



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

A report on

**Cwmffrwdoer Primary School
Waunddu
Pontnewynydd
Pontypool
Torfaen
NP4 6QZ**

Date of inspection: June 2018

by

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

About Cwmffrwdoer Primary School

Cwmffrwdoer Primary School is in Pontnewynydd, near Pontypool. The local authority is Torfaen. There are around 200 pupils on roll, aged from 4 to 11. There are seven single-age classes in the school.

The school identifies around 35% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is much higher than the national average (21%). A very few pupils have a statement of educational needs. The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is about 28%. This is higher than the national average (19%). Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity and very few pupils speak Welsh at home. There is a high degree of transience in the school with pupils joining and leaving the school during the year.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2012. The school's last inspection was in June 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

Although most pupils enter the school with lower-than-expected levels of skills and understanding for their age, nearly all make good progress during their time at school. Pupils' behaviour is good in classes and around the school and they have very positive attitudes to learning. Various pupil leadership groups make a purposeful contribution to the life and work of the school. The overall quality of teaching is good, and staff provide pupils with a rich and engaging curriculum. Pupils generally apply their literacy and numeracy skills effectively in all subjects. This is a nurturing school that strives to ensure that levels of care, support and guidance for pupils are high. The headteacher sets high expectations and she receives strong support from all staff and the governing body. The school manages its finances efficiently and ensures that there are sufficient staff and resources to meet the needs of all pupils.

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 the standard of spoken Welsh for pupils in key stage 2
- R2 Provide further opportunities for developing pupils' cultural and spiritual awareness

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 school with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those expected for their age. While at school, nearly all pupils make good or better progress.

In the foundation phase, most pupils remain attentive while seated on the carpet. In key stage 2, most listen respectfully to each other's points of view and share their ideas constructively. Most pupils make strong progress in developing their speaking skills. In the foundation phase, many speak increasingly clearly. In key stage 2, many hold mature discussions about their work. For example, they communicate clearly their empathy with children whose town was invaded during the Second World War. They have good recall of their learning and use technical vocabulary confidently, for example to describe the events associated with volcanoes.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in reading. They associate letters and sounds accurately, enabling them to pronounce words confidently. They use appropriate strategies, such as picture cues, to aid their understanding. Most recall main events well and make sensible predictions of what might happen next in a story. In key stage 2, most pupils read well. They read aloud clearly and expressively, taking good note of punctuation. Most are developing an enthusiasm for reading and describe their preferred genres of fiction. A majority are developing higher-order reading skills well. For example, they are beginning to use inference to 'read between the lines'. Many use research skills well, and they skim and scan non-fiction books purposefully to locate specific information quickly.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in learning to write. They generally form letters consistently, which enables them to write neatly. Many pupils use capital letters and full stops correctly in their sentences, while more able pupils use a wider range of punctuation appropriately. Many spell familiar words accurately and make sensible approximations of more difficult words. They write imaginatively in their poems, for example about pirates in Year 2, describing them as 'boat dwellers and treasure lovers'.

Many pupils in key stage 2 write well. They write at length frequently in a suitable variety of styles. Their spelling and punctuation are generally accurate, and they choose their style of writing carefully to suit the purpose and their intended audience. For example, pupils in Year 4 use bulleted lists and diagrammatic presentations to convey historical facts and to write extended prose in their imaginative writing. When retelling scenes from 'The Tempest', Year 6 pupils use powerful adjectives to describe characters and events, for example 'Prospero's eyes burned with silver magic in the howling, malevolent storm'.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop their mathematical skills well. They read, write and order numbers up to 100 correctly and add and subtract accurately to solve problems, for example about pirates' gold. They develop a sound understanding of shapes and use compass directions to locate features on a map. In key stage 2, most pupils continue to develop all aspects of their mathematical skills,

which they apply well in other areas of the curriculum. For example, they make and break numerical codes when studying the Second World War and calculate the distances of stages of the Tour de France. They draw a variety of charts and graphs accurately to support their study into renewable energy.

In the foundation phase, most pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently for a variety of purposes. They programme miniature robots to follow a course around their pirates' map and build branching databases. In key stage 2, most pupils use their ICT skills well to support and extend their learning. They use educational and commercial software to word-process their writing, producing leaflets about Wales, for example, and build databases and spreadsheets based on the travels of Phileas Fogg.

