



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

A report on

**Maesybryn Primary School
Lancaster Drive
Crownhill Estate
Llantwit Fardre
CF38 2NS**

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by

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

About Maesybryn Primary School

Maesybryn Primary School is in Llantwit Fardre on the outskirts of Cardiff and Pontypridd in the Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. There are 420 pupils on roll, including 30 full-time and 27 part-time nursery pupils. There are eight single-year and four mixed-year classes. In addition, there are two learning resource base classes, providing education for 17 pupils with communication needs from across the local authority.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 9%. This is well below the average for Wales of 19%. The school identifies 31% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is much higher than the national average of 21%. This includes the pupils in the learning resource classes. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs or 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. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

The current headteacher took up his post in 2009. The school's previous inspection was in 2013.

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

Maesybryn Primary School provides an inclusive and purposeful learning environment for pupils. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well, showing respect and concern for others. Across the school, the provision for pupils with additional learning needs is a strength. Staff in the learning resource classes provide care and support of high quality. This enables nearly all pupils to develop their social and communication skills highly successfully and to take a full part in school life.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers and support staff work together successfully to provide stimulating learning experiences that engage and meet the individual needs of most pupils successfully. As a result, most pupils are confident and articulate learners. They make strong progress in developing their skills in mathematics, and especially in literacy, where most achieve good standards in both English and Welsh. The headteacher and senior leadership team know the school's strengths and areas for development well and plan for improvement appropriately. They lead by example and ensure a strong team ethos among staff.

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 Raise pupils' standards in ICT
- R2 Refine monitoring procedures so that leaders can be more agile and effective in responding to identified areas for improvement
- R3 Strengthen the role of governors and parents in evaluating the work of the school

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 at a level expected for their age. Over time, most pupils make strong progress and they achieve good standards in most aspects of their learning. Pupils who have additional learning needs make effective progress towards their individual targets. In the learning resource classes, nearly all pupils develop their social and communication skills highly successfully, from their starting points. In general, most more able pupils achieve well.

Across the school, most pupils develop strong oracy skills that support them well in all areas of learning. They listen attentively and they are confident to share their ideas and thoughts. For example, nursery pupils make up their own pirate characters, such as 'Captain Beautiful' and 'Captain Silly-Pants', and they share them happily with visitors in their role-play activities. Most pupils in the foundation phase answer simple questions appropriately in Welsh, for example about the weather and what they like to do. In key stage 2, most pupils build well upon their skills in both English and Welsh to talk with increasing confidence about a range of familiar topics. Most pupils show respect for one another's ideas during discussions. They listen carefully and provide pertinent reasons to support their own views. By Year 6, a very few more able pupils sustain a dialogue highly successfully in Welsh, using interesting patterns, such as 'yn fy marn'.

Most pupils show enjoyment in reading and they develop strong reading skills in English and in Welsh. At an early stage in the foundation phase, most pupils develop a beneficial understanding of letter sounds and how these combine to build words. For example, pupils in the learning resource class recognise initial sounds well when they strike a bowling pin labelled with a letter or blend. As they progress through key stage 2, most pupils read fluently, accurately and expressively. Most pupils skim and scan for information successfully, for example when reading a factfile in Welsh on a famous person. They infer and deduce meaning from age-appropriate texts well. In Year 6, a very few more able pupils explore, in detail, the effect an author's choice of words has on the reader. They identify thoughtfully the different layers of meaning in more challenging English language texts, such as 'Beowulf' and 'The Wolves of Willoughby Chase'.

Many pupils make effective progress in writing as they move through the school. Standards of spelling and punctuation are good, and many pupils use well-chosen vocabulary to enliven their writing. Most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and, by the time they leave the school, many pupils develop a neat, fluent and mature handwriting style. Many pupils write to a good standard in their Welsh lessons.

By the end of Year 2, many pupils write well for a useful range of purposes. They sequence their writing in clear sentences and use description successfully to add interest to their work, for example describing a character as 'feeling the hot sun peeking through the trees'. In key stage 2, many pupils have strong knowledge and understanding of different genres and they apply these features to their own writing well. For example, many Year 5 pupils write effective newspaper reports about the

chair of governor's climb of Kilimanjaro to raise money for a charity. By Year 6, many pupils demonstrate good stamina for writing, sustaining and developing their ideas effectively. However, younger pupils do not always write at length well enough.

In the foundation phase, nearly all pupils develop strong number skills. For example, by Year 2, most pupils add and subtract two-digit numbers successfully, using doubling and halving strategies. In key stage 2, most pupils build upon these foundations well. For instance, they select and apply their knowledge of calculation methods effectively when solving word problems. In the learning resource class, most pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the range of mathematics topics. They identify horizontal and perpendicular lines on two-dimensional shapes correctly and they use a ruler to measure their length accurately. However, across the school, pupils do not always develop and apply their mathematical reasoning skills well enough in real-life situations.

