



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

A report on

**Ynysboeth Community Primary School
Ynysboeth
Matthewstown
Mountain Ash
RCT
CF45 4YT**

Date of inspection: December 2019

by

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

About Ynysboeth Community Primary School

Ynysboeth Community Primary School is in the village of Ynysboeth, near Mountain Ash in Rhondda Cynon Taf. There are 166 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11 years, including 19 part-time nursery pupils. There are seven classes in the school, four of which are mixed-age classes.

English is the predominant language for nearly all pupils. A very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupil speaks Welsh at home. The three-year average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 46%, which is much higher than the Wales average of 18%. The school identifies around 39% of pupils as having special educational needs, which is much higher than the national average of 21%.

Following a period of change in leadership, the present headteacher took up her post as acting headteacher in September 2019. She was appointed to the post of headteacher in October 2019. The acting deputy headteacher has been at the school since September 2019. The school's previous inspection was in January 2014.

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

In a short period of time, the headteacher has established a clear vision for the school, which is based on improving pupils' wellbeing, building community relationships and securing school improvement. Senior leaders have been very effective in identifying areas for development for the school and have begun to drive forward changes which are having a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and achievement.

Most pupils make suitable progress in the development of many of their skills as they move through the school and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. However, overall, they make only adequate progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and with their higher order reading skills.

Staff enjoy positive working relationships with pupils, ensuring that they feel cared for and valued. In many cases, teachers deliver an interesting range of activities that motivate and improve pupils' basic skills, such as those in speaking and listening, writing and mathematics successfully. However, teachers do not consistently plan and deliver activities that challenge pupils at a high enough level or develop their skills as independent learners.

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 Ensure stable and effective leadership at all levels to strengthen the school's capacity for improvement
- R2 Ensure that all pupils are challenged to achieve to the best of their ability and develop independent learning skills
- R3 Improve pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) and higher order reading skills
- R4 Provide regular and purposeful opportunities for all pupils to use their numeracy and, particularly in key stage 2, Welsh speaking skills across the curriculum
- R5 Plan purposeful opportunities for pupils in the foundation phase to develop their independent learning skills in the outdoor environment

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

A majority of pupils enter the school with literacy, numeracy and social skills that are appropriate for their age. A few pupils begin school life with skills that are well below those expected. Most pupils make suitable progress in the development of their skills as they move through the school. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual goals and targets.

Across the school, most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. From an early age, pupils in the foundation phase talk purposefully during activities and play sessions. By Year 2, they express their ideas well and speak with enthusiasm. For example, in the role-play hospital, pupils discuss why their patient, who has a broken arm and a bump on the head, will need to have an operation. In key stage 2, most pupils build well upon these skills and apply them appropriately to support their learning. They share suggestions well and use a good range of vocabulary when discussing how to build a Ferris wheel using construction materials.

Many pupils master the basic skills of reading well. For example, pupils in reception recognise a good range of letters and identify their associated sounds. By Year 2, many pupils use phonic strategies well to understand unfamiliar words. They read an appropriate range of texts with increasing accuracy and understanding. By Year 6, the majority of pupils read confidently and clearly with good expression. They discuss characters and events with confidence. The more able clearly understand the text and context of the story and use this successfully to read unfamiliar words and to deduce answers from texts. However, across the school a majority of pupils do not develop their comprehension and more advanced reading skills well enough.

Many pupils progress well in writing as they move through the school. They use an appropriate range of punctuation correctly and spell common words accurately. Many pupils present their work neatly and take pride in their books. In the foundation phase, many pupils write suitably for different purposes and in a range of contexts, for example, many Year 2 pupils write convincingly about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. In key stage 2, most pupils develop effective writing techniques in their English lessons and use these well in their work across the curriculum. For example, they write persuasive letters to Lord Shaftsbury urging him to stop children working in coalmines, factories and as chimney sweeps.

