



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

**A report on**

**Swiss Valley C.P. School  
Heol Beili Glas  
Swiss Valley  
Felinfoel  
Llanelli  
SA14 8DS**

**Date of inspection: March 2019**

**by**

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

## About Swiss Valley C.P. School

Swiss Valley Primary School is located on the outskirts of Llanelli, in Carmarthenshire local authority. The school has 246 pupils on roll, including 14 part-time nursery pupils. There are nine classes in the school.

The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is approximately 4%, which is below the national average of 18%. Most pupils are from a white British background. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language at home and very few have English as an additional language. The school has identified around 18% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is below the national average of 21%. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The last inspection was in June, 2015. The current headteacher took up his post in 2003.

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

Swiss Valley Primary School is a happy, inclusive community where most pupils develop effective literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Nearly all pupils behave well, care for each other and show respectful attitudes to staff and visitors to the school. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and praise the staff for their care and support.

Teachers have high expectations and provide well for pupils' needs. The curriculum is broad and engages pupils' curiosity successfully. Arrangements for supporting pupils with additional learning needs are robust.

The headteacher provides strong, effective leadership with a clear focus on improving pupils' learning and wellbeing. Other leaders, including the governing body, support him competently in achieving these aims. A culture of improvement permeates the school and planning for improvement is at the heart of the school's ethos.

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

## **Recommendations**

R1 Improve pupils' ability to write at length

R2 Provide more opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning

## **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' skills are at the expected level for their age. As they move through the school, most make good progress, including those with additional learning needs. The more able pupils recall their previous learning well and apply their skills successfully to new situations.

Throughout the school, most pupils listen well to each other and to adults. From an early age, most pupils in the foundation phase express themselves clearly and respond well to questions. In key stage 2, most pupils listen attentively to instructions and explanations and understand that this contributes to their learning. For example, many older pupils discuss their work as forensic scientists skilfully and enthusiastically.

Most pupils develop effective reading skills. In the foundation phase, most read a broad range of texts with good understanding. They pronounce unfamiliar words well, using phonic strategies and identify sounds and words that relate to different characters in stories. By Year 2, all pupils are able to talk about and describe their favourite characters in their books, for example the Gruffalo and the Smartest Giant in Town. In key stage 2, most pupils read a range of books successfully. Older pupils use their higher-order reading skills effectively, for example when investigating information on how plastic pollutes the seas and on the history of alchemy. Most are very enthusiastic readers who are eager to share their knowledge of books with visitors.

Across the school, most pupils write well for different purposes and in a range of contexts. In the foundation phase, many write interesting character studies and acrostic poems on the autumn. In lower key stage 2, pupils produce stimulating research work on Queen Victoria and improvements in medicine through the ages. Older pupils create good quality scripts on the sheriff of Nottingham and interesting descriptions of Gulliver and his travels. However, occasionally the overuse of worksheets impedes the development of pupils' extended writing.

Throughout the school, most pupils have positive attitudes to Welsh. In the foundation phase, pupils respond appropriately to instructions and reply to simple greetings confidently. By Year 2, most use simple phrases and vocabulary successfully. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils ask and answer simple questions about their likes and dislikes and give a simple reason for their opinions. Many hold simple conversations with one another, using sentence patterns that they have rehearsed in Welsh lessons.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills across the areas of learning. They confidently apply the mathematics they learn in lessons to solve problems. For example, in Year 2 most pupils successfully work out a simple bus timetable in order to go on a journey. Most pupils handle money successfully and use coin pieces accurately. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils develop effective calculation strategies, using the four rules of number competently to solve specific problems. For example, they weigh and work

out the least amount of blood Igor needs to order for Count Dracula. Most pupils have a good understanding of shape and area and use different units correctly to measure and weigh. Many pupils explain their mathematical thinking accurately when performing calculations.

Throughout the school, many pupils develop their information and communication technology skills (ICT) well. In the foundation phase, younger pupils use programmes effectively to present texts and pictures relating to fairy tales. By Year 2, most pupils use an app successfully to create a block graph, for example, when collating information about real life superheroes. Most pupils make good progress as they move through key stage 2. For example, they are able to use spreadsheets confidently to present information and to measure cost and profit when selling 'bath bombs'. Most pupils understand how to conduct a safe search on the internet, for example, when researching work for the 'alchemy island' topic. Older pupils plan and deliver database lessons through the 'flipped classroom' approach and this has a positive impact on their progress and confidence.