Most pupils in the foundation phase begin to build a useful vocabulary of Welsh words. They count in Welsh and describe the weather, colours and foods reasonably well. More able pupils in Year 2 read simple Welsh texts fluently and with understanding. They write simple Welsh sentences. In key stage 2, many pupils write in Welsh, practising familiar sentence patterns. Many read simple Welsh texts competently, although their pronunciation is often inaccurate. Their ability to extend their oral Welsh skills is less well developed.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils have a very positive attitude to their learning. They are happy and confident learners and involve themselves in their activities with enthusiasm and concentration. For example, younger pupils show great attention to detail when constructing boats they want to float. Similarly, older pupils read very carefully through a fiction text relating to life in Germany during the Second World War to discover exactly how the author's choice of words creates a compelling story.

Many pupils throughout the school use their skills well in order to learn independently. For example, pupils in the reception class organise themselves effectively to create their own music from wooden objects and instruments. Older pupils show particular motivation when they have the opportunity to identify what they would like to find out from their study of their topics.

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are considerate and relate well to each other and to adults, and most work well together from a young age. They feel safe and are confident that their school code ('See it, Say it, Stop it') helps to prevent incidents of bullying or harassment from occurring. They have a clear awareness of how to keep safe online and show a similarly clear respect for the arrangements to keep them safe during the current building work at the school.

Almost all pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. They make healthy choices with regard to diet and appreciate the value of physical exercise. They make enthusiastic use of the opportunities for vigorous exercise provided by the school during lessons and through after-school clubs.

Most pupils develop clear views on the importance of fairness, tolerance and concern for others. As a result, older pupils discuss maturely how to ensure that all pupils, such as younger ones or those with disabilities, can integrate fully in the life of the school.

Many pupils have leadership roles or responsibilities. They take these very seriously and carry them out maturely. As a result, nearly all pupils recognise the positive impact they have on school life. For example, pupils praise the Welsh assemblies led by the Criw Cymraeg and credit the school council and eco-group for numerous improvements to the school environment, such as the central school courtyard.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers plan and implement a wide variety of learning experiences for pupils well. They base work on interesting themes that contain learning opportunities identified by pupils. For example, when planning their topic on the World Cup, pupils in Year 4 decide to practise their work on perimeter and area by measuring football pitches. This approach engages pupils successfully in their learning and helps to ensure a commitment to their work. There are many opportunities for pupils to make good use of their ICT skills in a variety of activities.

The overall quality of teaching across the school is good. Nearly all teachers have high expectations of their pupils. All teachers are effective in planning challenges for pupils throughout the school to extend their learning and to foster their independence. This, along with the strong, positive working relationships between adults and pupils, leads to a productive working environment where most pupils enjoy remaining on task for sustained periods of time. Teachers and teaching assistants model English well, which encourages pupils' language development effectively. Consequently, many pupils write well by the time they reach Year 6. For example, pupils' work on wind farms is mature and of a very high standard.

Most teachers use open-ended questions skilfully to check pupils' understanding. Effective marking and dedicated feedback sessions provide pupils with the opportunity to reflect upon and improve their work. Across the school, pupils collaborate to create 'Steps to Success' to improve their literacy work. As a result, most pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve the standard of their writing.

Staff have embedded the principles of the foundation phase successfully, and the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils effectively. Most take part in visits that inspire interest and deepen their understanding of their topics. For example, following a visit to a local castle, pupils recorded their own commentaries in the style of a tour guide.

Staff have created attractive and stimulating learning environments that support and extend pupils' learning and skills effectively. For example, pupils in the foundation phase use their garden area to measure the height of tomato plants accurately using standard and non-standard units. Teachers plan with assistants to ensure that pupils have access to tasks that are appropriate to their abilities. In key stage 2, pupils develop their key skills further and apply them to their learning successfully. The school is proactive in its approach to preparing for curriculum reform and is already implementing change, providing pupils with opportunities to learn in real-life contexts and with a much greater role in leading their own learning.

There is a strong Welsh ethos throughout the school and nearly all pupils demonstrate an enthusiasm for the use of the language. The Criw Cymraeg leads

weekly assemblies to promote the use of Welsh and pupils have interviewed players from Newport Gwent Dragons about the advantages of speaking Welsh. By the time they reach Year 2, many pupils can read in Welsh to an appropriate standard and practise simple language patterns independently with their partners. However, opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to extend their spoken Welsh skills are limited.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There is an inclusive and caring ethos across the school where staff nurture pupils' personal and social skills well. Pupils' involvement in developing the school motto illustrates the school's commitment to ensuring that pupils play a purposeful role in helping to develop the school further.

