



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

A report on

**Pontarddulais Primary School
Upper James Street
Pontarddulais
Swansea
SA4 8JD**

Date of inspection: June 2018

by

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

About Pontarddulais Primary School

Pontarddulais Primary School is in the town of Pontarddulais in the City and County of Swansea. There are 481 pupils aged three to eleven years on roll, including 75 part-time pupils in the nursery. There are 16 single-year classes, including two nursery classes.

Around 21% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is slightly above the average for Wales of 19%. The school identifies 34% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is higher than the national average of 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A very few are in the care of the local authority. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity and a very few pupils have English as an additional language. A very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

The school is currently a pioneer school and is working with the Welsh Government and other schools to proceed with developments relating to professional learning.

The current headteacher took up his post in September 2017. The school's previous inspection was in January 2011.

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

Pupils at Pontarddulais Primary School are proud of their school and show high levels of engagement during lessons and other learning experiences. As they move through the school, most pupils, particularly those with additional learning needs, make at least good progress in their learning. Pupil focus groups contribute increasingly well to the life of the school and nearly all pupils show a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities as ethical and informed citizens.

The new headteacher and deputy headteacher set the strategic direction of the school and share their vision effectively with the whole school community. The school's focus on developing leaders across the school contributes well to the strong team ethos and the implementation of the priorities for improvement. They have high expectations of staff and pupils and communicate these clearly. This is having a positive impact on the provision and pupils' standards across the school.

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 Improve the quality of pupils' extended writing skills in key stage 2
- R2 Ensure that all teachers' planning is of a consistently high quality
- R3 Sharpen monitoring so that it identifies more clearly the specific aspects that require improvement

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 the purposeful use of the outdoor areas to develop pupils' skills progressively in the foundation phase, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils make at least good progress in their learning as they move through the school, including those with additional learning needs. In the foundation phase, pupils make good progress in developing their literacy skills. In Years 1 and 2, many communicate their thoughts and feelings clearly. For example, they describe their reasons for making recycled paper and how recycling can help the environment. Most pupils develop their reading skills well. They use their knowledge of phonics to decode unfamiliar words and, by Year 2, many read fluently. They discuss the plot and characters from their books, using suitable detail. Most foundation phase pupils write for a wide range of audiences and purposes. Most Year 2 pupils use basic punctuation appropriately and present their work neatly using a legible, joined script. More able pupils sequence their work and extend their sentences to provide interesting details. They write at length, engage the interest of the reader well, and use speech and exclamation marks correctly to enhance their writing.

Most pupils in key stage 2 speak and listen confidently and convey their opinions clearly. For example, they listen carefully to each other, make valid contributions and ask suitable questions when making pizza. Most develop good reading skills. They read with accurate intonation and fluency and express opinions about their books. Year 6 pupils use inference and deduction well to extract information from a range of text. Across key stage 2, most pupils write appropriately in a range of forms and use different sentence structures and paragraphs to organise their writing. They use an appropriate range of punctuation, and spelling is generally accurate. However, a minority of pupils in key stage 2 do not always present their work neatly and do not write at length regularly or consistently well. Only a minority of pupils choose adventurous vocabulary or use literary devices for effect.

Most pupils have a very positive attitude to learning Welsh and use the language with growing confidence in a suitable range of contexts. Most foundation phase pupils understand and follow simple instructions well and use a few words and phrases regularly. As they progress through key stage 2, most speak well in the present and past tense, using correct pronunciation and adding detail to their answers. Many write in Welsh well for a wide variety of purposes, for example when writing animal fact files when studying Botswana. They increasingly use the correct sentence structure, vocabulary and mutations. Most pupils read back their own work successfully and read fairly fluently from a suitable range of books, showing a good understanding of what they have read.

In the foundation phase, nearly all pupils develop their numeracy skills progressively. Nursery pupils recognise numbers to 10 and group toy snakes correctly according to size. By Year 2, most use their numeracy skills well to solve problems. For example, they interpret a graph of rainfall in Brazil to identify the wettest month. More able pupils in Year 2 convert fractions to decimals competently and check their work using inverse operations. In key stage 2, most pupils develop a secure understanding of number and other mathematical concepts. They use their reasoning skills well to solve problems and real-life scenarios across the curriculum. For example, most Year 4 pupils calculate the best deals to replenish a paramedic's First Aid kit. In

Year 6, many calculate interest on a loan to fit an en-suite bathroom in Rapunzel's tower and determine whether Jack can afford the mortgage based on his income and allowances. More able pupils develop a good understanding of how to use algebra to create a general rule that applies to solving multiple problems.

Nearly all pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) purposefully to support their learning when researching a topic, handling data, programming, presenting and communicating information. In Year 2, many pupils create an image of themselves on a green screen with a giant minibeast behind them to describe what life would be like if the children were minibeasts. Most pupils access Wales' virtual learning platform and navigate their way to relevant software to access their work. Many key stage 2 pupils use spreadsheets and databases successfully to manipulate data and search for information.

