



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

A report on

**Dafen Primary School
Lon-Yr-Ysgol
Dafen
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA14 8LL**

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by

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

About Dafen Primary School

Dafen Primary School is in the village of Dafen, on the outskirts of Llanelli.

There are currently 170 pupils on roll between the ages of three and eleven. There are seven classes in the school, which includes three mixed age classes and a nursery class with 21 full-time and eight part-time pupils. The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is 31%, which is well above the national average of 19%.

The school identifies around 31% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is above the national average of 21%. A very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

Dafen Primary School is in collaboration with another local school. The executive headteacher took responsibility for Dafen Primary School in November 2015. He is also the substantive headteacher of another local school. The headteacher spends the equivalent of two days each week at the school and the deputy headteacher leads the school on the remaining three days. The school was last inspected in January 2010.

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 the staff and has developed a strong team during the limited time he is at the school each week. All staff, governors and parents share his clear vision for continuous improvement.

The ethos in the school is happy and welcoming where pupils and adults work together effectively. Most pupils progress well as they move through the school. They develop as confident learners and nearly all pupils show interest and enjoyment in learning. Many pupils play an integral part in the life of the school representing all pupils successfully. They behave well, showing care and concern for others within and beyond their community. Teachers provide them with stimulating activities, which develop their skills effectively.

The links between self-evaluation and school priorities are now clearer and this has led to many recent improvements.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that individual educational plans include clearly defined targets in order to measure progress effectively
- R2 Improve outcomes for more able pupils
- R3 Ensure that all teachers provide effective feedback to pupils that helps them to improve their work
- R4 Improve attendance

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, most pupils have levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those expected for their age. During their time at school, many pupils make the expected level of progress from their starting points. However, a few pupils, particularly the more able do not make enough progress and it is sometimes unclear how well pupils with additional learning needs progress against their individual targets.

Throughout the school, most pupils develop effective speaking and listening skills. By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils speak accurately and fluently and talk about their work enthusiastically. They discuss how they care for the class goldfish in detail. Most pupils in key stage 2 speak clearly and confidently in a range of situations, for example when explaining the reasoning behind their predictions for a science experiment.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop secure phonic skills, which helps them to read unfamiliar words confidently. By the end of Year 2, many pupils read with fluency and expression. In key stage 2, most pupils use their reading skills well to extract relevant information by skimming and scanning. For example, when conducting research on the internet about plants. Nearly all pupils are enthusiastic about reading and enjoy reading books written by a wide variety of authors.

Across the school, most pupils develop their writing skills well and write confidently for a wide range of purposes. For example, younger pupils in the foundation phase create an accurate story map of the tale of 'Rumpelstiltskin'. By Year 2, many pupils form letters correctly and use basic punctuation accurately when writing independently. Most pupils, as they progress through key stage 2, show a clear understanding of different writing styles and audiences. Most pupils in Year 6 use paragraphs and punctuation accurately. They use a mature and interesting vocabulary, for example when writing a letter to persuade the emperor to set Gulliver free. Overall, the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation varies too much across the school.

By the end of the foundation phase nearly all pupils make secure progress in mathematics. Many pupils apply their mathematical knowledge well to solve everyday problems, including those relating to money and time. By the end of the foundation phase most pupils extract information accurately from tally charts to create their own bar graphs. For example, they collect, share and present information about the types of butterflies in the school garden. As pupils progress through key stage 2 most use a variety of mental and written calculation strategies to solve problems accurately. Many interpret tables and graphs in problem solving activities and investigative contexts well.

Most foundation phase pupils use their numeracy and literacy skills flexibly in a range of meaningful activities in other areas of learning. For example, pupils in the foundation phase measure their 'African snakes' accurately and use online information to find out more about minibeasts. Most older pupils use their literacy,

numeracy and thinking skills effectively across the curriculum, for example when researching, preparing and evaluating recipes from the Second World War such as 'eggless sponge' cakes.

Most pupils develop effective information communication and technology (ICT) skills. Many younger pupils in the foundation phase use software to accurately resize text, add illustrations and create sound effects for their 'Magic Porridge Pot' story. In key stage 2, most pupils can order and programme instructions confidently to create animations. They develop their multimedia and word processing skills to a good standard, for example when presenting on the majestic mountains of Wales.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the Welsh language and respond positively to the bilingual ethos of the school. They make purposeful progress in developing basic communication skills in formal lessons. Most pupils read Welsh books with confidence and discuss the text with ease. By Year 6, many pupils are able to write well at length, for instance when writing a dialogue between friends.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe in the school and know whom to talk to if they have a problem. They show respect and are consistently polite and well-mannered to one another and adults. Many older pupils care for and support younger pupils well, particularly during break times when they play together. Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and during break times. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Most pupils are engaged in lessons and they discuss current and previous work with enthusiasm and enjoy the topics they study. Across the school most pupils work effectively in pairs and groups. They listen attentively to the views of others and deal well with opinions that are different from their own. A good example of this is when the older pupils try to persuade the headteacher about the value of having a mobile phone. As they move through the school, most pupils become increasingly skilful at identifying how to improve their own work. However, only a few pupils make decisions about how and what they learn.

