



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

A report on

**Holton Primary School
Holton Road
Barry
CF63 4TF**

Date of inspection: October 2019

by

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

About Holton Primary School

Holton Primary School in the town of Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan. There are 425 pupils on roll aged from 3 to 11 years, including 45 who attend part-time in the nursery. The school organises its pupils into 14 single-age classes, plus the nursery.

Around 26% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average of 18%. The school identifies about 21% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is in line with national average. A few pupils come from an ethnic minority background or have English as an additional language. A very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher took up her post in November 2017. The school's previous inspection was in September 2013.

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

Pupils at Holton Primary enjoy coming to school and make good progress in the development of their skills and knowledge over time. Pupil behaviour and wellbeing are a particular strength. The school works well to ensure that pupils are happy in school and achieve to their full potential. The work of the school's nurture provision is a key part of this.

Staff plan and deliver interesting learning experiences that engage and motivate most pupils. They have high expectations of pupils and maintain a positive, encouraging working relationship with them. The school's support for the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy is strong. Staff ensure frequent opportunities for pupils to apply and develop these skills further in their work across the curriculum.

All leaders place the interest of the pupils at the heart of their work. They know the school well and are working successfully to develop their skills in school improvement. This is leading to strong progress in key areas of the school's work, such as ensuring consistently positive pupil behaviour.

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 systems of communication between staff and leaders
- R2 Improve attendance
- R3 Provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and direct their own learning in the foundation phase
- R4 Review the effectiveness of assessment for learning strategies

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Around half of pupils begin school with skills and knowledge lower than those expected for their age. Many make very good progress over time and, by the end of key stage 2, demonstrate a wide range of effective skills in most areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for free school meals make strong progress from their individual starting points.

Most pupils in the foundation phase have good listening skills. For example, nursery pupils follow instructions carefully while carrying out a musical activity. Many pupils talk with fluency and enthusiasm about their work. For instance, pupils in reception describe model buildings they have constructed and listen carefully to each other when sharing their ideas. Pupils in key stage 2 communicate effectively, often using imaginative vocabulary to explain their thoughts. When describing images of pollution on a beach, they express their emotions and opinions thoughtfully.

Many pupils read with enjoyment and enthusiasm. By the end of the foundation phase, they use their phonic knowledge successfully to decode both familiar and unfamiliar words. The majority of pupils in Year 2 read simple texts fluently. A few understand the importance of rhyme and use this well to add expression when reading aloud. Many pupils talk about their favourite authors. For example, Year 2 pupils explain why they like stories by Julia Donaldson. By Year 6, many pupils use more advanced reading techniques effectively, such as scanning a text to locate specific information. More able readers choose to read suitably challenging books, such as an adaptation of Jane Eyre. They make inferences about the feelings of characters and select appropriate examples from the text to justify their opinions.

Most pupils develop effective writing skills. By the end of Year 2, many pupils create well-constructed sentences and make thoughtful vocabulary choices. They organise their writing well and use basic punctuation, such as full stops and capital letters, accurately. In key stage 2, many pupils write purposefully and skilfully in a variety of forms including stories and newspaper articles. For instance, pupils in Year 4 write engaging play scripts describing the trial of Rumpelstiltskin. Many pupils reflect well on the quality of their writing and use adventurous vocabulary to improve their stories. For example, a pupils writes, 'She travelled for many nights through the ominous, gloomy wood, taunted along the way by the animals'. Most pupils present their work with care and the majority are able to write legibly and fluently. However a minority of pupils across both phases form letters inconsistently and have untidy handwriting.

In the foundation phase, many pupils' numeracy skills are developing well. By the end of Year 2, they use their number skills effectively to solve simple problems, including those involving money. Many pupils add and subtract two-digit numbers and find simple fractions, such as a half and a quarter. They draw bar graphs accurately and understand symmetry in two-dimensional shapes. Pupils in key stage 2 apply their numeracy skills effectively across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils investigate the correlation between the length of a pupil's arm and the distance they throw a ball, presenting their findings as a scatter graph. Most pupils in key

stage 2 have a secure grasp of number and choose appropriate methods to solve calculations both mentally and using formal written approaches. For example, pupils in Year 4 have good instant recall of the multiples of nine up to one hundred and count quickly in multiples of twenty-five. Pupils in Year 6 use fractions, decimals and percentages accurately and simple formula to calculate the area of shapes.

