



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

A report on

**Trealaw Primary School
Miskin Road
Trealaw
Tonypany
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF40 2QW**

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by

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

About Trealaw Primary School

Trealaw Primary School is in the village of Trealaw in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

There are currently 160 pupils on roll between the ages of three and eleven. There are five mixed-age classes and a nursery class with 18 part-time and five full-time pupils. The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 41%, which is well above the national average of 19%.

The school identifies 36% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is well above than the average of 21%. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity and come from homes where English is the main language. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher took up the post of acting headteacher in September 2010, and became the substantive headteacher in July 2012. The school's last inspection was in July 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

The headteacher works conscientiously with staff and has developed a strong team over time to support pupils' wellbeing effectively. All pupils enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is good and they have a very positive attitude to learning. Pupils make varying degrees of progress as they move through the school, although many achieve good standards by the end of the foundation phase. The provision for supporting pupils with additional learning needs is effective and nearly all these pupils make good progress against their targets.

Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support pupils' learning. However, teachers' planning across the school does not ensure enough challenge for pupils. There are important areas for development in assessment and curriculum planning.

Planning for improvement lacks drive and this means that, over time, many important issues remain as areas the school needs to address, for example to improve pupils' writing and the achievements of pupils who are more able.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the effectiveness of school improvement planning
- R2 Ensure that teaching across the school challenges all pupils, particularly those who are more able
- R3 Develop the numeracy skills of key stage 2 pupils
- R4 Ensure that pupils improve their ability to write at length
- R5 Improve standards in Welsh
- R6 Raise pupils' attendance

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

Most pupils' skills on entry to the school are low. During their time at the school, many make suitable progress from their starting points. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in line with their targets. More able pupils do not achieve higher enough standards, including those who are eligible for free school meals.

Many pupils' oral skills are developing well. They listen attentively to presentations and respond appropriately. For example, the youngest pupils in the foundation phase discuss confidently how a piece of jelly smells and feels and they make mature observations about its changing shape in water. By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils speak enthusiastically about their work and use an increasing range of relevant vocabulary and sentence patterns correctly. By Year 6, many express their ideas clearly and accurately, for example when debating about the pros and cons of hunting.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop their early reading skills effectively. By the end of the foundation phase, many read fluently and re-tell stories confidently. They discuss their favourite characters well. Most pupils use their phonics skills successfully when reading unfamiliar words. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils read correctly with an understanding that is consistent with their age and ability. They discuss the main events and characters in their current books effectively. Most pupils gather information from different sources independently and successfully, for example, to write a factual report on Charles Rennie Mackintosh

Across the school, pupils' progress in writing is too variable. In the foundation phase, many pupils write well and have a sound understanding of different styles of writing. They write purposefully across a range of writing forms, such as a rhyming poem, 'Who has seen the wind?' in the style of Christina Rossetti. In key stage 2, many pupils make purposeful progress in their writing skills. The more able pupils use mature vocabulary and include appropriate facts to support their writing, for example when producing character descriptions of Aslan. However, many pupils' ability to write at length independently in their literacy lessons and across other curriculum areas is limited. Standards of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work vary too much across the school.

In the foundation phase, many pupils use their numeracy skills effectively in relation to their work across the areas of learning, for example planning their way around Cardiff using time. In key stage 2, many pupils develop a sound understanding of number facts and use measurement skills correctly. For example, in their science lessons, they produce a bar graph of minibeasts found on the school yard. In Year 6, most pupils develop their number skills effectively. They apply these skills confidently to solve real-life problems, for instance to calculate the profit made on buying or selling local houses. However, across the school, pupils do not develop their knowledge of all areas of the mathematics curriculum to a suitable depth or apply their skills sufficiently in other areas of the curriculum.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe on the internet. The majority of pupils' basic information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing appropriately across the school. By the end of the foundation phase, many use tablet computers to record their work and use a variety of applications to support work in other subjects well. In key stage 2, most pupils search for information online competently and use a range of multi-media skills to present information, for example about life in Roman times, independently. However, they are only beginning to develop simple data bases and to create their own programmes.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make purposeful progress in developing basic communication skills in Welsh. By Year 2, they read their own work with suitable pronunciation. In key stage 2, most pupils' writing skills develop appropriately, for example to write their own simple dialogue. However, many pupils across the school lack confidence in speaking Welsh in less formal situations outside Welsh lessons and use limited words and phrases. The majority of pupils do not read simple texts fluently enough or with accurate pronunciation.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe in school. They know whom to approach if they have any concerns. Nearly all pupils are polite and welcoming and show respect towards each other and to adults. They show pride when talking about their school. Most pupils are caring towards each other, showing particular support to other pupils with additional needs.

Most pupils understand and have positive attitudes towards living healthy lives. For example, Year 6 pupils organise and run a fruit tuck shop each day. They know that fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet. Most pupils take part in physical activities regularly during the school week. Many pupils in key stage 2 attend after school clubs such as rugby and football and, as a result, take part in local sports competitions and tournaments. These activities contribute well to their levels of fitness and social skills.

