



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

**A report on**

**Edwardsville Primary School  
Cardiff Road  
Edwardsville  
Treharris  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF46 5NE**

**Date of inspection: October 2018**

**by**

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

## About Edwardsville Primary School

Edwardsville Primary School is on the outskirts of Merthyr Tydfil. The nursery is in the centre of the town of Treharris, just under a mile from the main school.

The school has 339 pupils, including 43 full-time pupils in the nursery. There are three mixed-year classes and nine single-year classes. The school has two learning resource bases for children with autistic spectrum disorder and communication needs.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 17%, which is close to the average for Wales. The school identifies 31% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is much higher than the national average of 21%, but this also includes pupils in the learning resource bases. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are in the care of the local authority. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity and come from homes where English is the main language. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

The current headteacher took up his post in September 2005. The school's previous inspection was in March 2012.

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 Edwardsville Primary School nearly all pupils behave very well in classes and around the school. They feel happy and safe and know where to turn if they need support. There are strong working relationships between pupils and staff, based on mutual respect and most pupils make good progress from their starting points in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

The majority of teaching is effective. In these cases, teachers plan interesting topics and deliver stimulating teaching. This motivates pupils, who then apply themselves to their learning positively, respond well and make good progress. However, the quality of teaching varies too much from class to class. Opportunities for pupils to shape their own learning and to develop their independence are limited. Support for pupils with additional learning needs is strong and the robust tracking systems in place enable most targeted pupils to make good progress in line with their abilities.

Leaders promote a clear vision for the school. Governors support the school well and they are developing their strategic role suitably. Self-evaluation procedures are generally effective, but links between self-evaluation and school priorities are not always clear and there are too many areas identified for development.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Strengthen the role of leaders at all levels so that they operate more strategically and focus more sharply on pupils' standards and improving provision
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching to ensure it reflects the best practice observed across the school
- R3 Ensure that the level of challenge and pace of learning are effective in meeting all pupils' needs
- R4 Ensure that staff implement the principles of the foundation phase fully across all classes
- R5 Increase opportunities for all pupils to contribute purposefully to the life and work of the school

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Around half the pupils start at the school with literacy and numeracy skills at the level expected for their age, with a minority below and a few above that level. Most pupils make good progress during their time at the school.

Many pupils recall prior learning well and many apply their skills to new situations confidently. Pupils with additional learning needs make strong progress in relation to their improvement targets and play a full and active role in the life of the school.

Across the school, many pupils respond positively to challenging activities and collaborate maturely. By Years 5 and 6, many more able pupils make purposeful suggestions about opportunities to develop their skills in different contexts. For example, when working on the running club project, the pupils developed useful literacy, numeracy and ICT skills by engaging in open-ended activities. However, across the school, a minority do not demonstrate strong enough independent learning skills.

Across the school, most pupils have strong oracy skills. In the foundation phase, most listen attentively and contribute purposefully to class discussions. They ask and answer questions maturely and speak clearly. For example, Year 1 pupils act out the story of the 'Room on the broom' effectively. Nursery and reception pupils can explain their activities well, for example when creating their own characters out of play dough and waste materials. By Year 2, many pupils share their views about the impact humankind has had on the environment, and what people should do to clean plastic from the oceans. Most key stage 2 pupils share opinions maturely. For example, Year 5 pupils discuss their views about the prophet Mohammed well.

In the foundation phase, most pupils' reading skills are good for their age and stage of development. Reception pupils recognise letters and link them confidently to sounds, and they develop an early understanding of familiar words and simple sentences, for example through their work on 'The Gruffalo'. Most Year 1 and 2 pupils read with increasing confidence. They have effective decoding skills and strategies to approach challenging texts. More able pupils in Year 2 read fluently and can discover and process information effectively, for example when looking in detail at the life of the humpback whale and its offspring.

Most Year 3 and 4 pupils read with accuracy, good expression and awareness of punctuation. They use self-correction strategies well, such as re-reading and reading ahead. Most pupils can use a dictionary to spell difficult words. Most Year 5 and 6 pupils read confidently and discuss their books maturely. They refer to preferred authors and favoured genres. In Year 6, more able pupils read excerpts from Anne Frank's diary and express their views about Hitler and antisemitism sensitively.