Many pupils use the Welsh language enthusiastically. They use simple phrases and language patterns appropriate to their age. For example, pupils in Year 2 play hide and seek using phrases such as 'Ble mae tedi coch?' However, a minority of pupils do not use the Welsh language independently.

Many pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) appropriately across the curriculum. In the foundation phase, they use tablet computers with confidence to support their work. For instance, pupils in reception use an application to create a digital painting of an owl. In key stage 2, most children record video clips and upload these to their online portfolios independently. Most pupils show confidence in accessing Hwb and are beginning to use a variety of software to support their work. However, many pupils do not develop a full range of ICT skills, such as using formula in spreadsheets or the ability to edit and refine video clips.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and feel safe and secure. Their behaviour in lessons, around the school and at playtimes is exemplary. They show care and respect for one another and contribute greatly to the nurturing ethos of the school. For example, older children act as mentors on the school yard to provide support for younger pupils.

Most pupils understand clearly the importance of eating healthily and engaging in regular exercise. They develop their fitness and mental wellbeing successfully by taking part in daily activities such as skipping, running, mindfulness and dance. For example, pupils explain how mindfulness relaxes the mind and body and helps to maintain a positive attitude. Nearly all pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Older pupils explain maturely how to use passwords to protect their accounts and the need to be cautious when communicating with people online as they may alter their image to pretend to be someone else.

Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude towards their learning. They are capable learners who take pride in their work and want to do well. When given the opportunity, many pupils cooperate successfully in pairs and small groups and concentrate for long periods when completing tasks. For example, younger pupils persevere when making and improving a three-dimensional owl using creative materials until they are completely satisfied with their work. However, pupils do not have enough influence in deciding how or what they learn.

Pupils enjoy the opportunity to take on extra responsibilities, such as becoming a member of the various pupil voice groups in the school. A few groups are making a difference and having a positive impact on the life of the school. For example, the eco committee collect and sort plastic bottle tops and send them to a local store so they can be recycled to make soap products. However, pupils' role in influencing whole school decisions is at an early stage of development.

Many of the older pupils are developing an empathy towards others. They actively support local and worldwide charities, such as Macmillan Cancer and the World Wide Fund For Nature. The school council organise a collection of food items to support the local food bank as part of their Harvest celebrations. Many pupils have a clear understanding of children's rights and can explain why they are important.

Most pupils are developing as ethically informed citizens. For example, Year 4 pupils demonstrate care for their local environment when they write to the local council to suggest ways of reducing rubbish on their local beach. Pupils in Year 6 have an understanding that the choices they make impact on natural resources across the globe. For instance, they explain how a country's carbon footprint can have a negative effect on climate change.

Rates of attendance for the last four years place the school below the average when compared with similar schools. Levels of persistent absence also remain too high.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Many teachers have high expectations of pupils and provide a good range of learning experiences that interest and engage pupils well. They ensure that tasks build successfully on pupils' existing knowledge and skills. This helps to motivate pupils well and maintain their interest in learning. Many teachers ask purposeful questions that help to develop pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. Teachers and learning support assistants provide good role models for pupils' behaviour and language. Staff greet each other with courtesy and treat adults and pupils with respect. This helps to create a calm and purposeful learning environment.

In the foundation phase, most teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work as a whole class, in small groups and as individuals. Many teachers plan tasks that engage pupils well. For example, teachers in Year 1 stimulate pupils' curiosity by showing them a video of a toy tiger misbehaving in their role play corner as part of their work on the story of The Tiger who Came to Tea. Across the foundation phase, teachers and teaching assistants work with pupils on focused tasks and activities for most of the day. This does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to make choices about what or how they learn. As a result, pupils' independent learning skills are underdeveloped. The school's provision for pupils to learn outdoors is limited.