Most pupils in the foundation phase begin to develop their skills in ICT appropriately. For example, nursery pupils use tablet computers competently to create a pictogram of teachers' favourite farmyard animals. In key stage 2, most pupils develop their knowledge of databases appropriately, for example by creating their own records about insects. In Year 6, a few more able pupils use a formula to calculate averages when working with spreadsheets. However, many pupils in key stage 2 use only a limited range of software to present text and images.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils feel that school staff listen to them well and act decisively to address any concerns they have. This helps nearly all pupils to feel safe and secure in school. They are happy and confident and enjoy coming to school. Nearly all show respect and consideration for adults, visitors and each other. For example, older pupils play considerately with pupils from the learning resource classes. They share playground equipment and many are patient when helping other pupils to learn games.

Nearly all pupils display good standards of behaviour in classes and around the school. Most pupils are proud of their progress and achievements. They settle to their work quickly, engage fully in lessons and sustain concentration well. For example, in the learning resource class, key stage 2 pupils persevere to sort three-dimensional shapes into a Venn diagram independently. Most pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning and they enjoy the topics they study. Many pupils understand their personal targets appropriately and what they need to do in order to improve their work. However, at the end of the foundation phase and in lower key stage 2, a minority of pupils rely too heavily on adults when carrying out activities. This means that they do not develop fully as confident and independent learners.

Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. They make sensible choices about their diet in school and nearly all are aware of the need to remain hydrated. Younger pupils know the benefits of wearing a sunhat and applying sunscreen during hot weather. Pupils appreciate the beneficial range of extra-curricular activities that are available and many attend them regularly. This contributes positively to the development of their fitness and social skills. Through the effective work of the school's digital leaders, nearly all pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Pupils take their leadership roles and responsibilities seriously. For example, the school council takes advantage of the worthwhile opportunity that staff give them to express their opinions about the topics pupils would like to study in key stage 2. Members of the 'Friends of Sikusi' group maintain strong links with a partner school in Uganda. They raise valuable funds to buy much-needed equipment and goats for the school and its community. This beneficial group raises pupils' awareness of important global issues, such as poverty and human rights. This helps many pupils to develop care and empathy towards others.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The overall quality of teaching across the school is good. There are strong working relationships between all staff and pupils and this creates a productive environment of respect, courtesy and trust. Teachers and support staff manage pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school very successfully. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for groups of pupils and individuals across the ability range.

Nearly all teachers plan learning activities that have clear objectives and that build upon pupils' existing knowledge and understanding successfully as they move through the school. Most planned activities stimulate and engage most pupils well. For example, younger pupils learn to read and follow instructions carefully in the outdoor area, by making a 'mud cake' for the royal wedding. Enthused Year 6 pupils produce effective creative descriptions to share with an author, whose work they have been studying, through an online video link. Most staff use questioning techniques skilfully to extend pupils' learning. For instance, they challenge pupils to explain and justify their thinking to a high level when debating which of Wales' places of interest are the most significant to Welsh culture and heritage.

Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and they meet individual pupils' needs effectively. However, in a few classes, the challenge for all pupils is not always high enough. For example, teachers in these classes tend to rely too heavily on the use of worksheets. Consequently, not all pupils develop their mathematical reasoning skills or their ability to write at length as fully as they could.

Most teachers use the 'success track' effectively to support pupils in knowing what they need to do to be successful in their learning. Many key stage 2 pupils use these criteria well to check on their progress in tasks during lesson 'pit-stops' and they help each other to improve their work. Recently, there have been improvements in the effectiveness of teachers' written feedback to pupils. This helps pupils to know what they have done well and what they need to do to make further progress. For instance, teachers often pose useful questions that support pupils to revisit their work and to make purposeful improvements to it. However, in a few classes, the quality of teachers' feedback to pupils is less helpful.

The school's planned curriculum is varied and interesting and this has a positive impact on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers respond well to pupils' ideas when planning learning activities. For example, in the foundation phase, they plan opportunities for pupils to create 'wanted' posters for the wolf in the little red riding hood story at pupils' request. Useful curriculum maps help to ensure that stimulating topics, such as 'Children of the revolution', provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their subject skills and to apply their literacy and numeracy skills effectively as they move through the school.

Recently, the school has adopted a suitable scheme of work for ICT. However, this does not yet incorporate fully into the school's planning. As a result, pupils do not have consistent opportunities to build on their previous ICT skills over time, particularly in communication.

There is a good range of educational visits linked to topics and themes that stimulate pupils' interests and help to develop pupils' awareness of Welsh history and culture. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit Swansea Bay when studying the Blitz in the Second World War. Across the school, staff provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills effectively throughout the school day.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has a caring and inclusive ethos and staff nurture pupils' personal and social skills well. The learning resource classes provide a calm and effective environment in which pupils play and learn successfully. Staff manage pupils' behaviour positively and consistently. As a result, the atmosphere across the whole school is happy and purposeful.

Across the school, there is a strong emphasis on respecting others and ensuring that everyone receives fair treatment. The school has a comprehensive programme of personal and social education, which staff reinforce effectively. They provide useful opportunities for pupils to reflect on their values and beliefs during collective worship and take forward pupils' spiritual development well. For example, pupils consider thoughtfully whether they ever jump to conclusions about other people. As a result, most pupils display tolerant and kind attitudes towards others.