Many reception pupils show strong emergent writing skills. Many write letters and simple words, and a minority write simple sentences in areas of continuous provision. By the end of the foundation phase, many have developed into competent independent writers for their age and stage of development. For example, they produce effective stories about an animal of their choice and fact files which they produce following research.

In key stage 2, most pupils write with increasing confidence in a range of genres across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 4 write an effective recount of their trip to the National Botanic Garden of Wales at Llanarthne, and a very effective description of their visit to the seaside using a wide range of adjectives. Many of the older pupils write well in a range of genres and improving their work through re-drafting, such as when engaged in a particularly sensitive piece of narrative, written from the point of view of an evacuee moving from London to Treharris during the Second World War.

Most pupils have strong numeracy skills. Most pupils in the foundation phase have sound knowledge of number, shape and data. Many reception pupils know their number bonds well and make sensible estimates of the length of objects. Many Year 1 pupils investigate the properties of different triangles confidently. Many Year 2 pupils develop their understanding of money through looking at costs of different toys.

Most pupils in key stage 2 have a sound understanding of shape and data. Many more able pupils in Year 4 understand the link between simple fractions and decimals, and can estimate the size of angles effectively. Most pupils produce accurate graphs, for example, pupils in Year 6 produce appropriate line graphs to show rates of evaporation. More able older pupils use simple algebra confidently and round decimals to the nearest whole number accurately. They use standard units of measure well. However, their numerical reasoning and problem-solving skills are less well developed.

Most pupils use ICT confidently. For example, most pupils in the foundation phase use simple word processing activities well, and play mathematical games effectively to reinforce their learning. By the end of the foundation phase, most can access their own school-based account, and save and retrieve their work. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use databases confidently, and interrogate the data to find information, such as when looking at data about numbers of goals scored at the World Cup.

Across the school, many pupils make good progress with their Welsh language skills. They read familiar vocabulary and texts correctly. They write to a standard appropriate for their age and show increasing understanding as they move through the school. However, pupils' use of the spoken language outside of designated Welsh lessons and in social situations around the school is less well developed.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe in school. They know where to turn if they need support and they are confident that staff will deal with their concerns effectively. There are strong working relationships between pupils and staff, based on mutual respect. Nearly all pupils are developing well as tolerant, ethical and informed citizens.

The behaviour of nearly all pupils is a very good. They are polite and are very welcoming to visitors. Many pupils are enthusiastic when talking about their school and have a mature approach when discussing their work with adults. Playground leaders are effective and they demonstrate care and sensitivity when dealing with minor disputes on the yard at playtime.

A minority of pupils take an active part in the life of the school by taking on leadership roles through the school council and eco council. For example, following requests from fellow pupils, the school council arranged fund raising events to provide extra benches on both yards. When opportunities arise, many pupils enjoy participating in a range of extra-curricular activities. They are proud to represent their school in various competitions. However, the involvement of pupils in making decisions about aspects of school life is underdeveloped.

Most pupils understand the need to be careful on the internet and they use appropriate strategies to protect their safety online effectively. Many pupils use information from their learning well to help them to make sensible decisions about leading a healthy lifestyle. For example, pupils in Year 4 use their mathematical skills to record information about the sugar and fat content in different foods.

From an early age, most pupils take pride in their work and show very positive attitudes towards their learning. However, in a few foundation phase classes, pupils rely too much on adult support and lack the skills and perseverance to complete tasks successfully on their own. Many pupils engage fully in lessons where teachers give them appropriate challenges and pupils discuss their current and previous learning with knowledge and enthusiasm. In many classes, pupils are beginning to have a greater input into what and how they learn, but this is at an early stage of development. Most pupils are increasing their understanding of how to improve their work using success criteria. For example, in Year 6, pupils use 'chilli challenges' to self-assess and to set their own targets for improvement.

Many pupils speak positively about the experiences they gain from class visits and from having visitors to school. For example, pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically about their visit to the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton and its contribution to their understanding of the Second World War.