Across the school learning support assistants provide effective support for pupils. For example, they deliver well-structured literacy sessions that help to develop pupils' phonic skills and a range of intervention programmes for pupils who need extra support with reading and writing.

Many teachers help pupils to understand the purpose of their lessons well. For example, they share learning intentions with pupils and are clear about what they need to do to be able to complete tasks and activities successfully. They provide appropriate oral and written feedback to pupils. However, written feedback is not always effective in helping pupils to improve. For example, it focuses too much on what pupils have already done rather than what they need to do next or is written in a way that younger pupils cannot read. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their own learning. However, pupils' evaluations tend to focus on a narrow range of work such as their spelling and punctuation skills. This work is time consuming for teachers and pupils but has limited impact on improving standards.

The school uses trips and visits well to enhance the curriculum for pupils. For example, pupils in the reception class visit Bute Park in Cardiff to look for mini-beasts and pupils in Year 4 visit the National Roman Legion Museum in Caerleon to find out what life was like when the Romans lived in Wales.

Teachers have started to plan changes to the school's curriculum in preparation for the new curriculum for Wales. The school held a creative week recently where all classes were involved in developing art work linked to their topic. For instance, pupils in Year 2 create engaging images of the Eiffel Tower using pointillism. Teachers have also considered how they will adapt their science and technology work and how they will ensure that they deliver topics that have real life contexts. For example, this term Year 5 pupils are learning about life in Japan and the Rugby World Cup. The topic is offering good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in purposeful ways. For example, pupils research differences in temperature at different rugby stadiums and present information about temperature differences well in graph form.

The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, they provide group reading sessions that allow pupils to learn to use a range of reading strategies effectively and teachers deliver lessons that focus well on oracy to help pupils to develop good speaking skills. Teachers plan writing and number tasks well to ensure that pupils make good progress in these areas as they move through the school. Nearly all teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy skills in their work across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 use their research skills precisely to find out about Captain Scott's expedition to the Antarctic. They use their numeracy skills well to compare the quantity of sea ice in the Arctic Ocean now and with the levels in 1979 and present this information clearly in line graphs. However, teachers provide fewer opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in their topic work. Many teachers plan appropriately to develop pupils' Welsh language skills.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school's focus on ensuring that pupils attain high levels of emotional and physical wellbeing is central to its inclusive ethos. Staff know pupils well and use this knowledge to put in place highly effective provision that raises pupil's self-esteem and confidence significantly. This helps nearly all pupils to engage with school life successfully.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is effective. Highly trained staff provide a range of beneficial intervention programmes to support and develop pupils' basic skills. The school works well with outside agencies, such as speech and language and medical services, to provide valuable support for pupils with specific needs and their families. Staff work appropriately with parents to plan and review individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. The school's support for vulnerable pupils through its nurture provision is highly effective, benefiting pupils who attend the nurture class, but also all pupils across the school.

The school has well-established and effective processes for tracking and monitoring the progress of pupils. Staff use the information from these well to ensure that effective provision is in place and having a positive impact on pupils' learning. In

particular, teachers and leaders use pupil progress meetings successfully to identify pupils requiring extra support and to plan beneficial intervention programmes.

Behaviour management is a strong feature of the school. Staff treat all pupils with great respect and encourage them to take responsibility for their actions. As a result of highly consistent approaches, nearly all pupils' behaviour and self-discipline is consistently good.

The school provides parents with appropriate information about their child's progress through parents' evenings and detailed end of year reports that contain useful information on pupils' social and learning skills. However, the school provides few opportunities for parents to learn how to support their children with their work at home.

The school has recently introduced a range of strategies to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. However, these are at an early stage of development and have not yet had a positive enough impact on improving rates of pupil attendance.

The school has appropriate arrangements in place to promote healthy eating and drinking. It provides parents with beneficial information that encourages them to make healthy choices for their children. The school provides an appropriate range of initiatives for pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle. For example, the 'Holton juniors' health and fabulous fitness day' promotes healthy eating and encourages pupils to be active. The police community support officer visits regularly to provide a range of workshops for key stage 2 pupils on a variety of subjects, such as the dangers of substance misuse and the importance of online safety. As a result, most pupils correctly identify what information they should or should not share online.