Nearly all pupils behave well during lessons when moving around the school and during leisure time. Support from playground leaders is helping to improve pupils' behaviour and their interaction and engagement during playtimes. They respect the rights of other pupils, accept the views of others and deal well with opinions different from their own. For example, when in Year 6, pupils have a lively discussion about an extract from a film. Most pupils co-operate well when working in pairs and groups and have a positive attitude towards learning. Most pupils across the school approach each task with enthusiasm. They have high levels of concentration. For example, reception pupils complete their healthy foods shopping list before moving on to the next task. Most pupils have purposeful recall of their previous learning and apply this to their work when, for instance, discussing the life and times of Saint David. A few pupils in the foundation phase are beginning to make independent decisions about their own learning.

Most pupils are very glad of the opportunities that they receive to develop valuable leadership skills. The newly established Criw Cymraeg take their roles seriously as classroom helpers to ensure that adults and fellow pupils use Welsh phrases and

sentence patterns daily. Pupils in Year 6 take on responsibilities maturely as digital leaders. They ensure that younger pupils look after digital equipment appropriately and that they have a clear understanding of how to stay safe on line. All pupils in the eco warriors and the school council represent the pupil voice purposefully. They encourage all pupils to recycle and reuse materials and they have made recent improvements to the school environment to enable pupils to use play equipment to develop their physical skills during breaktime. This also has a positive effect on their wellbeing.

Most pupils develop their social and life skills well through a range of events throughout the year. For instance, many pupils in key stage 2 engage well in enterprise projects such as designing and selling Christmas cards and bookmarks. Most pupils have a developing understanding of their global responsibilities, and sense of fairness and equality through their links with a school in Uganda. Year 2 pupils are developing a strong empathy towards children without clean water by supporting a sporting national charity event. In addition, the school council has adopted a dog from a local animal charity. This has strengthened many pupils' sense of responsibility successfully.

Attendance rates place the school below the average when compared with similar schools over the last three years. Many pupils are punctual in the morning.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

The school's curriculum provides interesting and engaging learning experiences through its termly topics, for example the themed work around the 'Ice Kingdom' in Year 6. Through purposeful planning, teachers ensure that tasks are appropriate for the range of ability and that there are relevant opportunities in the plans to ensure that pupils build suitably on previous learning. The school plans for a number of visits and visitors, which effectively broadens pupils' knowledge of the local and wider community. For example, pupils in the foundation phase visit Cardiff Bay, and representatives from a science exploration centre discuss Victorian medicine with the older pupils in key stage 2. The school offers an effective range of extra-curricular activities such as football, cookery, pottery and an ICT club.

Overall, the quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. This is because the whole school has not developed good enough strategies to ensure a purposeful challenge to stretch pupils, particularly those who are more able. Overuse of worksheets also inhibits the development of pupils' writing and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Despite this, all teachers and support staff manage pupils' behaviour well. The working relationship between pupils and adults at the school creates a very friendly and caring ethos. Teachers remind pupils of their previous learning appropriately and introduce learning objectives clearly. Many use open-ended questions to improve pupils' understanding and to help them elaborate on their answers. All teachers use a variety of learning methods and interesting activities to engage pupils well. Teachers succeed in creating an appropriate environment in which most pupils feel safe and eager to learn.

Teachers' use of assessment for learning strategies is developing suitably. They introduce learning objectives to pupils effectively and set appropriate success criteria for them. However, the effectiveness of written comments to help pupils understand

how to improve their work varies too much from class to class. Pupils are beginning to improve and assess their own work regularly.

In the foundation phase, pupils have numerous opportunities to learn through active play or to direct their own learning indoors. Teachers design learning activities in many curriculum areas that develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and thinking skills effectively. There are, however, fewer opportunities for pupils to develop as independent and resilient learners in the outdoor environment. A very few teachers adapt the activities according to pupil interests. For example, whilst on a recent school visit, a pupil made an observation regarding the amount of plastic floating in the sea and showed great concern. The teacher responded and adapted the topic to focus on environmental issues. This further developed the pupils' understanding of how they can help save and look after the planet.

In key stage 2, planning to develop pupils' literacy skills is appropriate. However, opportunities to ensure continuity and progression in the development of pupils' extended writing skills are not well established. Planning for ICT does not always cover all aspects well enough. As a result, pupils do not always develop a sufficiently strong understanding in a few areas, such as spreadsheets and databases. The school does not provide enough opportunities for key stage 2 pupils to develop their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. Teachers do not consider these effectively enough to ensure that pupils develop and build on these skills as they move through the school.