Many pupils in the foundation phase develop their physical skills well. They ride a range of tricycles and scooters and use the forest school confidently to take measured risks and explore the natural environment. Across the school, most pupils develop their creativity well. In the foundation phase, they work independently to create attractive night lights for 'The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark', considering the suitability of the materials they use. Key stage 2 pupils produce high quality, imaginative three dimensional work using everyday objects, such as nuts and bolts, linked to their work on Welsh culture.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe, well cared for and valued. They are respectful and tolerant of one another in classes and on the playground. The work of the Rights Respecting Champions supports this well and nearly all recognise the importance of their rights and responsibilities across the school. The positive interaction and strong levels of collaboration among pupils of all ages, at work and play, are a strong feature of the school. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in all areas of the school. Nearly all are proud of their school and greet adults and other pupils confidently and respectfully. They know who they can ask for help with work or any other issues that may arise. They understand how to stay safe, including when using the internet.

Most pupils understand the need to eat and drink healthily and to take regular exercise. The pupil-led School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) ensures that nearly all pupils realise the importance of bringing a healthy lunchbox to school and eating a healthy snack. The school council organises a daily fruit tuck shop, which supports this work well. Many pupils take part in a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, including rugby and netball in order to improve their health and fitness. Playground friends support this well by encouraging pupils to play cooperatively and join in with activities and games during playtime. Members of the eco committee encourage all pupils to care for their environment and to act sustainably. For instance, they encourage all pupils to bring their own drinking bottles to school to keep hydrated and reduce waste. In general, nearly all the pupil voice groups contribute well to the work of the school and teach pupils about the importance of taking on responsibilities and caring for each other. For example, the school council identified the need to buy sports equipment for pupils' use during playtimes, which contributes well to their wellbeing and fitness.

Nearly all pupils work diligently in lessons and show strong levels of engagement and collaboration. They settle to work quickly and work purposefully as they carry out tasks individually, in pairs or in groups. Most pupils persevere when faced with challenges and use different strategies well in order to succeed, for example the 'five point plan' strategy to try overcome challenges. They sustain concentration for long periods of time and engage well throughout lessons and learning experiences. They show respect for each other and listen carefully to others' suggestions.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers have recently adapted their planning to reflect the four core principles and the areas of learning and experience of the new national curriculum developmental model. This allows flexibility in planning and creates purposeful opportunities for pupils to use their skills across a wide range of learning areas. As a result, many teachers plan effectively to provide relevant and exciting learning experiences for pupils. This helps to ensure that pupils build on their skills and knowledge progressively as they move through the school. The majority of teachers include pupils increasingly in their learning, particularly in planning interesting and learning experiences based on what they already know and what they want to learn. This encourages them to engage fully in their learning and to build on previous learning successfully.

In the foundation phase, teachers organise termly topics and themes strategically in order to develop pupils' skills effectively. For example, a range of exciting learning experiences based on the story 'The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark' develops pupils' literacy skills well. A strong feature of the foundation phase provision is the way staff plan the activities in their outdoor learning areas to meet the needs of pupils across all year groups. This ensures that nearly all pupils build on previous learning well and develop their skills progressively whilst accessing these exciting and stimulating areas. In key stage 2, teachers are developing their planning to ensure that pupils use their skills increasingly across a suitable range of experiences. For example, exciting and stimulating short challenges such as the Formula 1 and 'Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics' (STEM) projects allow pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy, science and thinking skills in real life situations. This also develops pupils' ability to apply themselves in new, unfamiliar experiences and ideas successfully. However, teachers' planning in key stage 2 remains inconsistent, with areas of the curriculum not always being developed progressively across all year groups. Although many teachers plan appropriately for the development of writing across key stage 2, they do not plan to develop narrative forms and extended writing consistently well.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Staff develop strong working relationships with pupils and show mutual respect for each other. Many encourage pupils skilfully to become more responsible for their learning and to become resilient and persevere when they face difficulties. Many staff have high expectations for pupils and ask purposeful questions, which promote pupils' thinking and reinforce their learning well.

Many teachers give pupils regular and purposeful feedback on what they are doing well and what they can do to improve their work. This is a strength of the foundation phase, where staff provide pupils with useful oral and written feedback to allow them to correct and improve their work. Teachers in key stage 2 use a common marking

scheme appropriately. However, they do not always provide specific enough feedback, or time, to help pupils to improve their work. Teachers across the school assess pupils' work accurately and use their assessments effectively to inform their future planning to meet individual pupils' needs.

The provision for Welsh across the school is good and the importance given to promoting the language and culture is well established. Leaders ensure that all staff have suitable opportunities to improve their own language skills in order to help pupils learn. Carefully planned Welsh language lessons link well to pupils' other learning experiences and daily routines. Teachers use the local authority's 'Welsh Language Charter' effectively to develop the use of the language across the school. For example, the school uses a wide range of purposeful displays and notices to promote pupils' use of Welsh outside the classroom.