A good range of extra-curricular clubs encourage pupils to develop an interest in sports and the creative arts. The school's participation in local inter-school sports events promotes teamwork and a healthy lifestyle. The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to perform in school or in public. For example, the school choir performed in St David's Hall to raise money for an African school. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility, for example by encouraging pupils to belong to one of the young leader groups, such as the peer mentors or digital leaders.

The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and culture development successfully. For example, a recent visit from the NSPCC highlighted the rights of the child and helps pupils to develop a strong moral and social understanding. The school promotes local and global citizenship through the curriculum effectively through topic work and collecting for local charities. For example, Year 6 pupils learn about the impact of global warming as part of a topic on the Antarctic. Pupils have good opportunities be still, calm and reflective as part of regular mindfulness sessions. Year 3 pupils develop their cultural awareness through an annual visit to the Hay festival.

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

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher is developing a strong vision for the school based on ensuring that all pupils achieve to their full potential. She places a strong emphasis on developing the leadership skills of all staff to encourage their participation in school improvement. As a result, many staff now play important roles in evaluating and improving the work of the school. This is impacting on pupil progress positively. For example, middle leaders take responsibility for improving specific areas of the school's work, such as developing pupils' Welsh language skills. They introduce whole school systems that are beginning to improve the standards that pupils achieve.

Senior leaders develop effective processes to support the work of the school. For example, the school's arrangements to identify and support vulnerable pupils are highly effective. Senior leaders are beginning to collaborate effectively with staff to maintain and improve the quality of provision. However, systems of communication between leaders and staff are not sufficiently clear. Similarly, school systems do not ensure consistently that all staff are aware of decisions and the opportunity they have to contribute to them.

Leaders consider and address national priorities well. For example, they work successfully to reduce the impact of poverty on pupils' attainment through effective nurture provision. They ensure that suitable ICT resources and schemes of work are in place to implement the Digital Competency Framework and place a high priority on developing the Welsh language skills of key staff in order that they can raise standards among pupils. Leaders are beginning to consider how to implement the new curriculum in Wales and have restructured leadership teams to better enable its delivery.

The governing body works conscientiously to support the school and understands well the challenges it faces, such as the significant social and emotional needs of a few pupils. The headteacher and other staff provide governors with regular updates on developments at the school and progress against school improvement priorities. This provides governors with a good knowledge of the school's work. They use this suitably to question and challenge leaders. However, overall, governors are over reliant on the information provided by the school and do not gather enough first hand evidence on the work of the school to be able to ask pertinent questions around teaching and learning. Governors monitor expenditure carefully and this allows them to maintain a beneficial oversight of the school's budget.

Leaders arrange informative monitoring activities to gain a picture of the quality of teaching and learning. Increasingly, they involve a wide range of staff in these processes. For instance, teachers and teaching assistants work together to scrutinise pupils' work, comparing the strength of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in dedicated maths and English lessons with how pupils apply these across the curriculum. Leaders identify relevant areas for improvement and implement effective plans to address them. For instance, new processes have led to a consistent approach to behaviour management by all staff that has resulted in fewer occurrences of poor behaviour by pupils in lessons, around the school and at break times.

Leaders have put in place successful procedures for managing the performance of teachers. All have targets for improvement that match school improvement priorities and staff's own professional development needs appropriately. Leaders ensure a varied range of professional learning opportunities for staff. For example, middle leaders benefit from training sessions with external providers to develop their professional skills. Leaders use specific courses well to provide staff with the skills to support pupils with additional learning needs. For example, training in the leadership of nurture provision is effective in providing staff with the skills to support vulnerable pupils.

Leaders work well with the governing body to manage the schools' resources. For example, they ensure the good quality of the indoor learning environment and manage the challenges of an ageing Victorian building successfully. Leaders ensure the effective management of the school's budget and prioritise spending to match the school's improvement priorities effectively. They use grant funding well to limit the impact of poverty on pupil achievement.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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