Most pupils have a clear understanding how to keep healthy through eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise. For example, the school council runs a fruit tuck shop each day. Most pupils know that fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet. Many pupils are enthusiastic about their physical education lessons and engage well in strenuous activities at break times. More able pupils apply their leadership skills confidently to coach their peers during class sessions. Many pupils attend the after-school sports activities such as the multi-sport club. These activities contribute well to their levels of fitness and social skills.

Across the school, many pupils take on roles of responsibility successfully, such as by becoming digital leaders, sports leaders or monitors who ensure that all pupils behave sensibly during breaktimes. The children's ambassadors develop other pupils' understanding of their rights in society effectively. For example, they organise fundraising activities to raise awareness of children who are not receiving an education in Afghanistan. The positive work of this group helps most pupils to develop a good understanding of fairness, equality and tolerance. Members of the

eco committee encourage all pupils to care for their environment and to act sustainably. For instance, they recycle food waste to create their own compost to use in their vegetable and fruit beds and organise activities such as collecting and sending milk bottles to a recycling company who create wheelchairs.

Many pupils understand the importance of regular attendance and respond well to the school initiatives to improve attendance. However, despite the school's efforts, pupils' attendance rates have fallen over the last three years and do not compare well to those of other similar schools.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. All staff manage pupils' behaviour well, and as a result the atmosphere in classrooms is generally calm and productive.

Throughout the school, teachers work together to plan a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes rich and creative learning experiences indoors and outdoors. In many classes, the stimulus for topics and lessons is exciting and engages pupils' interest. For instance, all pupils in Year 5 engage enthusiastically in researching, planning and budgeting for their allotments. In most sessions, learning is fun, activities are purposeful and, as a result, pupils make good progress. For example, pupils create a mini bug cave and a wormery and hatch ladybird eggs. This develops their oracy skills and scientific knowledge effectively. However, on occasion teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop their independent learning skills fully.

Teachers plan opportunities well for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, such as designing, creating and evaluating a model merry-go-round and writing the quantities and instructions on how to make bread. There are worthwhile activities to develop pupils' ICT skills across the school through an appropriate range of contexts.

Most adults use a variety of pupil engagement strategies skilfully, such as encouraging pupils to 'magpie' ideas from one another, or to use their 'magnet eyes' to pay close attention to the teacher. Nearly all teachers have high expectations of pupils and their effective use of thought provoking questions ensures that learning proceeds at a good pace. More recently, teachers' assessment of pupils' work is more robust and most use this information purposefully to set suitable targets for pupils. However, in the majority of classes, the challenge for a few more able pupils is not always high enough.

Most adults provide helpful oral feedback to pupils during lessons. This helps pupils to see what they are doing well and where they can improve. In the best examples, teachers' written feedback gives clear and useful guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve their work. A few pupils are beginning to respond to these comments, and this results in a useful dialogue about learning between teachers and pupils. However, in most classes, feedback to pupils is not specific enough and this means pupils are not clear about the next steps in their learning. Many teachers give pupils suitable opportunities to consider the quality of their own and the work of others.

There are a good range of educational visits and visitors planned, which stimulate pupils' interests and knowledge well. For example, a trip to a local museum helps pupils to understand the impact of the Second World War on the local community, and visits to a Celtic village helps them to develop a better understanding of the culture and history of Wales. Visitors to the school from a local steel company motivate and broaden pupils' knowledge of the world of work successfully.

Almost all adults model Welsh very effectively in all aspects of school life. This develops pupils' understanding of Welsh successfully. Staff provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their Welsh language skills in planned lessons. The school is beginning to encourage pupils to use their Welsh skills informally around the school.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

The school is inclusive and provides a caring, nurturing environment for all pupils. Staff understand, identify and respond to pupils' emotional, social and behavioural needs well. They recognise and celebrate pupils' achievements in many different areas of school life. There are effective strategies and systems in place to support pupils' wellbeing. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to share their emotions in a discrete way and are proactive when responding to their needs. The school works closely with external agencies, including the local authority's social inclusion manager and education psychologist, and acts well on the advice given to provide effective support to meet specific behavioural needs.

