



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

A report on

**Coed Hirwaun Primary School
Cwrt y Carw
Margam
Port Talbot
SA13 2TS**

Date of inspection: January 2018

by

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

About Coed Hirwaun Primary School

Coed Hirwaun Primary School is in Margam in Neath Port Talbot. There are 182 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11 years, including 23 who attend part-time in the nursery.

Around 6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is notably lower than the national average of 19%. Nearly all pupils are of white British origin. A very few pupils speak Welsh as their first language and no pupil speaks English as an additional language.

The school identifies around 10% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is below the national average of 22%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are looked after by the local authority.

Estyn last inspected the school in May 2011. The headteacher took up post in April 2015.

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

Coed Hirwaun Primary school is a successful and caring learning community. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, behave well and display high levels of independence. The school's engaging curriculum ensures that most pupils develop effective literacy and numeracy skills. Many pupils have strong information and communication technology (ICT) skills, which they use confidently in a wide range of contexts.

The standard of teaching at the school is good. Positive relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils are happy and make good progress in their learning. Teachers know the pupils well and have a good understanding of their individual needs. The headteacher and governing body provide purposeful and effective leadership. This ensures that the school maintains a strong focus on continuous improvement.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Improve standards of reading and spelling in the foundation phase
- R2 Ensure that all improvement priorities have clear and measurable success criteria, and that leaders target the pupil development grant more effectively
- R3 Improve the consistency with which high quality written feedback helps pupils improve their work

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils enter the school with knowledge and skills that are at or above the level expected for their age. As they move through the school, most make strong progress in improving their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. They use these skills confidently to support their learning across the curriculum. Most pupils with additional learning needs make effective progress towards their individual goals.

Most pupils have strong English oracy skills. In the foundation phase, they listen well and talk enthusiastically about their work. For example, pupils in nursery use imaginative language to talk about how their potion containing eyeballs, bats and snakes will turn an adult into a frog. In key stage 2, most pupils continue to improve their oracy skills well. Many speak confidently on a range of subjects using mature and subject specific language. For example, pupils in Year 4 explain clearly their choice of method for solving numeracy problems. In a majority of classes, pupils' Welsh oracy skills are good. For example, pupils speak confidently about themselves and their families. However, by the end of key stage 2, a minority of pupils do not use a wide enough range of vocabulary and sentence patterns to express themselves confidently.

In the foundation phase, many pupils make satisfactory progress in recognising an appropriate range of letters and their associated sounds. They use this knowledge suitably to read simple texts. However, a minority of pupils do not develop their reading skills well enough and do not use a wide enough range of strategies when faced with unfamiliar words. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils are confident, fluent readers who enjoy reading a wide range of texts. Older pupils in particular use skills such as inference and skimming with accuracy. They express preferences for different authors and types of book. In Year 6, many pupils have very positive attitudes towards reading and regularly read a wide range of novels for pleasure. The majority of pupils read simple Welsh texts with appropriate pronunciation and understanding.

In the foundation phase, most pupils write well for a comprehensive range of purposes. Younger pupils make plausible attempts at writing simple sentences, for example to sequence a nursery rhyme in the reception class. In Year 1, pupils write short sentences in Welsh well to describe what colours they like. By Year 2, more able pupils write at increasing length. They use a wide range of vocabulary to make their writing interesting. However, throughout the foundation phase pupils do not develop their spelling skills well enough. In key stage 2, most pupils improve their writing skills well. They write confidently for a range of different audiences. Many pupils have a secure understanding of how to structure different types of writing. They spell accurately and use a wide range of punctuation correctly. More able pupils in particular use adventurous language to engage the reader effectively. Nearly all pupils develop neat cursive handwriting and present their work with care. Most pupils use their literacy skills confidently and well in other subjects throughout the curriculum.

In the foundation phase, many pupils improve their numeracy skills quickly. In nursery, they demonstrate a good understanding of numbers to 5 when playing hoopla games. In Year 1, pupils use money well when paying for different items of pirate clothing. By Year 2, many pupils work confidently with numbers up to 100 and have a sound grasp of the properties of shapes and measurement. They apply their number skills well to help them solve simple word problems. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils have secure numeracy skills. They use these skills well to support their learning in a wide range of different subjects. For example, older pupils use their knowledge of capacity to measure and record the size of their lungs in their science experiment. Many pupils solve real life problems accurately using a range of numeracy skills, often choosing their own methods to complete the task.

