



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

**A report on**

**Betws Primary School**

**Betws Road  
Bridgend  
CF32 8YD**

**Date of inspection: January 2024**

**by**

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

## About Betws Primary School

Name of provider	Betws Primary School
Local authority	Bridgend County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	183
Pupils of statutory school age	144
Number in nursery classes	22
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 23.7%)	51.0%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 13.2%)	13.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	29/01/2024

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: [mylocalschool.gov.wales](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

## Overview

Betws Primary School is part of a federation with nearby Blaengarw Primary School. An acting executive headteacher provides overall leadership for the federation. However, each school has its own head of school and retains its unique character. The staff at both schools collaborate well together to benefit the pupils of each school.

Betws Primary a safe, happy and caring community where pupils thrive. Leaders and staff place a strong focus on supporting the well-being and development of pupils to enable them to become rounded citizens with positive attitudes to learning. The school's inclusive ethos permeates its work, with pupils in the local authority hearing impaired learning resource classroom very much part of everyday school life.

Pupils make good progress during their time at the school and talk enthusiastically about the opportunities and experience they have through their curriculum and about how they have the tools to support their independent learning. They are proud that they have an emerging voice in their school and opportunities to influence what they learn. Teachers are effective in creating stimulating learning spaces and lessons, which skilfully move the learning on.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons, when they move about the school and during play and lunchtimes. They display high levels of respect for adults and each other. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and this is evident in the way they are keen to learn new skills, particularly in oracy, reading and numeracy. However, pupils have limited opportunities to implement and develop these skills, particularly writing, in their work across the curriculum.

Leaders support staff development well. There is a strong focus on supporting the well-being of staff and ensuring they have access to suitable professional learning to improve their classroom practice. Staff collaborate effectively with other schools, particularly Blaengarw, and this impacts positively on pupils' outcomes at Betws Primary. Leaders are keen to evaluate the strengths of the school and to identify opportunities for further improvement. However, this work is at an early stage in its development as evaluations do not identify sharply enough the improvements that need to be made.

## Recommendations

R1 Use evaluation processes more effectively to inform school improvement work

R2 Ensure that pupils develop and use their writing and numeracy skills progressively and to the standard they are capable of during their time at school

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Many pupils start school with language and social skills that are lower than expected for their age. As they move through the school, most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, make good progress overall. However, as they get older, pupils do not always make the progress they could. Most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), including in the hearing-impaired learning resource class, make good progress against their individual targets.

The youngest pupils engage purposefully in their activities and are keen to talk with adults about their learning. Older pupils listen carefully to their peers and value the views of others and are keen to share their learning with adults, for example when describing their presentations about electricity. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils are confident, articulate speakers and listen well to each other and adults. They respond appropriately and enthusiastically to questions about their work and use a good range of vocabulary to present their views. Overall, most pupils' speaking and listening skills develop very well as they move through the school.

Over time, most pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. For example, younger pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them to read new words appropriately and they begin to establish meaning independently. Most pupils use their reading skills to support their work across the curriculum well. Most older pupils enjoy reading and talk confidently about their favourite authors and build stamina to read longer novels. By Year 6, many pupils read fluently and with expression.

In the nursery, many pupils are confident when exploring making marks to represent early writing. By Year 2, many pupils spell common words correctly and use their knowledge of letter sounds and patterns to help them to write independently. Many pupils are beginning to write for a range of purposes and organise their ideas into sequences of sentences, often using capital letters and full stops accurately. By Year 6, most pupils write at increasing length and with awareness of their audience, for example when writing to persuade others to support their point of view. During their time at school pupils generally make suitable progress in developing their writing skills. However, their progress slows at the top end of the school due to a lack of challenge and opportunity to apply their skills. Overall, across the school, pupils do not apply their writing skills well enough across the curriculum.

Most pupils are very keen to use the Welsh language in a range of contexts. When speaking Welsh, most younger pupils use suitable vocabulary and respond to commands and greetings appropriately. By Year 2, many pupils use basic phrases

confidently, for example when expressing their feelings. Most pupils ask and respond to simple questions effectively. By Year 6 many pupils take part in conversations using a suitable range of vocabulary and sentence patterns.

