



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

A report on

**Betws C.P. School
Betws Road
Betws
Ammanford
Carmarthenshire
SA18 2HE**

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by

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

About Betws C.P. School

Betws C.P School is situated in the village of Betws near Ammanford, in Carmarthenshire local authority. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 81 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including four nursery age pupils who attend on a part-time basis. Pupils are divided into three mixed-age classes.

Over a three-year period, around 21% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is significantly higher than the national percentage of 18%. The school has identified around 26% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. This is higher than the national percentage of 21%. Very few pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes.

The current headteacher was appointed in September 2004 and the school was last inspected by Estyn in July 2013.

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

Nearly all pupils are happy to come to school and feel safe in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Most pupils behave well and treat their peers, the school's staff and visitors with obvious respect. Many make purposeful progress in their literacy, numeracy and communication skills from their starting points.

On the whole, many teachers plan varied learning experiences and activities so that pupils enjoy developing their knowledge and understanding purposefully. On the whole, many pupils develop their mathematics and English skills soundly and make purposeful progress from their starting points. However, teachers do not always have high enough expectations in terms of pupils' academic aspirations. As a result, a few underachieve.

The headteacher has conveyed a clear vision and, over time, has established a number of activities to evaluate the school's performance. Although leaders identify the school's strengths, monitoring procedures are not rigorous enough to identify all aspects for improvement or address important issues, such as raising the standard of pupils' Welsh.

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 Raise pupils' standards of oracy, reading and writing in Welsh
- R2 Ensure that monitoring and improvement procedures are rigorous enough to identify and address important areas for improvement
- R3 Ensure that teachers' expectations are high enough to enable all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability
- R4 Implement the principles of the foundation phase in full

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

Many pupils in the classes lower down the school have literacy and numeracy skills that are lower than expected for their age. However, as they move through the school, they make purposeful progress from their starting points. Nearly all pupils with special educational needs make sound progress towards their personal aims. However, more able pupils do not always make enough progress and a few pupils underachieve.

Most pupils in the foundation phase listen attentively to presentations and respond well to instructions in Welsh. By Year 2, a majority of pupils' skills are developing suitably, and they recall and discuss their work with increasing confidence. A majority of pupils build on their oral skills satisfactorily as they move through key stage 2. By Year 6, most pupils discuss confidently and maturely, and adapt their language purposefully for the audience in English. Effective examples of this include group discussions in a scientific experiment. However, very few pupils communicate confidently through the medium of Welsh solely. Most pupils use English words naturally when speaking, and their use of subject-specific vocabulary is limited.

As they move through the foundation phase, many pupils develop an appropriate knowledge of letters and their associated sounds, and they use this to create simple words. By Year 2, a majority read texts that are suitable for their age fluently and effectively. More able pupils read challenging words correctly and use their knowledge of phonics to overcome any difficulties. By the end of key stage 2, many read fictional texts independently and fluently in English, and discuss their preference for specific books enthusiastically. Many use their reading skills confidently to organise information from different sources, for example when presenting information about the different organs of the body. However, their progress in their Welsh reading skills is not as sound, and they read books at a level that is below their age and expected ability.

In the foundation phase, a majority of younger pupils develop their early writing skills suitably. By Year 2, many write short texts, such as a portrayal of a teacher from the Victorian era. They discuss how to plan their writing with an adult, and then create a sequence of simple sentences to express their ideas suitably. However, they are too reliant on sheets, sentence scaffolds and vocabulary, which prevent a majority of pupils from writing at length and completing independent work that is suitable for their age. A majority of pupils are beginning to recognise a few genres of writing. For example, they emulate a piece of poetry and change the theme to a portrayal of Henry VIII successfully. By Year 6, many write detailed descriptions based on a specific text in English when writing a letter to a boy in Botswana, describing a day at Ysgol Betws. They edit and re-draft pieces of their writing with increasing skill. On the whole, very few pupils use a wide variety of interesting vocabulary or develop their ideas in writing pieces independently in Welsh. Most pupils apply their literacy skills appropriately across the curriculum.

In the foundation phase, pupils make appropriate progress in their mathematical development. By Year 2, they handle money correctly and develop a good

understanding of measurement, time and data. Many pupils across the school apply their number skills confidently in various subjects. In key stage 2, most pupils have a sound understanding of number strategies and apply their skills successfully in a valuable range of activities. For example, they measure the length of different bones and compare the measurements of an arm's length to the distance that a pupil can throw a ball to see if there is a link.

On the whole, many pupils have a suitable range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They use an electronic tablet independently when taking a picture and create a graph of different jobs in the local area correctly. By Year 6, most pupils use their word-processing skills confidently to find information about African animals, and create multimedia presentations about their holidays successfully. Most pupils create a database purposefully and use a formula to calculate the cost of organising a party confidently. Many pupils are aware of the importance of online safety and the need to keep their passwords safe.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel happy coming to school. They feel safe within a learning community that is supportive of them and are happy to approach peers and adults for advice and support, where necessary. The school council's recent idea to create a wellbeing crew and organise weekly 'drop-in' sessions for any pupils with concerns is having a positive effect on pupils' confidence and social skills.