Leaders track and monitor pupils' progress effectively through well-established systems and maintain a clear overview of the progress that groups and individuals make over time. They identify pupils who require additional learning support or challenge quickly and accurately. Staff plan effective intervention programmes to meet pupils with identified needs. For example, small groups of older pupils who are particularly able mathematicians work successfully on higher-level mathematics projects in school and at home. Leaders and managers maintain a clear system for staff to identify pupils who are in need of emotional support and they ensure that trained staff provide effective support to those identified.

There are thoughtful and well-considered learning plans for those pupils who need them. These highlight what each pupil needs to achieve and the best way to support them to do so. Pupils have good opportunities to incorporate their thoughts and feelings into these plans. Staff use this information well to enhance and adapt their teaching. As a result, nearly all of these pupils make good progress against their personal targets.

The school has a wide range of partnerships with other schools and organisations, which it uses well to provide beneficial support for pupils. For example, teachers from the secondary school teach the oldest pupils regularly to prepare them for their transition to their new school environment. The school makes good use of specialist expertise, such as speech and language support, to enhance pupils' progress.

Staff provide pupils with suitable opportunities to take on responsibilities through pupil groups, for example the eco-committee and junior road safety officers, which raise pupils' awareness of environmental and community issues. The school's purposeful long-term partnership with a school in Uganda helps pupils to develop a strong insight into another culture.

The school choir, music tuition and art club support pupils' creative development successfully. The school offers a range of well-attended extra-curricular sports clubs, as well as good opportunities for pupils to exercise during the school day. Police officers visit the school to offer valuable guidance to pupils on how to keep themselves safe and the road safety officer supports pupils beneficially with their local traffic safety campaign. Overall, the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking, which pupils and parents understand well and support. However, on Fridays, pupils bring 'treats' to school from home, which undermines the school's positive focus on healthy eating and drinking.

The school builds positive relationships with parents. Informative newsletters, the school website and social media update them regularly with useful information about what their child is learning and identifies ways they can help or become involved in the school's work. For example, the school held valuable workshops for parents about new approaches to the teaching of mathematics. This whole-school approach has contributed positively to the improvements in pupils' calculation skills. Staff involve parents and outside professionals well when reviewing the progress of pupils with additional learning needs.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher and senior leaders work effectively as a team to provide clear strategic direction for the school. They aim to ensure that pupils' learning experiences and the quality of teaching contribute to their vision of raising standards and developing pupils as independent learners. For example, senior leaders' focus on improving pupils' reading and spelling has led to improved outcomes in literacy.

Leaders at all levels take responsibility for promoting school improvement conscientiously. They share responsibilities through a purposeful faculty system. This places all teachers into groups of practitioners under the guidance of a senior or middle leader. These faculties work effectively as teams, allowing staff to share ideas and expertise productively and to contribute to improvement initiatives. For example, the languages faculty has ensured a more consistent focus on Welsh throughout the curriculum. As a result, most pupils use the Welsh language well. Leaders use performance management systems competently to identify staff training needs and to target strategic priorities. Nearly all staff have a clear understanding of their role in whole-school improvement initiatives and they support strategic priorities effectively.

Leaders recognise and respond to local and national priorities successfully. For example, their strong focus on improving pupils' literacy, numeracy and Welsh skills ensures that most pupils make effective progress in these important areas.

Governors are highly supportive of the school and fulfil their duties conscientiously. For example, they collaborate very effectively with leaders to manage complex staffing issues sensitively and rigorously. They monitor the school's budget closely and they have a solid understanding of the school's performance when compared with similar schools. They scrutinise the school's self-evaluation report and development plan suitably and they have an appropriate understanding of the school's improvement priorities. However, they have few opportunities to gather first-hand knowledge of the school and this limits their ability to challenge leaders robustly.

Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They analyse pupil progress data regularly and they undertake a useful range of monitoring activities, such as the scrutiny of pupils' books and observations of the quality of teaching. As a result, overall, they identify well where provision is effective and where they need to make improvement. However, leaders do not seek the views of parents often enough in their self-evaluation processes.

Leaders make good use of their own monitoring and the outcomes of external reviews, such as those provided by the local consortium, to identify improvement priorities appropriately. However, leaders do not always monitor the school's progress towards achieving these methodically as the year progresses. This means that they are not always fully aware of the impact of the changes that they make or how successfully staff implement initiatives until they carry out their end-of-year reviews. This means that less effective practice can continue for too long before leaders address this.

Leaders work closely with colleagues in other institutions on a range of projects and joint training that increases teachers' professional knowledge and benefits pupils well. For example, in collaboration with schools in the local cluster, leaders organised training for staff in techniques for them to develop pupils' writing skills. Teachers implement these new strategies skilfully in school and, as a result, many pupils develop effective writing skills.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school has an appropriate level of staffing and learning resources to deliver the planned curriculum appropriately. The school provides an attractive environment, both indoors and out, in which pupils learn and play successfully. Leaders link expenditure to strategic priorities and staff training effectively. The school maintains a small budget deficit, but leaders and governors have appropriate plans to reduce this over time. They oversee the allocation of grants, such as the pupil development grant, competently.

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.

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