Most pupils make good progress in mathematics. Younger pupils work confidently with number. They collect and present information successfully, for instance when creating tally charts about favourite pets and fruits. By Year 3, pupils apply their knowledge of fractions to answer questions correctly and use directional language competently to plan a route. They use measuring skills independently and accurately when comparing their height with their peers. Most older pupils apply their mathematical knowledge, for instance of multiplication, effectively to solve problem. However, pupils' application of numeracy skills across the curriculum is less well developed.

Most pupils develop a range of digital skills well. Younger pupils use data handling programmes to present data effectively. They use digital skills confidently to support their learning in other subjects. Across the school, pupils use coding effectively when developing their literacy and numeracy skills. By Year 6, many pupils create informative multimedia presentations and present them confidently to an audience of younger pupils.

Most pupils develop and use their creative and physical skills appropriately. Younger pupils produce good quality artwork and take pride when drawing and painting, for example when recreating an aspect from a story they have been reading. They listen to a wide range of music and express their preferences. Older pupils embrace opportunities to experiment creatively. For example, in Year 4 and Year 5, pupils compose dance moves to popular music and consider the rhythm and dynamics of the music and how it will influence their choreography. Most younger pupils develop their physical skills appropriately, for instance when playing on an obstacle course as their bodies to manoeuvre around various equipment. They use their thinking and problem-solving skills effectively, for example when building habitats in the nature reserve.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

There are warm, caring and respectful relationships between pupils and staff. Nearly all pupils behave well and move respectfully and with a purpose around the school. Pupils know what is expected of them in terms of the way in which they should behave and as a result pupils exhibit positive behaviour. In addition, most pupils have high aspirations and understand why it is important to be at school and learning to help their future prospects. For example, members of the Criw Cymraeg speak about the importance of learning the Welsh language and explain that to work in Wales, you will be more successful getting a job if you speak Welsh.

Many pupils demonstrate a sense of pride at being part of a caring, nurturing and inclusive school. Pupils show that they value diversity and benefit from the support of one another. For example, pupils from the hearing-impaired learning resource centre teach adults and pupils in the rest of the school British Sign Language, which is used effectively around the school and helps pupils to feel included.

Nearly all pupils feel that staff listen to their views and take them into account when considering learning opportunities. Many pupils appreciate the 'Cool Chart' that gives them and their families an input into the learning by identifying things they are interested in learning about. This encourages pupils to become engaged in their learning and talk with increasing confidence about it as they move through the school. Most pupils persevere at their tasks, and complete their work successfully, particularly when activities match their needs and interests. Nearly all pupils are developing well as independent learners and explain clearly what they are doing and why they are doing it. Nearly all pupils describe how their teachers' feedback helps them to improve their learning and they are aware of their individual targets. However, pupils do not routinely respond to this feedback to bring about improvements to their work.

Pupils' well-being is a strength of the school including during less formal times of the day. For example, during breaktimes and lunchtime, pupils enjoy exploring nurturing activities the highly trained support staff create for them. In addition, pupils further develop independence and collaboration through other worthwhile activities. For example, the oldest pupils benefit from a Skills Club where they learn basic skills such as how to use kitchen tools safely.

Most pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay safe. For example, they understand not to share their passwords when working on the internet and understand that they can seek support from a trusted adult if they experience something that makes them feel uncomfortable. Nearly all pupils show a good understanding of the importance of making healthy food choices and the need for a balanced diet. However, they do not always make healthy choices.

Nearly all pupils are aware of their rights as children. They are becoming more confident and sophisticated in their understanding of their emotions and how to express how they are feeling. Pupils know who to turn to when they need support from school staff and benefit from help from a variety of external agencies.

Pupils have appropriate influence over the life and work of the school. In class they contribute ideas about what they would like to learn. Across the school many have a role in the various leadership groups, including pupils with ALN and those who attend the local authority's hearing impaired learning resource centre. For example, pupils who are members of the Criw Cymraeg are passionate and effective in their role and they plan a weekly Welsh language radio announcement to the whole school. As a result, the development of the Welsh language benefits from their drive.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

There is a shared vision for the curriculum across the federation that takes suitable account of the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. Regular professional learning and collaboration between federation staff supports the development of the school's curriculum appropriately. This is an ongoing process and staff continue to refine their planning to improve their curriculum provision. Across the school, teachers plan a variety of suitable lessons around a chosen theme. This provides an appropriate route for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils develop a full range of skills progressively as they move through the school.