As they move through the school, most pupils develop effective ICT skills, which they use confidently in a wide range of different contexts. In Year 2, many pupils draw detailed pictures of aliens using appropriate software. In key stage 2, many pupils achieve high standards of ICT. For example, in Year 6, many pupils use formulae correctly in spreadsheets to create a shopping list within a given budget, and produce mature persuasive presentations to convince designers to vote for their rollercoaster.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and well mannered, greet people happily, and show courtesy to others. They demonstrate respect for adults and for one another. They listen carefully to what their friends and teachers say, responding to their ideas with consideration. Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and are confident when in the school's environment. They feel safe and know what to do if they are worried or anxious. They respond well to adult guidance and support. Many pupils take their additional responsibility conscientiously. For example, older pupils support and care for younger pupils thoughtfully when acting as playground 'buddies'.

Most pupils have an understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet. Older pupils explain clearly the need to protect their identity online, the importance of not sharing personal information and having strong passwords. Most pupils understand the need to eat and drink healthily and to take regular exercise. They organise their own fruit tuck-shop successfully and enjoy improving their fitness through participating in a suitable range of extra-curricular sporting activities including netball and rugby.

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning and engage fully in lessons. They settle quickly and move between tasks sensibly and efficiently. For example, on entering the classroom each morning, Year 1 pupils begin independent learning activities without direction, such as logging onto the Welsh government's virtual learning environment. Many pupils sustain concentration for extended periods and persevere well when they find work challenging. Most speak enthusiastically about their school and the satisfaction they gain from their learning. Across the school, pupils demonstrate a high level of independence and this contributes significantly to the strong progress they make in their learning. For example, without adult prompting or input, Year 6 pupils research information they need to help them complete work in the classroom skilfully.

Most pupils contribute purposefully to decisions about their learning. In the foundation phase, they help teachers to plan their continuous and enhanced learning activities successfully. In key stage 2, pupils choose what to research within their thematic projects, such as the Victorians. This contributes to pupils' high levels of engagement positively. The school council works enthusiastically, for example to improve the playground environment. However, its contribution to wider improvement is at an early stage of development.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The standard of teaching is good. Throughout the school, there are strong and highly productive working relationships between staff and pupils. This allows pupils to engage positively with all adults in whom they have confidence and trust. Most teachers use a wide range of successful teaching strategies to enthuse pupils and engage them effectively in their learning, such as exciting practical science activities. They use a wide variety of questioning techniques well to develop pupils' thinking and to further their understanding. Most teachers plan interesting learning activities that challenge pupils at a suitable level and help to develop their independence. As a result, pupils participate in nearly all lessons enthusiastically and most make effective progress.

Teachers use a suitable range of strategies to help pupils understand what makes a successful piece of work, such as explaining what a good one looks like. They provide purposeful oral feedback during lessons that helps pupils make their work better. Many teachers plan worthwhile opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own work and that of their peers. Most older pupils understand the purpose of these processes and use them to improve their work successfully. Teachers' written feedback is often useful in helping pupils to know what they need to do to address weaknesses in their work. However, it is not consistently effective throughout the school.

Teachers use an engaging thematic approach to learning that provides pupils with a stimulating curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to make regular visits to local places of interest, such as Llancaiach Fawr and a local fairground, support the school's curriculum well and enrich pupils' learning experiences effectively. Extra-curricular clubs supplement the curriculum successfully. For example, the well-attended 'coding club' enhances pupils' ICT skills well. Throughout the school, teachers provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to direct their own learning, such as through 'daily dos' challenge sessions. These are very successful in developing pupils' independent learning skills and improving their resilience. The school is implementing foundation phase principles effectively. Teachers plan interesting outdoor learning activities for all pupils in their stimulating outdoor areas. These opportunities enhance pupils' learning and develop their independence well. However, pupils do not always have opportunities to access the outdoor provision through choice.

Most teachers plan successfully for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. They provide pupils with regular and meaningful opportunities to apply their skills in other subjects. For example, in Year 1, teachers plan for pupils to improve their oracy skills by making presentations to the class on a light source that they had designed and made. Nearly all teachers provide pupils with stimulating opportunities to use their ICT skills across all curriculum areas.

For example, pupils in Year 5 use a coding program to create Welsh conversations between characters and use simple databases to interrogate census data from the Victorian era.

