



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

A report on

**Pentwynmawr Primary School
Tonypistyll Road
Pentwynmawr
Newbridge
NP11 6HJ**

Date of inspection: July 2018

by

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

About Pentwynmawr Primary School

Pentwynmawr Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Newbridge, in Caerphilly local authority.

There are 130 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 20 who attend the nursery part-time. Around 11% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is lower than the national average of 19%. The school identifies 23% as having additional learning needs. This is higher than the national average for primary schools in Wales of 21%. No pupils speak Welsh at home or have English as an additional language.

The executive headteacher was appointed in May, 2018. The school was last inspected in October, 2010.

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 school is a nurturing community where staff value and care for pupils well. Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning and treat each other with respect. Across the school, pupils enjoy their lessons and make good progress. The overall quality of teaching is good with a few elements of excellence.

The school provides many rich learning experiences that support pupils' all-round development. However, pupils have a very limited role to play in making decisions about their learning or the work of the school. Arrangements for supporting pupils with additional learning needs are effective and enable specific pupils to make good progress towards their targets.

The executive headteacher's sensitive and purposeful leadership sets a clear strategic direction for developing the school. Since his very recent appointment, and in a short period of time, he has taken swift actions to establish clear procedures and to ensure that staff feel valued and understand their roles and responsibilities. He has accurately identified key areas for improvement, such as the self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen the self-evaluation processes and improvement planning
- R2 Raise standards in Welsh second language
- R3 Provide more challenge for pupils, especially the more able
- R4 Improve tracking and assessment procedures
- R5 Increase opportunities for pupils to contribute purposefully to the life and work of the school

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: Good

Many pupils enter the school with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. During their time at the school, many make good progress from their starting points. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress towards their targets. More able pupils do not always achieve well enough.

In the foundation phase, many pupils make good progress in developing their listening and speaking skills. They listen carefully to adults and contribute well in class discussions. Many are enthusiastic about reading and they use their knowledge of letters and sounds effectively to work out unfamiliar words. In Year 2, many pupils write successfully for different purposes, such as when describing big, busy cities. They use basic punctuation well and their spelling of common words is often correct. They develop their handwriting skills successfully.

In key stage 2, many pupils speak confidently and clearly. They work together well and generally respect each other's views. For example, older pupils listen carefully and develop effective thinking skills as they work in small groups to create imaginative stories based on willow patterns. Many key stage 2 pupils have positive attitudes to reading and display a good understanding of what they read. For example, older pupils collaborate well to discuss texts in guided reading sessions and display a mature grasp of inference and deduction skills. In Year 6, many pupils discuss their favourite authors and identify themes and characters in books they are reading. For example, they research the life and works of Charles Dickens. Many pupils use their writing skills successfully to produce interesting poems and newspaper articles. They research topics competently and write stimulating histories of the Victorian circus. Many develop joined handwriting effectively by the end of the key stage. Many pupils in both key stages apply their literacy skills confidently across other areas of the curriculum. However, pupils do not always present their work neatly and the over-use of worksheets often hinders the development of their extended writing skills.

Throughout the school, many pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their Welsh language skills. In the foundation phase, many follow instructions well and respond to teachers' questions using a simple vocabulary. In key stage 2, many pupils use basic vocabulary to respond to simple questions. They write well in Welsh, for example to produce interesting letters and third-person descriptions. Most pupils in key stage 2 read very hesitantly from pieces of their written work. However, most pupils in both key stages do not have a secure enough understanding of familiar language patterns and they lack the confidence to engage in basic Welsh conversations outside of designated Welsh lessons.

Most pupils across the school develop effective mathematical and calculation skills and they apply these skills consistently when solving purposeful problems. In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in their mathematical development and, by the end of Year 2, apply their mathematical knowledge well to solve everyday problems relating to money and time. At the end of key stage 2, older pupils use a wide range of methods confidently to solve interesting and

challenging problems. For example, they construct a formula to calculate the cost of placing adverts in the local paper and draw accurate line graphs to show differences in annual weather patterns between Cardiff and Brazil.

