



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

**A report on**

**Rhydypenau Primary School  
Fidlas Avenue  
Llanishen  
CF14 0NX**

**Date of inspection: March 2018**

**by**

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

## About Rhydypenau Primary School

Rhydypenau Primary School is in Llanishen, Cardiff. There are 531 pupils on roll, between the ages of three and eleven years, including 80 part-time nursery pupils. There are 18 classes at the school.

Around 4% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is much lower than the Wales average of 19%. The school identifies that around 7% of pupils have additional learning needs. This figure is well below the Wales average of 21%. Around 31% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and 23% speak English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh at home. There are very few looked after children at the school.

The school's most recent inspection took place in October 2011. The headteacher took up post in September 2016.

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

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

Overall, pupils at Rhydypenau Primary School make very good progress and achieve excellent standards by the time they leave the school. They develop outstanding literacy skills and a very strong capacity to solve number problems. Nearly all pupils have exceptional attitudes to learning. They are keen to undertake challenges and to achieve high standards in all that they do. Rates of pupils' attendance are consistently high. Pupils have a very strong say in what and how they learn. They work with staff to shape a vibrant and engaging curriculum. As a result, learning experiences match pupils' needs and interests particularly well. Teachers plan comprehensively to support pupils to develop and apply their skills in real life learning contexts. Provision to develop pupils' creative skills is excellent, especially in music. School leadership is highly effective and inspires staff to work collaboratively to achieve the best possible standards of teaching, learning and levels of wellbeing for pupils.

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

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Improve provision to develop pupils' understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyle choices and broaden the range of physical education experiences
- R2 Further improve communication between school and parents

## **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 its provision to develop pupils' literacy skills through the creative arts, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main findings

### Standards: Excellent

Most pupils start school with skills that are equal to or above those expected for their age. Overall, they make very good progress and achieve high standards by the end of key stage 2, especially in all aspects of literacy. Across the school, pupils that are new to the English language make very good progress from their individual starting points.

Most pupils have very well developed speaking and listening skills when they join the school. For example, nursery pupils use complete sentences when talking about the role-play house. As they move through the foundation phase, most pupils build effectively upon their strong starting points and use their speaking and listening skills successfully in many contexts. In key stage 2, most pupils have excellent speaking and listening skills. They listen attentively during ensemble music productions and appraise their work with well-chosen vocabulary, for instance when composing a piece about the journey of the River Taff. Overall, pupils' outstanding capacity to understand and use language to such a high level is extremely significant in supporting them to achieve very well in many areas of learning.

In the foundation phase, most pupils read well. Younger pupils develop a firm understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds. Over time, most pupils read a suitable range of fiction and non-fiction books fluently taking good account of punctuation. More able pupils read confidently with good levels of expression and comprehension. Year 2 pupils apply their reading skills well in topic work, for example when ranking the physical attributes of owls in priority order. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils read expressively from challenging texts with excellent levels of understanding. They use a wide range of higher-order skills effectively, for example to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words using contextual clues.

Overall, standards of pupils' written work at the school are outstanding. Most Year 2 pupils spell common words accurately. They present work neatly and use adjectives successfully, for example when writing to describe different types of birds. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils write at length for a wide range of purposes and audiences to a very high standard. They use an extensive vocabulary and a variety of literary techniques well, for example to create imagery to enhance their work. They plan their writing particularly well with high levels of independence. Nearly all pupils apply their writing skills exceptionally well in their work across the curriculum. For example, pupils write high quality non-chronological pieces about hurricanes in Puerto Rico that paint dramatic pictures of events.

Across the school, most pupils have strong mathematical skills for their age. They work confidently with number, shape, space and measure. They present and interpret data effectively. As they move through the school, many pupils develop excellent mathematical problem solving and reasoning skills. For example, most Year 6 pupils work systematically to find out how many peaches a monkey will have left if he eats a specific fraction of a total each day. Overall, pupils apply their numerical skills well in their work across the curriculum. For example, key stage 2 pupils use multiplication strategies effectively to calculate the size of carbon footprints in a topic on climate change.

Across the school, most pupils use a wide range of information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to support their learning. In the foundation phase, pupils programme floor robots and tablet devices successfully to follow instructions. Most key stage 2 pupils apply ICT skills independently to enhance their work. They work confidently with spreadsheets, for example to calculate the costs of supporting victims from the Grenfell Tower disaster. They also produce engaging digital movies, for instance to present characteristics of mystery writing.

In the foundation phase, most pupils follow instructions and respond to basic Welsh with understanding and enthusiasm. They engage positively in conversations to express their feelings and produce written work of an appropriate standard. A few more able pupils write extended independent pieces in Welsh, for example to create a simple dialogue between friends. Most key stage 2 pupils speak confidently about familiar topics such as the weather. They use a good range of vocabulary and sentence patterns in the past, present and future tenses. They produce written work of a good standard and read this work with accurate pronunciation. A few pupils in Year 6 choose to use Welsh independently in response to teachers' questions outside of Welsh lessons.