Most teachers plan well for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through a range of purposeful cross-curricular themes and topics. This enables pupils to use their skills to enhance their learning in meaningful contexts. Teachers also ensure that pupils learn about the importance of online safety through purposeful experiences from a range of sources, including the school's digital leaders group.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Pontarddulais Primary School has a very welcoming ethos with a strong focus on respect, rights and responsibilities. The school provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to share their opinions and take responsibility in a wide range of pupil-led forums. For example, members of the Safety Squad work with the school's site manager to ensure a safe and attractive learning environment. A strong feature of pupil voice in the foundation phase is the way in which staff encourage the younger pupils to contribute ideas and suggestions about what they want to learn. This reflection and planning (RAP) time ensures that nearly all pupils engage well in exciting pupil-led activities in the indoor and outdoor learning areas.

The school has worthwhile arrangements for promoting pupils' healthy eating and drinking. A wide range of sports, structured playtime games and extra-curricular experiences and clubs promote health and fitness well. Members of the pupil-led 'SNAG' group support this work effectively, for example through promoting the benefits of healthy lunch boxes. The school places a high value on good behaviour and has appropriate procedures in place to prevent bullying. Pupils have written the school's code of conduct, which promotes good standards of behaviour well. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Teachers use a comprehensive assessment and tracking system well to monitor pupil progress effectively. This helps them to identify pupils who may require additional help or challenge in their work. Staff use purposeful assessments to measure pupils' language and communication skills on entry to the school in order to provide early support. Teachers use regular pupil progress meetings well to monitor the progress of pupils and to discuss possible intervention strategies.

Provision for pupils who require additional support is effective. The additional learning needs co-ordinator supports teachers and support staff well to ensure good quality provision for these pupils. They use a wide range of assessment strategies, and the 'provision pyramids' help staff to identify pupils' needs and plan purposeful support. Well-trained staff deliver a range of beneficial intervention programmes and use other strategies effectively to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as well as their emotional and wellbeing needs. The school's family liaison officer works alongside staff to support vulnerable pupils and their families, for example to improve their attendance and wellbeing.

The school works well with parents and carers to ensure that they can contribute purposefully to their child's learning. All parents receive useful information about their children's progress through parents' evenings and informative end-of-year pupil reports. The school's social media feed is particularly effective in keeping parents and carers informed of the work of the school.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual and cultural development well through a wide range of cultural activities, events and visits. For example, pupils visit local churches and chapels to participate in celebratory events to enrich their learning experiences. Pupils also perform at the annual 'Primary Partners' concert with other local schools. These experiences help to foster pupils' self-confidence and their expressive capacities well.

Leadership and management: Good

Since their appointment, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked effectively with all staff, governors and pupils to develop a shared vision for the school and to review its aims. Leaders have high expectations of staff and pupils and communicate these clearly. The wellbeing of pupils and staff has a high priority. Leaders promote a strong collaborative ethos within the school and they listen carefully to the views of others and address concerns promptly. The school has expanded its leadership team to include middle leaders and all members of the team understand their roles and responsibilities in school improvement.

A particular focus of the school's work is to review its curriculum and teaching practices in line with its role as a pioneer school and to respond positively to the challenges of developing a new curriculum for schools in Wales. This work is at an early stage of development, but leaders have considered carefully how best to plan to nurture the core purposes of the Curriculum for Wales and to develop a stimulating and exciting curriculum for all pupils. They have identified what has worked well and aspects that need to be developed further to make sure that all pupils make strong progress in their skill development across the curriculum. For example, they have tried to introduce more opportunities for creative activities to inspire pupils and make learning fun.

Governors know the school well and understand their role in providing support and challenge well. The governing body acts purposefully to support new leaders and it has developed an extremely useful strategic plan to guide its work. As a result, all governors know their roles and responsibilities in securing school improvement. They have a firm understanding of school performance and consider well how they can be most effective in assisting the work of new leaders. Governors have audited

their skills to identify strengths and gaps in the expertise of the governing body that they may consider when recruiting new governors.

The school has suitable processes to evaluate its performance and to plan for improvement. Staff, pupils, parents and governors contribute effectively to the self-evaluation process and identify areas for improvement, such as communication with parents. Leaders respond promptly, where possible, and have improved channels of communication as a result. Staff use suitable processes to monitor provision and the standards pupils achieve, but this monitoring is not always robust enough to identify accurately specific areas that require improvement, such as improving the quality of pupils' writing in upper key stage 2. Areas identified for improvement feed appropriately into the school's development plan. This contains a suitable number of priorities, but, in a few instances, there are too many actions to complete effectively within the timescale.

There are effective procedures to manage the performance of staff, and leaders plan suitably to address any training needs. Staff have good opportunities to share good practice across the school and with other schools. The partnership with University of Wales Trinity St David to support teachers with their initial training helps staff to develop their coaching and mentoring skills and provides valuable opportunities for a few staff to develop their leadership skills.

Senior leaders and governors manage the school's resources well. They ensure that there are enough appropriate teachers and support staff to meet the needs of pupils. They have overseen the development of the school's outdoor learning spaces well. This has enhanced the foundation phase curriculum considerably. The school has shown a strong commitment to implementing national priorities, for example in developing its pupils' Welsh language skills. Leaders use the pupil development grant well to support the learning of vulnerable pupils and to increase their opportunities, for example by funding a local artist to develop their creative skills to a high level.

Copies of the report

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

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

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

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

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

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Publication date: 20/08/2018