Many pupils have a purposeful understanding of the importance of drinking water and taking part in regular physical activities. Many reinforce this effectively by taking part in a suitable range of physical activities, such as morning 'dance' sessions, the mile a day activity and attending the school's sports clubs. Through class theme work and the opportunity to taste different foods, many pupils have a good knowledge of which foods are good for them and the effect this has on the body.

Most pupils behave well within the classroom and during break time. They are polite towards each other, and treat staff and visitors with respect. Older pupils show a naturally caring attitude towards younger pupils. This is evident as the bronze ambassadors play playground games with them daily, and as Year 5 and 6 pupils listen to them reading in weekly 'shared reading' sessions. Many are familiar with discussing in groups and with each other, and show respect when others are speaking. In the foundation phase, most nursery and reception age pupils show a sound understanding of classroom organisation, and move around the various areas confidently and independently. Although many pupils in key stage 2 are beginning to contribute towards what they would like to learn as part of their themes, they do not choose how they would like to do so often enough.

Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are hard-working and enthusiastic learners who stay on task for extended periods. Across the school, most pupils work together well in the classroom, and older pupils develop perseverance and resilience successfully. For example, based on the theme 'Gwenllian', they create a character from building resources and then write digital instructions in order to make it move.

Many pupils have a sound understanding of sustainability and global citizenship. The work of the eco council to raise pupils' awareness of how to care for their environment and issues that affect this, such as wind farms, strengthens many pupils' understanding effectively. Many pupils take pride in the opportunity to contribute to activities in the local community, which has a positive effect on developing their understanding of social issues and the needs of others. For example, pupils perform in a residential home occasionally, and raise money for an appeal to commemorate soldiers who lost their lives in wars. Many take pride in the opportunities they are given to lead on relevant issues in order to help and improve the school. For example, by responding to the ideas of all pupils in key stage 2, the school council has ordered more play equipment to enrich their experiences on the playground during break time.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

On the whole, teachers plan an appropriate and balanced curriculum for pupils, and ensure that they are given a suitable range of experiences in all areas of learning and subjects. Many teachers nurture pupils' previous skills, knowledge and information soundly. They give appropriate consideration to the requirements of the literacy and numeracy framework in their planning. They are also beginning to prepare to meet the needs of the curriculum for Wales by creating links between curricular aspects and providing opportunities for older pupils to create tasks that make learning more interactive and engaging for them. The school's focus on developing all pupils to become happy and confident learners is developing effectively.

Provision for younger pupils in the foundation phase reflects the pedagogy and principles of this phase effectively, and provides them with engaging and stimulating learning experiences. Outdoor activities develop pupils' physical and creative skills appropriately. However, because of the organisation of the school's classes, opportunities for Year 2 pupils to take advantage of the experiences of the foundation phase and develop as independent learners are limited.

Nearly all adults develop a strong working relationship with pupils. Staff plan a range of purposeful learning activities for them, which encourage many to take part enthusiastically in their tasks. For example, when considering the digital competence framework, the Year 5 and 6 teacher plans lessons that provide an opportunity for pupils to plan how to take care of their teeth by using green screen technology to create a skilful digital presentation. Many teachers plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects successfully, but opportunities to present written work independently are not as prominent.

Many teachers question pupils skilfully to extend their learning and build on what they are able to do. They plan learning at an appropriate level, and most teachers share success criteria with pupils successfully. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are inconsistent across the school. As a result, activities are not varied enough to respond to the age and range of different abilities, particularly for more able pupils.

Teachers' oral feedback during lessons helps pupils to identify how they can improve their work appropriately. In the best practice, teachers provide clear and detailed written comments on how they can improve their work in their books. However, this

is not consistent across the school. At the end of key stage 2, pupils are beginning to assess the work of their peers and respond to their own work confidently. They have a good understanding of their strengths and where they need to improve.

The school ensures that pupils are given beneficial opportunities to learn about their area and Welsh history and culture by attending a suitable range of educational visits and welcoming visitors to the school. A few examples include visiting a nearby theatre and Pendine residential centre. The school's provision to develop the Welsh language supports a minority of pupils to make suitable progress in acquiring the language. Staff are beginning to use the 'Criw Cymraeg' suitably to promote the Welsh language among their peers by rewarding the Welsh pupils of the week. However, there is no consistency in the way in which staff feed or correct pupils' spoken Welsh, either in lessons or at other times.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Staff have created a homely ethos at the school, with a clear emphasis on supporting pupils' wellbeing. They are very caring towards pupils and provide valuable opportunities for them to gain a good awareness of their rights. Staff promote pupils' good behaviour effectively, which ensures that standards of courtesy and respect are sound.