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

Nearly all pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and engage very well in tasks. In relation to their ages and stages of development, nearly all pupils sustain concentration and persevere for significant periods. This supports them to achieve very high standards. Many pupils in key stage 2 complete a substantial amount of interesting work to a high standard in lessons, for example when preparing their thoughts for an argument for and against school uniform. Younger pupils in the foundation phase, concentrate well to complete chosen tasks independently. Most pupils work well in collaboration with others. For example, in Year 6, pupils consider carefully the views of others as well as their own when discussing the plight of polar bears in the wake of global warming. They listen and respond with empathy and compassion.

Pupils' attendance is excellent and has placed the school in the top 25% when compared with similar schools in each of the last four years. Nearly all pupils undertake activities with confidence and maturity. They behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They are extremely courteous and polite to each other, to staff and to visitors. Nearly all pupils know who to turn to if they feel worried or upset. Over time, they develop a strong understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet.

Pupils have a very strong say in whole school planning. They identify what and how they want to learn in topics regularly. For example, older pupils planned their learning about the human and financial cost of the Grenfell Tower disaster. Pupils' ability to improve their own learning is an outstanding feature. For example, most older pupils collaborate effectively with their assessment partners to use success criteria to redraft their written work to a very high standard. Many pupils demonstrate maturity and skill when evaluating what they have achieved and what they should improve within their work.

Many pupils take on additional responsibilities successfully. In the key stage 2 playground, monitors organise equipment effectively to help others to enjoy playtimes. Digital leaders play an important role within the school. They make presentations in assembly, give guidance to other pupils and staff and ensure that equipment is ready for use. Their work supports the development of pupils' ICT skills effectively. Older pupils make a significant contribution to fostering a love of reading in younger pupils, for example by working as reading buddies. Overall, pupils make informed choices and decisions about many matters that affect them directly at school. However, they do not always make healthy food and drink choices at break and lunch times.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent**

Overall, the quality of teaching is excellent. Nearly all teachers expect pupils to make very good progress in lessons and to achieve high standards. Adults establish strong working relationships with pupils. This promotes positive attitudes to learning among nearly all pupils. Teachers plan sequences of lessons that build successfully on pupils' prior learning, for instance to develop writing skills progressively to a high standard. Teachers generally provide work that challenges most pupils at the right level, often through effective grouping arrangements. This leads to very good levels of engagement and progress in learning. Most teachers make effective use of success criteria to support pupils to understand how to do well. Adults ask thoughtful questions in lessons to deepen pupils' understanding. Most teachers provide pupils with valuable written and oral feedback that helps them to understand what they have done well and what they might do to improve. They ensure that pupils have beneficial opportunities to evaluate their own learning and to identify their next steps for improvement.

Overall, teachers in the foundation phase work in accordance with the principles of foundation phase pedagogy. They generally ensure a suitable balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning experiences and make effective use of indoor and outdoor learning environments. Teachers have an in depth understanding of current national developments in education. For example, they are making exceptional progress in providing a vibrant curriculum that develops pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills within highly relevant and engaging contexts for learning. This results in pupils developing and applying a comprehensive range of skills and knowledge progressively as they move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 6 take part in a science and technology topic about the properties of materials where they have opportunities to apply their learning to challenging tasks. This enables them to show sophisticated approaches to organising, interpreting and presenting their work.

Arrangements to develop pupils' literacy skills are exceptional. They ensure that pupils build progressively on prior learning and develop a considerable depth of understanding, for example about how to write for different audiences and purposes while developing strong spelling, grammatical and organisational skills. Well-planned phonics and group guided reading sessions develop pupils' reading skills effectively. Additional strategies such as the buddy reading system promote very positive attitudes to reading in younger pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to apply their oracy skills to a very high standard, for example through a play in a day about the Second World War.

Provision to develop pupils' numerical skills is successful. In particular, the school's arrangements to develop pupils' problem solving and reasoning skills are very strong. For example, teachers challenge Year 2 pupils to solve multi-step problems and in Year 6 more able pupils work systematically to prove or disprove mathematical theories through reasoning activities in the context of prime numbers.

The school's provision to develop pupils' ICT skills is effective. This is evident in the opportunities pupils receive to use their digital skills to support, extend and present their learning across the curriculum. For example, pupils have opportunities to use applications and software packages to plan their writing and enhance the production of their work, for instance to demonstrate their learning about world faiths.

Provision for music at the school is an outstanding feature. All pupils receive exciting opportunities to play instruments and to learn about aspects of the curriculum through music. For example, pupils in Year 5 learn about the journey of the River Taff from source to mouth through composing and performing.

Nearly all teachers model the Welsh language positively. They plan lessons that enable pupils to develop their speaking, reading and writing skills successfully. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales, for example through learning traditional Welsh songs, studying Welsh artists and authors and visits to places of interest, such as Big Pit.

