



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

A report on

**Betws Primary School
Betws Road
Bridgend
CF32 8YD**

Date of inspection: November 2017

by

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

About Betws Primary School

Betws Primary School is in the village of Bettws, approximately six miles from Bridgend.

There are currently 228 pupils on roll between the ages of 3 and 11. There are six single-age classes and three mixed-age classes, including a nursery class with 29 full-time pupils. The school also has two learning resource base classes with 12 pupils from the foundation phase and key stage 2. Most of these pupils come from a wide geographical area within the local authority. The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is 44%, which is significantly above the national average of 19%.

The school identifies around 42% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is well above the national average of 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A very few pupils are in the care of the local authority. None come from homes where Welsh is the first language.

Betws Primary School is in collaboration with another local school. The headteacher of the local school took responsibility for Betws Primary in April 2016 and spends the equivalent of two and a half days each week at the school. The school was last inspected in July 2011.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

The headteacher works conscientiously with the staff and has developed a strong team during the limited time she is at the school each week. Many pupils make suitable progress and achieve at least expected standards from their starting points by Year 6.

All pupils enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is good and they have a positive attitude to learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support pupils' learning. However, teachers' planning across the school does not ensure enough challenge for pupils, and there are some areas for development in assessment and curriculum planning.

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 teachers' expectations to increase the challenge for all pupils
- R2 Improve pupils' reading skills
- R3 Improve standards in weaker areas of information and communication technology (ICT)
- R4 Plan purposeful opportunities for pupils in the foundation phase to develop their independent learning skills in the outdoor environment
- R5 Ensure that leaders' roles are distributed appropriately, and that they focus strategically on improving outcomes for all pupils

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

Most pupils enter the school with literacy, personal and social skills that are below that expected for their age. Over time, many make suitable progress and, by Year 6, achieve at least expected standards from their starting points. However, pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes and more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

Many pupils in the learning resource bases achieve well in line with their needs and abilities. They recall prior learning well and make purposeful progress in developing their numeracy and literacy skills. Most pupils in the specialist hearing unit make good progress in developing communication skills and make their needs and feelings known through sign and sustained eye-contact.

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils listen well to adults and to peers, and follow instructions carefully, particularly at the beginning of each lesson. Many foundation phase pupils talk purposefully to each other, for example when taking the role of the shop keeper in Pudding Lane bakery or when discussing their work in class. Most key stage 2 pupils show respect for one another's ideas during paired discussions and express themselves articulately in small groups when sharing the kind acts of the Good Samaritan. A few of the older pupils use a lively and extensive vocabulary when discussing their achievements.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop suitable phonic reading strategies and use them confidently when reading unfamiliar words. By the end of the phase, a majority can re-tell stories such as 'The Owl that was afraid of the dark' correctly, but only a minority develop fluency and accuracy when reading aloud. Most key stage 2 pupils use their reading skills appropriately to access other areas of the curriculum. They extract information from texts, but do not always filter the information well enough. A majority of pupils read correctly and have a suitable understanding of the text, but many pupils do not enjoy reading and lack confidence when discussing their books.

Pupils' writing skills strengthen gradually as they move through the school. By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils use a range of relevant adjectives to create effect in extended pieces when writing Cinderella's diary. They write appropriately for a variety of purposes, for example when writing instructions on how to build a snowman. In key stage 2, many pupils give suitable consideration to the audience and are beginning to organise and present their ideas purposefully. A few more able pupils create vivid descriptions of a fantasy location, report on the major organs of the body and build convincing arguments for and against the impact of technology on their lives. Most pupils are beginning to gain confidence across a range of types of writing in other areas of the curriculum. However, the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of them varies too much across the school.

Many pupils make appropriate progress in developing their mathematics skills. In the foundation phase, many pupils use numbers to a hundred confidently to carry out calculations, and use block graphs and pictograms to represent data. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils order decimal numbers confidently. They calculate fractions

and percentages, and use an appropriate range of graphs and charts to organise data. More able pupils solve problems, and check whether their answers are reasonable and accurate. However, most pupils do not use their numeracy skills to the same level in other subjects as they do in mathematics.

Many pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their basic skills in Welsh. By Year 2, many use simple phrases and basic vocabulary often during the school day, but they lack confidence when reading simple texts. By Year 6, most pupils use basic vocabulary to respond to simple questions and more able pupils are beginning to form their own questions to ask others. However, most pupils in key stage 2 do not engage in Welsh conversation often enough outside formal lessons.

Most pupils demonstrate suitable skills in ICT. In the foundation phase, they are able to use appropriate range of applications to practise number skills and records their learning competently. In key stage 2, most pupils present their work creatively and create simple characters and add sounds confidently. They have developed data bases and presented their findings, but most pupils in key stage 2 have a limited understanding of this important area of ICT. For example, most of the older pupils do not understand spreadsheets well enough.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

All 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. Most pupils show respect to adults and to their peers when greeting people and by holding doors open for others. All pupils are considerate of their friends' needs, for example when signing during assembly for the pupils in the learning resource base.