Many pupils and parents have responded positively to the school's focus on improving attendance and the incentives that the school provides. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of attending school regularly and rates of attendance are high. Most pupils arrive in school on time and settle quickly into classroom routines.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement**

Teachers develop strong working relationships with pupils and show mutual respect for each other. This allows pupils to feel confident to ask questions and to share their ideas in the classroom. Learning support assistants engage well with pupils and work effectively with them in and outside the classroom.

Teachers plan together appropriately using the literacy, numeracy and ICT frameworks. They ensure that most pupils build appropriately on their previous skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. In the majority of classes, teachers set challenging, real-life scenarios that allow pupils to use their knowledge and skills to solve problems effectively, for example when planning a day trip to a fairground. However, in a minority of lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough and the tasks do not challenge all groups of pupils sufficiently to help them achieve as well as they could. In these classes, teachers' planning does not

always deliver a rich variety of learning experiences that reinforce pupils' skills and knowledge effectively. As a result, pupils do not always receive purposeful opportunities to work independently, influence the direction of their learning and develop problem-solving skills to a high enough level.

Many teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. For example, pupils work well with data on the number of children evacuated to areas of Wales during the Second World War, and most write comprehensive reports of their science investigations. Provision for science across key stage 2 is strong. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills, for example in music and art, vary too much from class to class. In a minority of classes, teachers rely too heavily on the use of worksheets.

Most teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects they teach. They use questioning techniques well to extend pupils' learning and to develop their understanding of new concepts and ideas. Many give pupils effective verbal feedback on their work that helps them to understand what they need to do to improve. However, the quality of written feedback varies too much from class to class and the use of self and peer assessment is at an early stage of development. In the nursery, there are many examples of highly effective teaching. The provision for the foundation phase is rich and vibrant in most classes. It develops pupils' skills and independence very well. Staff exploit opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills expertly in a pupil-focused learning environment. However, this does not extend to all classes in the foundation phase and, in a few, there is too much emphasis on adult-directed learning. In these classes, teachers and learning support assistants do not always make effective use of the continuous and enhanced provision in classes and in the outdoor areas. As a result, pupils do not develop their independent learning skills well enough.

Most staff use the Welsh language well in their classes. However, in general, teachers do not create enough opportunities for pupils to use Welsh beyond designated Welsh lessons and during the school day.

The school gives pupils valuable opportunities to learn about their locality and the culture of Wales, for example by writing to the local council regarding litter problems in Treharris and applying for the Welsh Heritage Award each year. The school provides a good range of visits to local areas of interest to support pupils' topic work. For example, pupils benefit from visits to Limeslade Bay on Gower and to St Fagan's National Museum of History.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is a happy, caring community and its ethos is effective in helping pupils to develop their social and moral understanding. Staff know the pupils well and respond positively to their social and emotional needs. They have consistent expectations of pupils and use effective behaviour management strategies to ensure mutual respect and good standards of behaviour in classes and around the school.

The school's procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress and wellbeing are thorough and robust. The system designed by the chair of governors and



implemented by the additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) is highly effective. The ALNCo produces detailed progress reports for staff and governors. These feed well into the system for tracking the progress of year groups and individuals. The robust tracking and monitoring systems help senior staff and teachers to link pupils to targeted intervention programmes from an early age to meet the needs of pupils that staff have identified as in need of support. A purposeful range of intervention programmes and strategies enables most learners to make good progress, including those in the learning resource base classes.

The pupils with individual education plans have clear, measurable targets that help them to make good progress. Staff and parents review these appropriately. The school uses on-page and person-centred profiles successfully to deepen staff's understanding of the interests and needs of individual pupils.

All pupils in the learning resource base have detailed learning programmes which have a positive impact on their individual progress. They take a full part in their own learning and assess confidently their own and other pupils' progress towards meeting their personal targets. Provision in the learning resource bases (LRB) is good overall and staff ensure that the pupils integrate well with other pupils wherever possible.

