and carefully costed. There are clear time allocations for staff to implement the improvements, and for leaders and governors to monitor and evaluate the successful delivery of the plan.

There are clear and effective performance management systems. Leaders address any identified underperformance robustly and supportively. They plan training opportunities strategically and link them closely to whole-school priorities. Staff make highly effective use of action research and work together constructively to try out different ways of doing things. For example, teachers identified that pupils are well placed to share their work with other pupils in adjacent cohorts and that adults could learn from pupils' discussions. As a result, they now provide regular opportunities for pupils to share their books with other pupils in other classes, talk about their work, and discuss their enjoyment of the learning. Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants join in pupils' discussions and this provides an efficient source of informal monitoring of the school's provision and its impact on pupils' standards.

There are regular, useful meetings where teachers and leaders make sustainable, manageable decisions about the provision, and how to improve pupils' outcomes further. For instance, staff have worked together to plan comprehensive, manageable training and investment to improve the ICT provision in readiness for the new digital competence framework. As a result, pupils and teachers have improved their skills in ICT.

Leaders use the school's resources highly efficiently and have developed the former caretaker's house and garden creatively for new use by the school. The current level of budget underspend is higher than recommended, but leaders have allocated the surplus for essential building repairs. The school uses the small pupil development grant very effectively to provide opportunities to enhance the provision for pupils who may be vulnerable to underachievement. For example, the school promotes music tuition for eligible pupils, and employs a positive role model who works with pupils as a play leader, teaching assistant and sports coach to cover teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time. The Victorian buildings are bright and colourful and provide a stimulating, well-resourced learning environment. In addition, staff have developed the outdoor space imaginatively to provide pupils with creative, all-weather learning experiences of high quality.

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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