Most pupils develop their numeracy skills effectively as they move through the school. By Year 2, most have a sound knowledge of basic number facts and use these well to tackle simple problems successfully, for example, when sorting objects into different recycling boxes, they quickly total the different types in their heads. In key stage 2, most pupils understand an appropriate range of mathematical concepts and, by Year 6, many use confidently a wide range of methods to calculate in their heads and on paper when solving problems. They handle and analyse data competently, for instance when investigating whether taller people have greater lung capacity. However, many pupils apply only a limited range of numeracy and problem-solving skills appropriately in other areas of the curriculum.

In the early years of the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in developing their spoken Welsh and use Welsh confidently as part of class routines. By Year 2, many ask and respond to simple questions following basic patterns, for example when meeting and greeting their friends. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils respond appropriately to familiar questions and use a suitable range of basic vocabulary when sharing personal information. By Year 6, a minority read short texts with understanding. Many write well using familiar vocabulary and sentence patterns, for example when writing a dialogue about a visit to the sports centre. However, pupils in key stage 2 do not use their oral Welsh language skills confidently enough in other areas of the curriculum and around the school. This limits the progress they make.

Many pupils in the foundation phase make purposeful use of their ICT skills to support their work across the curriculum. By Year 2, many pupils use a suitable range of applications on tablet computers to record their activities and to practise number games and phonic exercises. Many pupils in key stage 2 use a suitable range of software competently to create interesting presentations for example on the impact of plastic waste on the environment. However, pupils of all ages use ICT for too narrow a range of purposes across the curriculum. Few pupils use ICT effectively to handle data or to model situations, for example using spreadsheets.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Many pupils enjoy coming to school and are confident in the school environment. The warmth and strength of the working relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils feel safe in school and know what to do if they are worried or anxious. They feel valued and this encourages them to take part in all school activities.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and well-mannered, always greeting people and holding doors open for others. Most show respect for adults and for one another, listening carefully to what their friends and teachers say and responding to their ideas considerately. Most pupils behave well at break times and lunchtimes. They engage positively in playground activities, such as sports and games. However, a very few pupils have limited self-control and do not follow adult instructions well enough.

Nearly all pupils are proud of their school and are keen to share their work. Most have positive attitudes towards their learning. Many are hardworking and enthusiastic learners, who work together well, and stay diligently on task for extended periods. This contributes well to the learning ethos in the school and has a positive effect on many pupils' standards and wellbeing. However, pupils' skills in improving and guiding their own learning are only just beginning to develop. A majority tend to rely too much on adults to direct them in their learning.

Most pupils take their responsibilities seriously and welcome opportunities to help shape the school's work. Members of the school council are proud of their involvement in the recent appointment of the headteacher. They have been instrumental in deciding on the school's values and in introducing the new behaviour approach, which has had a positive impact on pupil conduct. The eco-council is committed to the school environment. For example, they work effectively alongside the school caretaker to pick up litter and keep the school grounds looking tidy. They

take an active role in raising pupils' awareness of looking after their environment by organising recycling and encouraging energy conservation. The Criw Cymraeg promotes pupils' use of the phrase of the week enthusiastically. This has a positive impact on pupils' appreciation of the language.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. Most have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet. Older pupils speak confidently about the need to protect their identity and the dangers of contacting people online, when playing games for instance. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and keeping fit. Many participate enthusiastically and energetically in a wide range of physical activity such as the hop skip and jump club. This has a positive effect on their wellbeing and on their ability to co-operate effectively with others.

Members of the school council are proud of their involvement in organising fundraising activities for local and national charities and talk enthusiastically about their links with a school in Africa. This has positive effect on most pupils' awareness of the needs of others in their community and the wider world.

Many pupils and parents have responded positively to the school's focus on improving attendance. As a result, nearly all pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Across the school, most teachers develop effective working relationships with pupils and create a productive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Staff engage an effective range of strategies consistently to manage pupils' behaviour well. This includes dealing with occasional incidents of highly challenging behaviour with sensitivity. This supports pupils' learning and wellbeing successfully and encourages many pupils to make good progress.