There is a consistent approach to the development of pupils' literacy and number skills across the school. The provision for developing pupils' oracy skills in English is a particular strength. A range of experiences and activities ensure that pupils build their confidence as they progress through the school. The planned daily phonics and reading sessions impact successfully on pupils' writing and support other areas of their learning well. However, despite teachers providing opportunities for pupils to develop discrete literacy and numeracy skills in lessons, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply these in other areas of the curriculum. In addition, provision for the development of older pupils' writing and numeracy skills does not always ensure that they are provided with sufficient challenge. Provision for developing pupils' Welsh and digital skills is good overall.

Pupils contribute enthusiastically to the planning of termly topics by suggesting ideas they want to learn at the start of each new topics. Here, teachers immerse pupils in their learning and skilfully draw out their interests and what they would like to learn. Teachers use the pupils' ideas and questions at the beginning of class topics to guide learning activities. As a result, most pupils enjoy what they are doing as they are engaged in their learning.

The school is beginning to develop its curriculum to reflect the nature of its context, including activities that reflect the cultural and linguistic nature of a diverse Wales and the wider world. For example, pupils learn about Celtic history during their 'Time Will Tell' topic as well as learning about festivals, such as Diwali. The school makes good use of visits, including residential trips, to enhance the curriculum and pupils' learning experiences. For example, pupils visit Llancaiach Fawr and the Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagan's. To enhance pupils' learning, the school offers a wide variety of worthwhile extra-curricular clubs, such as Seeds and Weeds, Self Help Skills and STEAM, where they develop science, technology, engineering and mathematical skills. Pupils value these sessions as they help them to learn new skills and support their well-being.

Staff establish positive working relationships with pupils. This creates a good industrious environment and allows pupils to feel confident that they can ask questions and request help with their learning. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well in lessons and most pupils are attentive and respectful. Support staff across the school are effective in their roles and support pupils in important aspects of their learning. They reflect the warm, thoughtful and supportive ethos of the school in their working relationships with pupils and provide strong support for vulnerable pupils and those with ALN, including those in the hearing-impaired learning resource class.

Most teachers use the indoor classroom effectively to enhance the curriculum and create engaging environments for pupils. For example, teachers in the classrooms for the youngest pupils plan learning environments that promote independence effectively. Outdoor learning is a strength. Nearly all pupils enjoy beneficial opportunities to learn through forest school sessions where they develop important skills such as teamwork and problem-solving, whilst also improving their well-being.

In most classes, teachers deliver lessons at a good pace. They share the lesson aims clearly and use a suitable range of resources to engage pupils' interest. In the most successful lessons, teachers plan highly engaging activities set in real-life contexts for learning. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and generally

plan activities that meet their pupils' needs well. They use questioning effectively to challenge, check and extend pupils' understanding and to move learning forward. Overall, teachers generally provide worthwhile opportunities to review and discuss learning at different points during lessons. Across the school, the quality of teachers' feedback to pupils' work is becoming more supportive. As a result, pupils have an increasing understanding of what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school is an inclusive and happy community that is highly effective in supporting the emotional, health and social needs of its pupils. Staff place a strong emphasis on promoting positive behaviour and nurturing pupils' respect for each other. This is evident in the natural courtesy and exceptionally good behaviour nearly all pupils demonstrate to adults and one another. The integration and support of the pupils attending the hearing-impaired learning resource centre is extremely effective and the school promotes British Sign Language to ensure all pupils can fully access all school activities. The highly skilled staff ensure that these pupils make very good progress.

Provision for pupils identified as having ALN is strong and early interventions are a strength of the school. The ALN co-ordinator works well across the federation and with external agencies to ensure that there is effective identification, tracking and support for individual pupils. Staff have a clear understanding of the needs of pupils. They develop and use extensive pupil profiles well in class to inform provision for pupils. Multi-agency target setting reviews are effective in identifying what pupils have achieved over time and in setting targets for next steps. As a result, most parents feel that they know what the school is doing to help their child make progress. These arrangements ensure that most of the pupils who benefit from additional support make good progress towards their learning goals.

Well-being has a high focus in the life of the school and is a particular strength. Leaders identify early any pupils who are at risk of not engaging in their learning and provide effective intervention strategies to address their needs. As a result, most are happy, well behaved, and ready to learn. The school provides a range of bespoke interventions that support the more vulnerable pupils well. These allow pupils time and space to reflect on their behaviours in a calm and protective environment. This helps these pupils to build their resilience and to fully engage in their learning successfully and make progress in line with their peers.