Staff provide pupils with numerous worthwhile opportunities to take on responsibilities and to influence decisions through its numerous pupil leadership groups. For example, the school council are currently leading a project to raise funds for an outdoor tuck shop, and the eco group are analysing the results of their latest 'walk to school' campaign. Similarly, the school's equality leaders recently undertook a site inspection to identify changes which would benefit pupils with specific physical needs. These activities promote pupils' social, moral, entrepreneurial and personal skills well.

The school has a successful programme of personal and social education, which reinforces these skills effectively. They provide useful opportunities for pupils to reflect on their social and moral beliefs, for example through the prominent displays of values, such as courage and honesty, around the school or through the class selection of inspiring role models. Consequently, most pupils display a strong sense of fairness and make decisions thoughtfully and maturely. However, provision for promoting pupils' cultural and spiritual development is not as well developed.

Leaders track and monitor pupils' progress effectively and maintain a clear overview of the progress that groups and individuals make over time. They identify pupils who require additional learning support quickly and accurately. There are well-established systems to provide these pupils with effective small-group support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Staff monitor the impact of these programmes effectively and, as a result, nearly all of these pupils make good progress in overcoming their difficulties.

Staff monitor pupils' personal, social and emotional wellbeing closely and provide good support to individual pupils to meet their particular needs well. They make effective use of a range of specialist expertise as well as developing their own strategies and programmes. For example, staff have worked closely with a specialist from the local authority to enhance identified pupils' social skills.

The school makes good use of its links with other schools and organisations to provide beneficial support for pupils. Staff work closely with other local schools to provide interesting opportunities for more able and talented pupils, such as visiting Oxford University to attend a lecture, which has inspired pupils taking part. Police officers regularly visit the school to offer valuable guidance to pupils on how to keep themselves safe. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school offers a range of well-attended extra-curricular clubs, as well as good opportunities for pupils to exercise during the school day. The school makes effective provision for pupils to understand and make wise choices regarding healthy eating and drinking. For example, the current indoor healthy tuck shop is available to pupils daily.

The school builds positive relationships with parents. For example, it recently held a useful reading workshop for parents. It keeps parents regularly informed through newsletters, the school website and social media updates.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher communicates a clear vision for the future of the school and receives positive support from staff and the governing body. Staff morale is high and there is a clear team ethos throughout the school. The headteacher is a strong role model and she has high expectations of pupils and staff. Senior staff take appropriate action to identify shortcomings in the school's provision and the headteacher has addressed underperformance effectively in recent years. All staff have clear job descriptions and understand their roles and responsibilities. An experienced senior management team supports the headteacher effectively and the school is building the leadership capacity of other members of staff through a purposeful programme of professional development. Senior management team meetings and staff meetings enable staff to contribute to the strategic direction of the school, including preparing for the imminent expansion of the school with the addition of a nursery and other classes.

Members of the governing body are well qualified to provide support and challenge. They know the school well through their frequent visits and the headteacher's detailed reports. Governors contribute a wide range of relevant skills and expertise to their role. They challenge school leaders to improve in important areas, for example regarding attendance, the quality of teaching and the level of pupils' attainment. The school responds well to local and national priorities. For example, the school is preparing effectively for the new curriculum by extending pupils' involvement in deciding what and how they learn, and the school's response to the digital competence framework is progressing well.

Arrangements for monitoring and self-evaluation are robust and effective. Staff, governors and pupils take an active role in the process. Consequently, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school development plan links closely with the findings of the self-evaluation report. The plan is a well-constructed compilation of a manageable number of priorities and is a useful tool for bringing about improvements.

Performance management arrangements for all staff are comprehensive. All teachers and teaching assistants have relevant targets relating to the school development plan. All staff benefit from appropriate training and development opportunities, including sharing good practice with other schools. For example, staff have received specialist training to support pupils with additional needs and updated their skills in the teaching of reading.

Leaders deploy staff and resources efficiently. The headteacher and governors monitor the use of the school's budget carefully to ensure good value for money and maintain a level of reserves that is within recommended limits. The school uses its pupil development grant appropriately to support vulnerable learners by providing specialist interventions aimed at improving pupils' wellbeing and attainment.

Copies of the report

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

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

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

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

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

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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