The school has effective arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and to encourage pupils to keep fit. For example, younger pupils classify healthy and unhealthy food and many pupils across the school grow and cook their own vegetables and fruit. The after-school multi-sport club enriches pupils' physical development successfully and contributes well to pupils' standard of wellbeing.

The school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. For example, meetings with the police liaison officer make pupils aware of how to look after themselves, including dealing with anti-social behaviour and peer pressure. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school offers many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and become active citizens by becoming involved in influential groups. For example, the school council runs the fruit tuck shop as an enterprise, sharing all profits with individual classes so that they can purchase resources of their own choice. To strengthen the pupils' voice in the school, they have also introduced a programme that enables all pupils to express their emotional wellbeing on a daily basis. This having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes towards their work and their peers.

Provision to develop the pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues is effective. The school promotes respect and tolerance well through whole school assemblies, close links with the church and charity events. These provide suitable opportunities for pupils to reflect on how they should treat others and help them to understand the diversity of the wider world. Staff make good use of a residential course to encourage pupils to learn about trust and team work while taking part in outdoor activities.

The school has an effective relationship with the local community. It uses a wide range of visitors successfully to broaden pupils' cultural experiences. For example, artists, religious leaders and famous Welsh sports people visit the school regularly to share their experiences and special talents with pupils. This contributes successfully towards developing pupils' awareness of their area, their heritage and their Welshness. There are also regular opportunities for pupils to engage in the creative arts through specialised music lessons and to perform in the Christmas productions.

Leaders ensure that parents and pupils know the importance of attending school regularly and being punctual. These strategies are beginning to improve pupils' attendance.

In the last year, the school has developed a process to track and monitor pupil progress. Teachers are beginning to use this information more regularly to identify those with additional learning needs and those who are more able.

The provision for pupils identified as having additional learning needs is generally suitable in helping many pupils make expected progress. The school does not take the views of pupils and parents into consideration well enough when writing and reviewing pupils' individual learning plans. The targets are not always clear and measurable and leaders do not monitor and review how well individual pupils progress rigorously enough. As a result, it is unclear whether the support provided is fully effective.

Leadership and management: Good

The executive headteacher works conscientiously on leadership and management when he is at the school. He receives effective support from the deputy head of the school and staff, who ensure that the school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis.

The headteacher has a clear vision which is to give all pupils the best possible opportunity to succeed in a safe and happy environment. Under his robust leadership, the staff have gained a useful understanding of the school's standards and performance. This helps them to contribute well to the strategic decision-making process. The headteacher and the governing body have worked effectively to ensure that the relatively high number of staff changes has not had an adverse effect on pupils' progress and wellbeing.

All members of staff now have appropriate roles and responsibilities that link well to improving the curriculum and teaching. Staff work together successfully to provide broad and valuable experiences for all pupils. Focused staff meetings provide leaders and teachers with many opportunities to evaluate progress towards achieving agreed improvement priorities.

The school has worthwhile systems for managing teachers' performance. Leaders work closely with governors and staff to realise these objectives and monitor progress in line with the agreed priorities. The headteacher ensures that there are valuable opportunities for the professional development of staff. These link directly with school priorities and individual teachers' needs. Specific training and close co-operation with nearby schools, for example in improving the provision for literacy and planning for sustainable play activities during lunchtimes, have had a positive effect on pupils' reading and social skills.

The senior leadership team uses an appropriate range of self-evaluation activities that helps them to have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, they have identified the need to improve the provision for ICT and raise the standards of oracy for all pupils. Leaders have implemented effective actions to address these priorities for improvement. However, over time planned actions in the school's previous development plans have not always resulted in improving outcomes well enough such as attendance.

The governing body are very supportive of the school. Leaders keep governors well informed about the school's performance through detailed updates, buddying with subject co-ordinators and more recently taking part in learning walks. This enables governors to hold the school to account for standards effectively. A good example of this was challenging standards in science. As a result, teachers have enriched provision by ensuring regular opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative skills.

The headteacher and governors manage the budget carefully to ensure its best use and have agreed plans with the local authority to manage the current budget deficit. The school uses the pupil development grant purposefully to raise the standards of all the pupils who are eligible for free school meals. As a result, most pupils attain the expected outcome or level.

Resources are generally appropriate to meet pupils' needs and the targets in the improvement plan. The indoor environment supports teaching and learning purposefully and planned opportunities develop pupils' social and creative skills effectively. The outdoor learning environment is developing suitably and the school uses it increasingly well to support pupils' learning. The Friends of the School provide helpful additional income, for example to buy books for the school's library. Leaders make good use of the expertise of individual teachers to provide specialised teaching in music and physical education.

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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