Many teachers prepare an interesting range of activities that engage most pupils' interest and build well on pupils' prior learning. They match tasks appropriately to pupils' abilities and ensure that most pupils are motivated and challenged. They use support staff effectively to support pupils' learning. In these classes, introductions are brisk and purposeful and teachers using a range of strategies well. They use questioning effectively to progress pupils' learning. They focus on helping pupils to acquire the language necessary to collaborate effectively with others and to explain their learning. However, in a few classes, where teaching is less effective, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' achievement. They do not adapt the work to meet pupils' needs well enough and this means that learning activities do not always provide enough challenge for pupils, especially those who are more able. As a result, these pupils do not develop their independent learning skills and achieve well enough.

In most classes, teachers share the learning objective for the lesson with pupils and many identify clearly the success criteria that pupils need to be aware of to complete their work well. In the majority of classes, teachers' feedback indicates successfully to pupils what they do well and what they need to do to improve, however this is not consistent across the school. Overall, teachers do not use assessment for learning techniques frequently or well enough to encourage pupils to become reflective learners.

Teachers in the foundation phase, generally, plan an effective balance of activities led by staff and opportunities for pupils to work independently in the learning areas. They provide a range of purposeful activities for pupils to develop their skills. However, they do not plan enough opportunities for foundation phase pupils to develop pupils' independent learning skills in the outdoor areas. Teachers in key stage 2 plan for pupils' learning using a thematic approach that provides good coverage of all subjects. They are beginning to incorporate the main purposes of the revised curriculum for Wales into their planning. For example, teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to share their ideas and interests at the start of new topics. These topics provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales for example by visiting Cardiff.

Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to acquire an appropriate range of literacy and numeracy skills. However, opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in other areas of the curriculum are limited. The school has considered carefully requirements of the Digital Competence Framework and has begun to address gaps in its current provision for ICT. Overall, teachers support pupils to develop their Welsh language skills appropriately. As a result, many use a suitable range of basic vocabulary and sentence patterns with increasing confidence. However, teachers do not ensure sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their oral Welsh language skills enough in other areas of the curriculum and around the school. This limits the progress they make.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Staff create a welcoming, caring environment that nurtures pupils' personal social, spiritual and cultural skills well. They give a high priority to promoting the wellbeing of all pupils and providing effective support for vulnerable pupils. Staff know the pupils very well and respond sensitively and skilfully to their individual needs. Teaching assistants work effectively with individuals and groups of pupils during the school day and encourage them to talk about how they feel. This helps pupils to manage their feelings and raises their self-esteem. The school has successfully introduced a behavioral management approach built on agreed school values, which is having a positive impact on pupil behavior both in lessons and around the school.

The headteacher is committed to building community bonds and establishing productive working relationships with parents. The dedicated family engagement officer works very sensitively and effectively with families to support them. She engages successfully with the staff at the pre-school provision to ensure that nurture programmes support pupils' smooth transition into school. Through the happy families project, she ensures regular opportunities for parents to come into school to take part in a range of initiatives. These include the maths and reading cafés, the healthy eating cookery club and the 'dads of Ynysboeth do it yourself' project. A particularly notable example of the school's beneficial engagement with parents is the opportunity for pupils and parents to learn about e-safety through the family gaming club. Parents value these initiatives and, as a result, they are increasingly aware of what they can do at home to support their children's learning.

The school provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and culture issues. Collective worship and visits from the local priest promote pupils' understanding of a range of spiritual and moral issues well.

Provision to improve pupils' personal development is effective. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils learn about a range of issues such as anti-bullying, tolerating differences and respecting others through a series of well-organised lessons. The school helps pupils to understand about equality and diversity well. For example, pupils taste food from a range of countries and dress up in clothes from other cultures.

School leaders track and monitor pupils' progress carefully as they move through the school. The newly introduced systems clearly identify the progress of specific groups of learners well. School leaders and teachers are beginning to use this information effectively to respond to the needs of pupils and specific groups who need additional support. The school provides well for pupils who have special educational needs, and this has a positive effect on their progress. The individual education plans for these pupils include specific targets for improvement and staff provide well-planned support to help them achieve well. These plans are reviewed regularly with pupils and parents. Staff work effectively with specialist agencies, such as the educational psychology service, that provide them with valuable support and guidance to address the needs of specific pupils. As a result, most pupils who receive additional support make good progress towards their individual targets.