The school plans topic work successfully, such as learning about the mining communities of the Rhondda Valley. This raises pupils' awareness and interest in the traditions, culture and history of the local area and Wales. A few members of staff are very good language models and use Welsh patterns regularly with pupils throughout the day. However, this is inconsistent across the school and many pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their Welsh skills.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school creates an inclusive environment for all its pupils. The staff know and value all pupils well. They promote respect and tolerance effectively through classroom activities, whole school assemblies and charity events. These provide suitable opportunities for pupils to reflect on how they should treat others and to understand the diversity of the world. The beneficial personal and social education programme promotes aspects such as equality and diversity effectively. The emphasis on developing values is prominent in the school.

There are robust systems for tracking pupils' progress. Teachers use a range of information and test results appropriately to plan and provide additional support for specific groups. They make suitable use of data across the areas of learning and core subjects. Staff know their pupils' needs well and provide an effective programme to support vulnerable pupils to develop their social and emotional skills. This has a positive impact on raising their self-esteem and helps most pupils to develop improved levels of confidence and engagement in school life.

The school's provision to support pupils with additional learning needs is comprehensive. Staff identify pupils' additional learning and personal needs from an

early age and provide them with effective support. A purposeful range of intervention programmes and strategies enables pupils and groups of pupils to make good progress in their learning. Individual education targets for pupils with additional learning needs are specific and measurable, and pupils and parents play an important part in the process. Early intervention ensures that pupils receive the necessary support in order for them to succeed in their work as they move through the school. The additional needs co-ordinator makes effective use of outside agencies, such as the neurological service at Cardiff University, in order to refine programmes for particular pupils.

There are sound working relationships with parents. The school offers a suitable range of opportunities for them to be involved, such as the class taster sessions to help them better understand and gain an insight into their child's learning. A series of workshops, for example the recent Welsh sessions, helps to develop the parents' skills alongside those of their children.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy eating and drinking and ensures that there are beneficial opportunities for them to take part in physical education lessons. The school raises pupils' awareness of the dangers of smoking, drugs and alcohol through a series of planned sessions by the police liaison officer. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are appropriate and are not a cause for concern.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is purposeful. The school provides opportunities for pupils to visit the local church and to perform there, for example at the harvest service and at Christmas time. Through whole school assemblies and regular lessons, pupils learn suitably about world religions and celebrations, such as the Chinese New Year and Saint David's Day. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect during these sessions.

Staff develop pupils' creative skills successfully through music activities, taking part in local competitions and contributing to the weekly ceramic workshops. There are opportunities for pupils to work alongside a local author and illustrator. These experiences develop pupils' self-confidence, pride in themselves and in their ability to work with others. The school council and eco warriors are well established, and members take their role seriously. They have made appropriate contributions over time on how to improve the school environment. For example, they have purchased the trim trail to increase pupils' choice of activities during playtimes.

Leaders offer purposeful opportunities for pupils to engage in trips and visits, for example to Caerphilly Castle and they use visiting theatre groups suitably to engage pupils with live performances. The school makes good use of an outward-bound centre, where pupils from Years 5 and 6 learn about team work while taking part in outdoor activities.

School leaders have a range of strategies in place to promote good attendance and punctuality, including working closely with the local authority. However, these approaches are not effective enough and attendance continues to be low.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The headteacher has a clear purpose to provide a caring environment for all children in her care. She communicates this well to staff at all levels and, as a result, staff work successfully together within a supportive, informed and friendly atmosphere to develop pupils' wellbeing effectively.

Leaders recognise the importance of having high expectations of what pupils can achieve but they have been slow to address this. Staff promote pupils' self-confidence well but leaders know that academic expectations and standards vary across the school. Leaders have strengthened systems recently for reviewing with teachers the progress that each pupil makes and they now link this to their systems for managing staff performance. However, it is too early for this change to have a beneficial effect on raising the standards that pupils achieve, particularly those pupils who are more able.

Leaders and managers collect a good range of evidence to evaluate the school's work. Through regular lesson observations and the monitoring of pupils' work, senior leaders identify important areas for improvement. More recently senior leaders have introduced a number of new initiatives to improve standards. For example, they have refined the marking policy and adapted teacher's short-term planning. However, overall, leaders do not give sufficient weight to this evidence and, as a result, the pace of improvement over time has been too slow. For example, whilst their monitoring activities show that the school has not met its attendance targets, this does not feature prominently in the current school development plan. This plan links to local and national priorities and contains an extensive range of activities and targets, but these do not match the current needs of the school well enough, for example to improve numeracy in key stage 2.

Governors know the school's staff and pupils well and involve themselves successfully in its day-to-day life. They have close links with individual classes to gain an understanding of pupil standards across the school. Governors are beginning to challenge the school, in particular to ensure, for example, that spending benefits all pupils. The headteacher and members of the governing body manage the finances well and the school is well resourced.

The school generally makes suitable use of the pupil development grant to meet the basic skills and wellbeing of the majority of vulnerable pupils.

Leaders provide staff with appropriate training opportunities to fulfil their roles suitably and to develop their professional expertise. The headteacher allocates staff carefully to provide a good balance of experience and skills across the age ranges. Leaders have improved the school building so that it provides stimulating experiences for pupils of all ages.

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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