The curriculum and school environment promote the Welsh language and culture well. Teachers include interesting elements of Welsh heritage and culture within their topic work appropriately. For example, pupils in Year 4 study Welsh castles and in Year 5 famous Welsh musicians. Teachers have begun to plan a comprehensive programme of work that develops pupils' Welsh language skills progressively. There are a useful range of opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh skills in other situations during the school day, for example in the playground. However, many of these initiatives are at an early stage of development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school's processes for tracking pupils' progress are robust. Leaders use information, such as the outcomes of teacher assessment and national testing, well to recognise pupils' strengths and areas for improvement. They identify those who require additional help at an early stage and provide appropriate support to meet their needs. The individual plans of identified pupils contain detailed, meaningful targets. Pupils and parents make an effective contribution to these processes and this ensures that they understand the targets fully. When required, the school involves specialist services helpfully. This ensures that teachers and pupils receive beneficial advice and support. Intervention strategies have a positive effect on the progress of identified pupils, for example those to improve pupils' literacy skills in key stage 2.

The school has effective arrangements to support pupils' wellbeing. Staff have created a caring community that nurtures pupils' personal and social skills effectively. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and respond sensitively to the needs and interests of individuals. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, most pupils demonstrate very good behaviour in class and around the school. The school's focus on promoting positive values contributes well to the caring ethos and strong supportive atmosphere within the school. The emphasis on the rights of children successfully reinforces this and ensures that pupils feel respected.

Provision for developing pupils' independence is particularly strong and teachers encourage them to use their initiative and to try various approaches before asking for help. These are effective strategies in developing pupils' resilience. The school encourages pupils to participate in pupil voice groups, such as the school and eco council well. However, their opportunities to inform decisions at a whole school level are at an early stage.

The school makes appropriate arrangements to support healthy eating and drinking. There is a strong emphasis on this aspect throughout the curriculum. For example, pupils in key stage 2 design and make fruit kebabs to help them learn about healthy food choices. All teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of fitness related activities through physical education lessons and after school clubs. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Topic work, such as studying the journey of a banana and recognising the impact of global disasters on people and the environment, enhances pupils' moral, cultural and social understanding well. Organised visits from learning assistants from China introduce worthwhile activities to develop pupils' understanding of Chinese art and culture. Valuable links with local places of worship provide interesting opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual awareness. These include visits to a local church to learn about Christian celebrations.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher is a committed and highly motivated leader who heads an effective team. Working together, they deliver their vision of developing a curriculum that engages all learners and delivers strong pupil standards successfully. Leaders communicate their expectations clearly to a willing staff who take forward plans purposefully as a team. The school's arrangements for managing the performance of staff are effective and link usefully to improvement initiatives. Leaders ensure that staff benefit from a broad range of training that allows them to understand and take forward new teaching and learning strategies successfully. For example, training to improve teachers' ability to foster pupils' digital competence has led to strong standards in this area of the school's work.

The governing body know the school well and undertake their roles diligently. From useful arrangements, such as termly governor mornings, they are able to evaluate first-hand evidence of standards and provision well. As a result, they gain an effective understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They use this knowledge beneficially to support leaders and hold them to account. However, they do not always ensure that leaders focus the pupil development grant effectively enough to support all pupils who should benefit from this money.

Leaders have developed comprehensive and well-organised procedures for evaluating the work of the school. Using measures such as lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work, leaders gain an effective understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They develop useful plans to address identified shortcomings and apply these effectively. The plans include well-considered actions and appropriate training for staff. As a result, many of their plans lead to useful improvements in the school's provision and pupils' standards. For example, the identification of the need to improve pupils' oracy skills led to strategies such as the use of speaking frames throughout key stage 2. As a result, the standard of nearly all pupils' speaking and listening skills are strong. However, leaders do not consistently consider well enough how they are going to measure the success of their plans and in a minority of cases, this makes it more difficult for them to judge the impact on pupils.

School leaders are developing a culture of sharing and challenge to support teachers' professional learning. For example, when leaders monitor and evaluate lessons, another teacher accompanies them. This allows staff to observe and share best practice, as well as providing beneficial training in evaluating standards and provision. This contributes well to improving standards of teaching. Leaders are beginning to link suitably with other schools in order to share best practice, for example to improve the creative element of their curriculum.

The headteacher and governors monitor the school's finances diligently. They ensure that they use resources efficiently and target spending to deliver the school's priorities. This includes careful spending to help meet national priorities effectively, such as improving outdoor provision in the foundation phase.

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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2018: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 19/03/2018