Nearly all pupils behave well in class and have a positive attitude to learning and to school. They have a suitable level of commitment and support each other willingly when working together. Many pupils persevere for extended periods of time, consider different ways of working and demonstrate resilience when faced with a problem. They are beginning to be involved in making decisions about their own learning, which is influencing the teachers' termly planning successfully.

Most pupils take their responsibilities seriously and are very glad of the opportunities that they receive. In key stage 2, the eco-council and members of the eco club take an active part in school life and raise pupils' awareness of looking after their environment by organising recycling and energy saving activities. As well as the positive impact of the playground champions on pupils' behaviour, the girls' network has empowered many girls to resolve and improve any issues between friendship groups. Many of the older girls show empathy towards each other and listen to other pupils' views successfully.

Most pupils develop their social and life skills well through a range of events throughout the year. Year 6 pupils engage well in enterprise projects such as printing and selling baseball caps, and taking part in the formula one pro-racer challenge. Many pupils demonstrate empathy towards others within the school community and further afield. For example, the school council is involved in organising worthwhile fundraising activities, such as a coffee morning to support a national cancer charity, and contribute regularly towards 'Hunger lunch', a local food bank linked to the church.

Most pupils have positive attitudes towards healthy lifestyles and regular exercise. They understand the importance of eating healthily in school. For example, nursery pupils make appropriate choices when making sandwiches in a cooking activity and nearly all pupils bring fruit to eat during breaktimes. Most pupils take part regularly in physical activities during the school day, participate in a range of after-school clubs and compete at local sports events. Many take part enthusiastically in the 'tip toe' and 'trotting Tuesday' walking to school initiative and are knowledgeable when discussing the importance of keeping fit. Most pupils understand how to stay safe when using the internet.

Pupils attendance rates place the school consistently above the average when compared with similar schools. Most pupils are punctual in the morning.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

The curriculum provides a purposeful range of learning experiences for most pupils. It builds on their prior learning and meets the needs of most pupils successfully. Long and medium-term plans provide teachers with an appropriate overview; however, teachers do not always plan and deliver learning in all subjects successfully. Overall, there is a suitable degree of breadth and balance in the curriculum.

The school arranges stimulating opportunities for pupils to visit local places of interest, such as visits to a local manufacturing company and a speed boat trip, to reinforce pupils' understanding of forces. The mountain schools course develops the pupils' team building skills and an appreciation of different environments. Teachers provide pupils in key stage 2 with purposeful opportunities to enrich pupils' knowledge of Wales through residential visits in Snowdonia and the Brecon Beacons.

High quality planning of interesting activities for the development of pupils' oracy skills is successful. For example, most pupils' confidence develops well through playing different characters during the school 's annual book week. Teachers are beginning to place a suitable emphasis on providing opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. However, the planning and provision for pupils to develop their ICT skills in other areas of learning is more limited.

In the foundation phase, staff provide focused and continuous activities that include purposeful opportunities for pupils to investigate, role play and practise their physical skills in the indoor environment. Most teachers plan enough activities for pupils to make their own choices and to contribute to their own learning. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to enrich their experiences in the outdoor learning environment.

Overall, the quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. Most teachers plan learning activities that have appropriate objectives and staff communicate these clearly to pupils. Planned activities stimulate and engage many pupils well, build on pupils' prior learning and ensure that lessons proceed at a suitable pace. A majority of teachers ask a wide range of open questions that help to extend most pupils' learning. They prompt pupils to explain their initial thinking well. All staff manage pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school successfully. However, the activities that teachers provide do not always challenge pupils well enough, particularly the more able. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as well as they

could. Many of the teachers and support assistants tend to lead too many activities. This means that pupils do not have enough regular opportunities to make decisions and choices about what and how they learn during class activities. Most teacher expectations of what the pupils can achieve are too low.

Opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in designated lessons is appropriate. However, the school does not ensure that pupils practise the Welsh they have learnt often enough in informal situations around the school.

The quality of teachers' questioning and verbal feedback to pupils as they carry out tasks in formal and informal situations is purposeful. This helps pupils to know how well they are doing and encourages them to think about what they can do to improve their work. Most teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to self-assess their own work. They are beginning use assessment outcomes effectively to identify individuals and groups of pupils who require support purposefully.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has a comprehensive system for identifying and tracking pupil progress on their journey through the school. Teachers use this information appropriately in order to identify pupils who need additional support in literacy, numeracy and emotionally. All pupils with additional learning needs have effective learning plans, which staff, pupils and parents review regularly. They meet the needs of individual pupils successfully. These help most targeted pupils to make suitable progress. Learning support officers provide effective in-class support to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills successfully.

The learning resource provision provides a nurturing environment that benefits its pupils. The staff plan carefully to meet a wide range of educational and social needs. The school works well with a wide range of specialist services which support the pupils and parents very effectively.