The school has a purposeful system to track pupils' progress. Termly meetings between the assistant headteacher and staff about the progress of individuals and groups of pupils are beginning to have a positive effect on staff's understanding of pupils, achievement, namely those who achieve above the expected levels. However, on the whole, targets for these pupils are not always specific or ambitious enough to enable them to achieve as well as they could.

Teachers identify specific pupils' needs at an early stage and take appropriate steps to support them effectively. The school's close-knit relationship with an organisation that provides pre-school education on the school grounds leads to formal and informal discussions about pupils regularly. This has a positive effect on staff's ability to plan specific programmes and support for pupils before they start at the school. The school has established purposeful procedures to track the progress and wellbeing of groups of pupils. Staff use information that derives from these procedures successfully to earmark specific provision for them, which is adapted as and when necessary. Intervention programmes within the school are sound and support the learning of particular pupils well, for example to strengthen their literacy and numeracy skills. For pupils with special educational needs, they provide purposeful individual education plans, and parents are including in producing them and reviewing them every term. As a result, the school ensures that most pupils with special educational needs make good progress against their personal targets. The school fosters a successful working relationship with external agencies. For example, teachers use the local authority's speech and language service effectively, which provides staff with specialist support and guidance.

Through an appropriate range of extra-curricular and curricular activities, the school has effective arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. Pupils' spiritual attitudes are promoted effectively through regular periods of collective worship, in addition to regular visits by religious leaders. The school develops pupils' empathy

towards others suitably by supporting charities, such as Children in Need, and teaching them about the religions and cultures of people in other countries.

The school's provision to develop pupils' creative skills is developing purposefully. Staff ensure that pupils are given regular opportunities to take part in concerts, sing at a local residential centre and compete in the Urdd Eisteddfod. This contributes successfully towards increasing their confidence. Staff plan suitable activities that develop pupils' appreciation of Welsh culture. For example, the knowledge of pupils in Years 5 and 6 of contemporary Welsh songs has broadened efficiently after attending a gig, and educational visits to Cardiff Museum and the Pembrokeshire coast raise their awareness of different landscapes well.

The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills, for example through the activities of the school council, the eco council and the bronze ambassadors. However, the contribution of the Criw Cymraeg towards expressing a direct opinion on the school's wider procedures and influencing Welsh provision is limited.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The headteacher has developed a vision that forms a basis for the school's homely and caring ethos. All staff and the school community work well together to ensure that pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of their work. This promotes positive attitudes within the school and supports pupils' ability to develop as responsible citizens. On the whole, the school's leadership ensures that many pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points during their time at the school. Staff are dedicated and work together closely, and undertake their responsibilities conscientiously. The headteacher benefits greatly from the robust support of the assistant headteacher and, together, they show a suitable commitment to promoting improvements.

The school is developing as an appropriate learning community and has suitable arrangements to manage staff performance. This is beginning to make a beneficial contribution towards their professional learning needs. As a result of valuable opportunities to observe good practice and teaching methods in other schools, staff have recently been given opportunities to strengthen the contribution of older pupils towards improving their own work successfully. However, although aspects of teaching are improving, this is not yet consistent across the school and has not had an adequate effect on pupils' standards.

Members of the governing body are supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. Through regular reports from the headteacher, data analysis and visits to the school, governors have a sound understanding of pupils' attainment and progress. Their reports are probing and refer clearly to issues to improve standards and the quality of provision. In their role as critical friends, members have begun to hold the school to account for its performance successfully. However, it is too early to see the effect of this.

Over time, the school has established a wide range of suitable self-evaluation procedures, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and data analysis. Recently, these procedures have enabled staff to identify the school's strengths and some areas for improvement successfully. A good example of this is the effective standards and achievements seen in mathematics. However, success criteria are not clear and detailed enough to evaluate progress and improve provision. As a result, leaders have not identified important areas for development, such as the need to raise the standard of full provision for all pupils in the foundation phase.

The school is beginning to respond to local and national priorities in a satisfactory manner. On the whole, the school has developed pupils' English literacy, numeracy and ICT skills soundly. Staff are beginning to understand the requirements of the new curriculum for Wales and have placed a clear focus on improving pupils' wellbeing and fitness.

The school has a suitable level of teaching staff and support staff, and uses them appropriately to support individuals and enrich learning. Leaders monitor expenditure regularly and carefully. There is a close link between expenditure and the school's objectives, targets and improvement plans. Managers use the pupil development grant prudently to improve provision in order to improve the literacy and numeracy skills and wellbeing of those who are eligible to receive it. As a result, these pupils make sound progress from their starting points and attain high levels, particularly in mathematics. The school benefits from significant and regular contributions from the parents' association to broaden opportunities for pupils to go on different visits. Indoor learning areas enrich pupils' learning experiences successfully, support learning and promote wellbeing well.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

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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