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

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and they know that they can speak to staff if they have any concerns or worries. Most pupils know how to keep themselves safe online.

Most pupils have a thorough understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They have a secure understanding of the importance of eating healthily. For example, they bring water to school to drink and school ambassadors organise a fruit tuck shop to promote healthy breaktimes. Pupils in key stage 2 talk knowledgeably about World Kidney Day and benefit from working with medical staff from a local hospital. Most pupils participate in the wide range of after-school sporting clubs, such as hockey, boys' and girls' football, rugby and tennis.

Nearly all pupils behave consistently well in lessons and at other times during the day. They move around the school in an orderly, calm manner. They are polite and considerate towards each other, staff and visitors. They are very caring and older pupils act as playground buddies to help care for the younger pupils at breaktimes.

Most pupils show positive attitudes towards their work. They are enthusiastic learners who work harmoniously and stay on task over extended periods. Most pupils persevere well in lessons and show determination to learn new things. For example, younger pupils enjoy learning about symmetry through designing a decoy flag for Blackbeard the pirate. Most older pupils find appropriate ways to work through challenges. For example, they ask a friend for support and use the stimulating classroom displays to help when they find their work difficult.

Pupils take their leadership roles very seriously and they talk enthusiastically about their work. For example, the school council organises activities such as the school food bank and manages stalls for the school fayre. The 'clwb garddio' promotes garden open days at the school and the 'tîm tec' raises awareness of internet safety across the school.

Pupils take pride in the opportunities to support various charities and contribute to activities in the community. They gain an awareness of life in other countries and have close links with schools in Lesotho and Swaziland. This has a very positive impact on their understanding of the needs of others in the wider world and especially of the problem of water shortages in other countries.

In the past, attendance rates compared to those of similar schools have not always been favourable. However, most pupils respond well to the school's sustained focus on improving attendance and understand the importance of attending school regularly. Most are punctual at the start of the school day.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

Working relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Teachers create a purposeful learning environment in which pupils feel confident to ask questions and share ideas. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively in lessons and, as a result, nearly all pupils are very respectful and attentive, supporting each other well in their learning.

Most teachers share learning objectives well with pupils and provide clear instructions that enable pupils to undertake their tasks confidently. They plan tasks and activities to meet the needs of pupils successfully and make effective use of plenary sessions to evaluate pupils' learning. Teaching assistants support pupils very well and display strong professional initiatives to enable those pupils with additional learning needs to work effectively.

Teachers use questioning techniques purposefully to help pupils understand new ideas and to develop their knowledge and skills. Oral and written feedback help pupils to know what they need to do to address weaknesses in their work. Opportunities for pupils to assess and reflect on their own performance and that of others are developing appropriately.

The school reflects on the effectiveness of the curriculum regularly and takes good account of developments towards the new curriculum for Wales. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibilities for their learning. Across the school, classrooms are stimulating places and teachers devise exciting activities to engage pupils. For example, pupils in key stage 2 assume the role of forensic scientists and investigate possible crime scenes. The principles of the foundation phase are well established and pupils have easy access to the outdoor areas for independent work.

There are well-planned opportunities to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in a wide range of contexts across the curriculum. Teachers make appropriate provision for pupils to practise their writing skills in other areas of learning, for example through studying the history of pits and ponies through the ages and children's lives in Victorian times. However, the overuse of worksheets occasionally hinders pupils' extended writing skills.

The school has a progressive approach to developing pupils' Welsh skills. Classes have regular 'helpwr y dydd' sessions and the 'criw Cymraeg' is proactive throughout the school. The school plans good opportunities for pupils to celebrate the culture

and heritage of Wales. For example, pupils learn about Mary Jones and her Bible and the story of Gelert. Pupils visit many different places of interest, such as the Swansea maritime and war museums and older pupils have opportunities to speak at the National Assembly for Wales. Older pupils enjoy residential courses at the Urdd centre in Llangrannog and the Long Barn, near Llandysul, and these help to develop their social skills well.

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

The school is a caring, inclusive community, which actively promotes the wellbeing of all pupils. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the individual needs of pupils and provide a safe and supportive environment that develops pupils' confidence and resilience well.