The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils well. Teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to appreciate diversity and to celebrate differences, for example through discussions about different faiths, such as Christianity and Hinduism. As a result, nearly all pupils reflect on their own values and beliefs and challenge stereotypes. Staff provide pupils with worthwhile experiences that encourage them to consider their rights and the needs of others. For example, pupils take part in events to understand the harmful effects of racism. Leaders provide pupils with valuable opportunities to engage with events in the local community and visit places of interest in the local area regularly, such as Bryngarw Park. This ensures that pupils feel proud and part of where they live.



Pupils' Welsh identity, heritage and culture are actively encouraged through whole-school initiatives, activities and competitions. This ensures that most pupils have a developing awareness of Welsh traditions and an appreciation for its language. Pupils have worthwhile opportunities to make a positive difference to the lives of others in the community and the wider world, for example through participating in fund raising activities to raise money for local and national charities.

Teachers provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to take on leadership roles during their time at the school. As a result, most pupils feel that their ideas are listened to, and that they contribute effectively to the life and work of the school. Members of the pupil-led groups collaborate successfully on priority areas within the school to bring about desired improvements, for example through the promotion of the Welsh language.

Leaders promote a positive culture of safeguarding that is understood by all who work at the school through a system of effective policies and procedures. As a result, the school is effective in ensuring that the welfare of all pupils has the highest priority. The assistance the Pupil Support Officer provides for pupils and families is extremely effective, for example through regular monitoring of pupil attendance and providing appropriate support to families in need. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe in school and have high aspirations for their future.

### **Leadership and management**

The acting executive headteacher has developed a vision for collaborative working across the federation that is effective and beneficial to both schools. She demonstrates professional values and sets high expectations for leadership, provision, pupil outcomes and their well-being across the two schools. In addition, she promotes a strong climate for collaboration and close working between the two schools, for example on curriculum design, and with other local primary schools and the neighbouring secondary school.

In the federation's two schools, each head of school has a clearly defined role and responsibilities within the leadership structure, ensuring that each has a key role in developing their individual school. At Betws Primary School, the head of school demonstrates sensitive, inclusive leadership that builds leadership capacity across the school. Staff understand their roles well and engage effectively in school improvement activities.

Members of the federation's governing body understand their roles and contribute to the strategic direction of the federation. Governors visit the school regularly and have an appropriate understanding of each school's strengths and the challenges they face. Governors provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge when holding senior leaders to account. They fulfil their statutory duties, for instance by ensuring that the school makes appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking and by working hard to encourage pupils to make healthy choices.

Leaders ensure that spending is appropriate and regularly monitor the budget, including suitable use of the pupil development grant, for example by supporting pupils and their families to overcome barriers to school attendance. They monitor attendance at the school effectively and the progress pupils make, although analysis of the achievement of groups of pupils is at an early stage of development. Leaders

and staff create a highly effective, robust culture of safeguarding across both schools. As a result, all pupils feel safe at school and learn how they can keep themselves safe. Overall, leaders promote good working relations with parents, who value the school's effective communication.

Under the direction of the acting executive headteacher, the heads of school, alongside other senior leaders, monitor their school's performance appropriately. This work informs the school's improvement plan and sets out the expectations for improvement and expected progress, with clear timescales. Suitable monitoring activities take place to inform leaders of the progress the school is making. However, leaders' ability to monitor robustly is at an early stage of development. As a result, current evaluations lack rigour and limit their ability to bring about progress in a few key areas of the school's provision.

Leaders support and encourage staff to engage with professional learning activities to support their development and that of the school. The acting executive headteacher is keen to identify and share good practice in each of the schools. For example, staff at Betws benefited from collaborating with Blaengarw to improve their knowledge and approaches to the teaching of phonics. This has led to pupils making good and sustained progress in developing their reading, spelling and writing skills. Over time, the school demonstrates a track record in sustaining improvements, for example by addressing previous inspection recommendations successfully.

Work to support pupils and their families with outside agencies is highly effective. There are frequent events at the school for parents to attend and receive valuable support, for example Early Help and Holistic steps and Active Young People. In addition, leaders ensure that there is support for staff well-being through outreach services, and this is greatly valued. Governors understand their role to support the well-being of the acting executive headteacher.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer 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/carers 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' well-being, 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](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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