The school provides pupils with worthwhile opportunities to take on a wide variety of responsibilities, for example as members of different groups such as the school council, eco council or as digital leaders, playground leaders and prefects. This ensures that pupils are part of the decision-making process at the school. Members of these groups understand that they represent the views of others and through the school council regularly report to the governing body. As a result, many pupils understand how their actions contribute to the wider benefit of the community.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote the importance of healthy eating and drinking and the benefits of regular exercise. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn how to be healthy within the curriculum and through a wide range of extra-curricular clubs such as such as football, rugby, gaming, arts and crafts and the hop, skip and jump club. These promote the importance of physical fitness well and together with the pupil run fruit tuck shop, help pupils to make sensible lifestyle choices. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

During the very short time she has been at the school, the headteacher has promoted and shared a powerful vision for the school, which focuses on providing a safe, nurturing and supportive learning community based on mutual respect. She provides purposeful strategic direction for the school and is committed to improving pupils' wellbeing, building community relationships and nurturing independent, confident and self-motivated learners. The headteacher has been very effective in identifying areas for development and has begun to drive forward changes which are already resulting in improved pupil behaviour and standards of reading. She leads by example and provides a very good role model.

The headteacher has high expectations of herself, her leaders, staff and pupils. Other leaders, including the acting deputy headteacher, support the headteacher

well. Together they are beginning to have a positive impact on the work of the school. For example, in developing consistency of expectation regarding what pupils can achieve. Since the appointment of the headteacher, curriculum leaders have begun to take forward strategic priorities such as improving teaching to support pupils' independent learning. However, while the sharing of leadership responsibilities is a developing feature of the school, it is too early to assess its impact on pupil outcomes.

School leaders make effective use of a wide range of first-hand evidence to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are establishing effective systems to evaluate the school's performance, which include a detailed monitoring and evaluation cycle. They use a range of first-hand evidence, such as lesson observations, book scrutiny and learning walks effectively, to accurately identify areas for development. They base school improvement priorities directly on an analysis of a range of information on pupils' performance, national priorities and the outcome of monitoring. The school has recently strengthened the way it analyses information on pupils' progress through the implementation of regular meetings where teachers discuss each pupil's 'progress flight path' with the headteacher. This is beginning to impact on teachers' ability to meet pupils' needs.

The school supports the professional learning of staff well. Support staff are an integral part of the school team and attend staff meetings alongside teachers. This enables them to contribute effectively to achieving school priorities. Staff receive beneficial support and training from colleagues and, recently, have begun to share this successfully within the school. For example, the school is supporting vulnerable pupils effectively by working with the educational psychologist to help these pupils to manage their behaviour successfully. Nearly all teachers benefit from useful collaborative working with other schools, for example to improve aspects of teaching and learning. Performance management procedures link appropriately with identified actions for improvement.

Members of the governing body are supportive of the school's life and work and undertake their duties conscientiously. They contribute suitably to the self-evaluation process through taking part in learning walks, book scrutiny and through interviews with curriculum leaders. Through regular reports from the headteacher, governors have an appropriate understanding of the school's performance and provision. However, governors' roles in challenging leaders about pupil progress over time is limited.

The headteacher, with the support of the governing body, manages the school budget carefully. They target finances suitably to meet pupils' needs and to support priorities in the school's improvement plan. They maintain an attractive environment indoors. However, the outdoor areas, particularly in the foundation phase are underdeveloped and do not support independent learning effectively.

The school is successfully reducing the effect of poverty and deprivation on vulnerable pupils. It makes good use of the pupil development grant to provide additional support for those pupils who are eligible for free school meals. For example, the family engagement officer provides valuable support for parents and the school often 'goes the extra mile' to help pupils and their families if needed. This has had a positive effect on improving the standards and wellbeing of these pupils and enables nearly all to make good progress against their starting points.

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 (where appropriate) 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 undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- 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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