Staff know their pupils' needs well. There is a highly effective programme to support vulnerable pupils and adults. For example, most pupils attend regular sessions with the wellbeing officer to develop their social and emotional skills. This has a positive impact on raising pupils' self-esteem and most pupils demonstrate improved levels of confidence and engagement in school life. The involvement in a young people's project has been successful in developing girls' resilience strategies and increased their aspirations.

The school gives parents useful information about events and projects and this helps parents to understand and support the work their children are doing effectively. Identified parents attend workshop activities during a termly open day to celebrate their children's work and partake in a four-week family learning programme where they work alongside their children on projects such as shelter building and play development. Staff communicate with the parents regularly and inform them about their child's progress. However, the annual report to parents is too brief and does not focus well enough on pupils' progress.

Pupils have worthwhile opportunities in the curriculum to discuss the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. Pupils in the early years plan healthy food and snacks and grow vegetables in large wooden containers. Regular opportunities for physical education lessons and a broad range of after school sports

clubs, for example, football and hockey, benefit pupils' fitness levels. The school provides a purposeful range of extra-curricular clubs and activities that enrich pupils' learning successfully and contribute well to pupils' standard of wellbeing.

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

The school council is well-established and members take their role seriously. They are currently working on a programme to develop pupils' rights and this is beginning to strengthen the older pupils' understanding that pupils have a voice in the school. However, they make limited contributions to the decision making in the school. Pupils of all ages participate in making decisions about the content of their topics and classroom activities on a regular basis.

The school is caring, inclusive and nurtures pupils' personal and social skills well. All staff and pupils use sign language during hymn singing and storytelling to include all members of the school community. Staff make good use of the project mountain schools, where pupils learn about trust, resolving conflicts and team work while taking part in outdoor activities. The school promotes respect and tolerance well through classroom activities, whole school assemblies and charity events. These provide suitable opportunities for pupils to reflect on how they should treat others and to understand the diversity of the wider world.

Provision to develop pupils' creative and physical skills is successful. Leaders offer good opportunities for pupils to engage in trips and visits, for example to the SWALEC cricket ground. Education in theatre companies motivate and engage pupils by performing at the school. Through a range of planned activities, pupils develop a broad understanding of world religions. However, there are only a few activities to develop the pupils' cultural development.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The headteacher who oversees the school works conscientiously on leadership and management in the limited time that she is at the school each week. She receives effective support from the head of school and staff, who work well together as a team to ensure that the school runs efficiently on a day to day basis.

The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body place equality of opportunity for pupils of all backgrounds at the heart of their vision for the school. They are firmly committed to ensuring the best interests of all pupils, and all staff support this well. Following a number of recent challenges, leaders now have a clear understanding of their roles and carry these out with dedication. However, it is too soon to measure the impact of these improvements.

The school is developing effective systems to monitor the progress of agreed actions through regular staff and phase meetings, but they are at an early stage of development. The school is improving steadily and senior leaders are developing suitable procedures to address shortcomings in teaching or learning experiences in

order to improve pupils' standards and wellbeing. For example, they have changed the deployment of teaching assistants in order to address the persistent trend of underachievement of boys across the school over time.

Members of the governing body have a sound knowledge of their responsibilities and carry these out purposefully. They meet regularly and work diligently to direct the work of the school, monitor finances and agree relevant policies. The governing body is beginning to challenge the school regarding pupil progress and they have a purposeful understanding of pupil outcomes. Despite this, governors do not always review the whole provision regularly enough in order to evaluate the effect on standards.

Senior leaders undertake an extensive range of monitoring activities that help them evaluate the quality of the school's work purposefully. Recently, they have identified more accurately important areas for improvement, such as raising teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve and the lack of opportunities for foundation phase pupils to develop their independent learning in the outdoor provision.

There is a close link between the self-evaluation report's outcomes and priorities in the development plan. The quality of improvement planning is sound and the current plan has relevant and measurable actions for improvement. However, the school has a variable track record of the success of previous targets on making improvements for all groups of pupils.

The head of school manages teachers' performance suitably to develop staff expertise that link appropriately to school and national priorities. The effective partnership with the headteacher's other school has resulted in improving the quality of leadership at all levels and training opportunities for all staff. For example, the introduction of the pupil progress meetings has improved teachers' accuracy in assessment.

The headteacher manages the school's finances and resources purposefully, with the support of the governing body. Spending decisions link suitably to strategic priorities and improvement planning. The headteacher deploys staff efficiently. For example, a learning support officer undertakes emotional literacy sessions with pupils every day, and this promotes strong levels of pupil wellbeing. The school plans the use of the pupil development grant suitably to ensure that pupils of all backgrounds achieve at an appropriate level. However, it does not target the grant specifically enough to meet the needs of all pupils eligible for free school meals.

Resources are generally appropriate to meet pupils' needs and the targets in the improvement plan. The indoor environment supports teaching and learning effectively and planned opportunities develop pupils' social and creative skills well. However, provision in the outdoor environment is less effective.

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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