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

The school is a caring community with an inclusive ethos. Arrangements for the care, support and guidance of pupils make a significant contribution to their wellbeing, personal development and the high standards that they achieve. All staff promote co-operative values exceptionally well and most pupils apply these consistently in their daily lives. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development successfully. Regular assemblies reinforce a range of important messages such as equality for all through stories from the bible and other sacred books. These activities develop nearly all pupils' skills and abilities to deal very effectively with different situations, empathise with others and discuss issues in a mature manner. There are effective arrangements to develop pupils' understanding of different faiths and culture. For example, parents volunteer to visit the school to teach pupils about the beliefs and traditions from a variety of countries and faiths.

The school's provision ensures that nearly all pupils' behaviour and self-discipline is exemplary. Staff treat all pupils with great respect and encourage them to become enthusiastic learners. As a result, nearly all pupils show enjoyment and pride in their work and persevere with their tasks for extended periods. A strong feature of the school's provision is the support most pupils receive to understand their strengths and to explain confidently what they need to do to improve.

The staff provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to perform in school, and within the local and wider community, for example through singing activities with 'The Goldies', a group of local senior citizens. Regular participation in competitive games, dramatic productions, orchestral performances and Urdd competitions support pupils to develop self-confidence and pride in themselves and the ability to work with



others. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to take exercise through physical education lessons, extra-curricular activities and games at playtimes but these focus on a limited range of skills. The school's arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking are not always effective in supporting pupils to make healthy lifestyle choices. Staff offer a valuable range of extra-curricular clubs including the Urdd Club, Boys' Choir and Choir. These develop pupils' skills and interests in a range of areas. For example, the Urdd Club use ICT to develop digital books to extend the foundation phase pupils' Welsh vocabulary.

There are successful procedures to track pupils' progress and to monitor their wellbeing. Leaders review these frequently to identify appropriate support for pupils as their needs arise or change. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is effective. Staff identify pupils' needs at an early stage. The provision of early support for individual pupils and a range of intervention groups to support and develop pupils' emotional and basic skills has a positive effect on their progress. The school prepares comprehensive individual education plans containing pupil friendly targets, which staff monitor and review regularly. The school has very strong links with a number of specialist agencies that ensure high quality support and guidance for pupils and parents. As a result, individuals receive effective provision to meet their needs. For example, most pupils who have English as an additional language receive effective support and make very good progress during their time at school.

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

### **Leadership and management: Excellent**

The headteacher and other senior leaders provide strong and dynamic leadership. This motivates and inspires all members of staff to work together to achieve the best possible standards of teaching, learning and levels of wellbeing for pupils. The school is a creative learning organisation where staff and pupils are secure enough to take risks, make mistakes and experiment to develop learning in a highly supportive environment. All staff understand their roles and responsibilities within a cohesive and close team, where innovation is valued, for example in the development of a child-centred and engaging curriculum that motivates and enthuses nearly all pupils. At the heart of this, pupils' ideas and interests inform and shape topic work in all year groups. Leaders share this pioneering curriculum work widely with other schools across Wales as part of the Welsh Government's curriculum review.

The governing body has a strong presence in the school and the chair provides effective leadership. Governors make good use of sub-committees to influence overall decision-making that contributes well to the school's strategic direction. Members act as critical friends when necessary, for example to challenge leaders to ensure high levels of achievement at the higher-than-expected outcomes and levels.

Self-evaluation is a highly effective process that links closely to and informs school improvement priorities, performance management and professional learning for staff. Senior leaders are exceptionally good at developing colleagues to ensure consistency of practice and high quality learning throughout the school. The headteacher and senior leaders know the school well and set clear, manageable and

focused priorities for improvement. As a result, most pupils' across the school have improved their writing skills and produce extended interesting and engaging pieces for a wide range of purposes and audiences. For instance, pupils in Year 6 write thought provoking 'raps' about racism, which they set to music and perform.

The school seeks the views of parents regularly and is working to improve communication strategies in response to parental feedback. As a result, there is now greater administrative support in the school office to improve the quality of written communication and a mobile phone application allows parents regular access to interesting information about their child's class activities. However, better communication between the senior leaders and parents remains a priority for development. Leaders value pupils' views and opinions and these help to shape the direction of the school. For example, pupil representatives were important panel members at the interviews of the current headteacher and deputy headteacher.

A wealth of professional development activities within and outside the school, enable staff to enhance their skills continually. These opportunities focus well on raising standards of teaching and learning, for example in the development of pupils' ability to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively in a wide range of work across the curriculum. Senior leaders support other staff and pupils well to take responsibility for their own development as educators and learners, particularly through the innovative pioneer curriculum work where pupils have a strong influence over what and how they learn. This contributes immensely to the excellent standards that pupils achieve.

The school benefits from careful and creative budget management. Leaders take a flexible approach to the deployment of staff to make the best of their talents and interests. This ensures support in vital areas, for example to improve pupils' basic skills in certain year groups. Cover arrangements to teach music in teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time develop pupils' creative skills to a high level. This is an excellent and long-standing leadership strategy to develop literacy through the expressive arts. The provision encourages pupils to write and perform their own compositions for a range of purposes and audiences, such as through an assembly presented by more able pupils to highlight the problems of racism. This work had a notable effect on raising pupils' levels of wellbeing and resulted in pupils winning an award for their creative writing at a national level.

## Copies of the report

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

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

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

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

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

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