The school works well with a range of specialist services. The parent liaison and pupil welfare officer is having a positive impact on providing support for parents and pupils, particularly in relation to attendance. The school celebrates good attendance through rewards for individual pupils and for classes. Procedures for tracking attendance across the school are clear and purposeful, and there is a consistent approach to improvement in all classes.

The school has effective systems in place to promote healthy eating and drinking by pupils. The school provides a few opportunities for pupils to become active citizens by encouraging them to apply for various pupil groups, such as the school council, eco council and playground buddies, but pupils' involvement in decision-making is limited overall.

Staff ensure that pupils develop their social skills and cultural knowledge effectively, for example through visits to Cardiff Castle, Cyfartha Castle and Big Pit. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to interact with their local community and local churches. Older pupils in key stage 2 develop their entrepreneurial and collaborative skills very well when entering a racing car project by working with local businesses to design, build, promote and race their car.

Teachers organise a range of activities to develop pupils' awareness of the history and culture of Wales. The local school eisteddfod reinforces this well. Pupils produce poetry, prose and artwork for the eisteddfod, but generally have too few opportunities to develop their creative and artistic skills and opportunities for pupils to attend extra-curricular activities are limited. There are suitable opportunities in assemblies and classes for pupils to reflect on a range of social, spiritual and moral issues.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

## **Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement**

The headteacher, senior leadership team (SLT) and governing body, display a strong commitment to realising the school's vision. Together they have secured a strong school ethos that focuses effectively on securing the wellbeing of pupils. The headteacher along with the SLT manage the school well. The deputy headteacher supports the headteacher successfully. She has a clear understanding of her role and responsibilities and carries these out effectively.

The school's governing body is increasingly effective in supporting the school's vision and in holding the school to account. Governors know the school well and have a suitable understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. They are honest and realistic about standards in the school. Governors challenge leaders appropriately and have created a productive and effective relationship with school leaders at all levels. They receive purposeful feedback from the standards committee and the newly formed, curriculum cohort group. Overall the governors' role in self-evaluation is developing appropriately, but opportunities for their involvement in first-hand self-evaluation processes, such as talking to pupils, are less well developed.

Senior leaders have developed a detailed monitoring and evaluation cycle. They use a wide range of first-hand evidence, such as observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, to identify areas for school improvement. The school has strengthened the way it analyses information on pupils' progress through the implementation of cohort improvement plans and pupil progress meetings. These plans also influence staff performance targets appropriately. The majority of staff have opportunities to offer their views and contribute to self-evaluation processes. However, opportunities to obtain the views of pupils and parents are limited. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is mostly accurate. However, it does not focus enough on the undue variation in the quality of teaching across the school.

Most priorities in the school improvement plan are appropriate and derive directly from the evidence gathered during the self-evaluation process. There are detailed targets for nearly all actions within the plan and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of agreed actions are clear. However, the large number of actions identified means that leaders and staff do not always focus well enough on the most urgent priorities. The school gives purposeful attention to national and local priorities and, in general, implements these effectively to improve standards and the quality of provision. However, the provision in a few classes does not deliver foundation phase principles as fully as it could.

The school uses performance management appropriately to support the professional development of all staff. This includes identifying areas for development and agreeing targets to help staff to improve their professional knowledge, understanding and skills. However, professional learning opportunities do not always link closely enough to school priorities and this limits the impact of professional development on school improvement.

The headteacher, with the support of the governing body, manages the school budget carefully. They target finances well to meet pupils' needs and to support priorities in the school's development plan, but the school has tended to run too large

a surplus from year to year. Leaders and governors ensure that the school has an appropriate level of staffing and learning resources to deliver the planned curriculum. They maintain a suitable environment, both indoors and outside, where pupils learn and play happily. Leaders link expenditure to strategic priorities well. The school makes suitable use of the pupil development grant to provide a worthwhile range of intervention groups to help targeted pupils to improve their attendance and to make suitable progress. For example, the appointment of the school's parent liaison and pupil welfare officer has had a significant impact in supporting parents, and improving pupil attendance and the wellbeing of vulnerable pupils across the school.

## 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))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	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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Publication date: 24/12/2018