The school has robust systems in place to assess and track pupil progress. Staff use the comprehensive range of assessment data competently in order to identify pupils who would benefit from various intervention programmes. For example, skilled teaching assistants deliver speech and language support for younger pupils and, as a result, many pupils make positive progress in their communication skills. Pupils with identified social and emotional needs are supported through a nurture group, which has a beneficial impact on their personal development.

The additional learning needs coordinator monitors and supports pupils with additional needs effectively. There is a comprehensive provision map in place which ensures that all members of staff have a detailed awareness of the support that individual pupils and groups of learners require. Teachers produce useful individual education plans that include suitable targets for improvement. Pupils and teachers, together with parents, regularly review progress against the individual targets.

The school has effective arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. There are healthy snacks at break times and pupils participate in a range of activities to support their physical development. Pupils learn through their physical education lessons about the effects of exercise on their bodies. There is a good range of after-school clubs offering sporting activities, such as girls' and boys' football, rugby, hockey and tennis, and also a thriving gardening club.

Most parents speak positively about the school and confirm that the school provides them with useful information about their children's progress and the next steps that they need to take. The school fosters good working relationships with outside agencies and seeks advice when appropriate.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness and understanding of equality and diversity. This is a strength of the school. The very close links with Lesotho and Swaziland ensure that pupils have a sound knowledge of other countries and cultures. As a result, many pupils are developing well as ethical, informed citizens.

Teachers use assemblies to promote pupils' spiritual development effectively. They provide opportunities for pupils to learn about world faiths and to reflect on their own values, for example, pupils learn about Mary Jones and her determination to acquire a Bible. They have also visited a Mosque and local churches and benefited from



visits by local clergy. The school promotes pupils' cultural development well. For example, many pupils participate in musical and drama activities, such as the production of 'Oh What a Lovely War' performed in partnership with the local youth theatre. In addition the school choir performs locally on a regular basis, for example at the annual Christmas tree event and at other community venues.

There are effective arrangements to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe on line. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher is an experienced leader who sets a clear strategic direction for the school. He has established a vision that is strongly focused on promoting the wellbeing and achievement of pupils. This shared by the senior management team, staff and governors. He has high expectations of all pupils and has created a very caring and stimulating environment. Consequently, most pupils are engaged in their learning and make good progress.

Senior leaders carry out their responsibilities effectively and support the head teacher competently. The staff have detailed job descriptions, work skilfully as a team and support each other well to develop different areas of the curriculum, for example to introduce a literacy scheme in order to improve pupils' phonics skills. This has had a very positive impact on reading standards throughout the school.

The school works successfully with parents and the wider community. Staff regularly ask parents for their views on how they can help their children at home. The school also provides an interesting range of workshops for parents, for example, on the Welsh language and mathematical strategies.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and carries out its duties conscientiously. It has an effective working knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and offers an appropriate level of challenge. It acts as a well-informed critical friend to the school's leadership team and contributes beneficially to the self-evaluation process, for example through discussions with senior leaders and learning walks.

There are successful processes in place to evaluate the school's performance and to plan for improvement. Leaders use a suitable range of sources to analyse pupil performance and the quality of provision, for example through the purposeful analysis of data, lesson monitoring and book scrutiny. The school also gathers the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils regularly. For example, pupils have contributed to the improvement of the school grounds, play equipment and pathways to different parts of the school. Leaders respond positively to the outcomes of the self-evaluation processes and act on them accordingly to highlight areas of underperformance and identify relevant school priorities.

The school has robust performance management systems in place. A strong feature of the school's work is its success in providing many professional learning opportunities for staff. For example, teaching assistants have had valuable training on speech and language therapy techniques, literacy initiatives and emotional and

behavioural interventions. Staff support each other well and the senior leadership team leads and manages the school successfully, especially when the headteacher is based on another school site for two days a week.

The school uses its resources effectively. The indoor environment provides an attractive and stimulating place for pupils to learn and they have access to sufficient, good quality resources. The outdoor environment is spacious and foundation phase pupils have a range of good quality resources.

Over time the school has accrued a deficit budget which the headteacher, with the support of the governing body, is actively addressing. The school has an effective and robust business plan which has been approved by the local authority. Leaders allocate the budget appropriately to address the key priorities for improvement. The school uses the pupil development grant purposefully to support those pupils who need additional support with their literacy and numeracy skills.

## 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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