Many pupils apply their numeracy skills confidently across all areas of the curriculum. Most foundation phase pupils use their numeracy skills flexibly in a range of stimulating activities. For example, younger pupils use their early measuring skills well when cooking grass noodles in the outdoor role play area. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use their numeracy skills successfully in a variety of interesting and engaging contexts. For example, they use their knowledge of co-ordinates to locate grand prix circuits around the world and calculate the distances between them as part of their project on car racing.

Most pupils throughout the school develop effective information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They use a wide range of programmes and applications to support their work in various curricular areas. For example, in Years 1 and 2 most pupils use a laptop successfully within the role play area to book a holiday. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils work collaboratively on various stimulating projects. For example, in Year 6 they produce a moving presentation on the civil rights activist, Rosa Parks. In key stage 2, older pupils create effective spread sheets to collect, store and manipulate data.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement

Most pupils feel safe, secure and happy in school. Most know whom to turn to if they have any concerns and they confirm that the school supports their personal, emotional and social needs well. They have a sound understanding of how to be safe online and remind themselves to take care when using the internet.

Many pupils are friendly and considerate to others and older pupils act as positive role models for the younger pupils. Many pupils behave well in class and around the school. However, a very few pupils do not behave well enough and they are not always respectful of other pupils and adults. They push the boundaries of behaviour and do not respond consistently well to supervisors and visitors.

Many pupils speak confidently about their work and have positive attitudes to learning. Many work well in classes, individually and in groups. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 successfully sequence a story using their ICT equipment while those in Year 6 enthusiastically participate in their Formula One project. However, at times a very few pupils do not concentrate well enough in lessons and the poor behaviour of a very few distracts other pupils from learning effectively. Although pupils generally enjoy the learning opportunities offered to them, they have a very limited role to play in making decisions about their learning.

Most pupils have an appropriate understanding of healthy eating and understand the impact that exercise has on their wellbeing. For example, they participate in regular physical activities, such as football, rugby and tennis, and know that fruit and vegetables are healthy options.

Many pupils are eager to contribute to the life of the school and want to assume roles and responsibilities. They often have good ideas about how they want to improve

aspects of school life, for example by purchasing new play equipment for the outside areas. Despite their enthusiasm, currently pupils do not have enough of a voice in decision making in the school. The school council has not always met regularly in the recent past and, as a result, it has had very little influence over developments in the school.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The overall quality of teaching is good with a few elements of excellent practice in key stage 2. Teachers in the foundation phase have a good understanding of the principles of how young children learn best. The learning experiences in these classes enable pupils to develop their skills well. Throughout the school, teachers generally have appropriate lesson objectives which they communicate clearly to pupils. In both key stages, many teachers plan activities carefully and make use of a variety of teaching methods to engage pupils successfully. Many teachers ask a wide range of perceptive, open questions to extend pupils' learning. This helps to promote pupils' thinking skills well. Teachers and support staff generally have effective working relationships with pupils. Teachers deploy support staff well to work purposefully with specific pupils to achieve their learning targets.

Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not always challenge pupils well enough and they tend to lead too many of the learning activities. As a result, pupils do not have enough opportunities to make decisions and choices about what and how they learn.

The quality of teachers' verbal feedback is generally effective. However, teachers are not consistent enough in ensuring that pupils know what to do to improve their work. Neither do they provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others.

The school provides a beneficial range of activities that promote the history and culture of Wales and the local environment well, for example, through a study of the Chartist movement in the area and by researching Welsh heroes such as Owain Glyndwr. Opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in designated lessons are appropriate. However, staff do not ensure that pupils use their Welsh skills in more informal situations around the school.

The school arranges appropriate opportunities for pupils to visit local places of interest, for instance Caerphilly castle, the Winding House at Tredegar and Brecon Mountain Railway. Older pupils attend the residential centre at Ynys Hywel. These experiences have a positive influence on pupils' learning and personal and social skills. The school also nurtures pupils' creative skills well. For example, older pupils work successfully with a local artist to create attractive murals.

The curriculum provides a purposeful range of learning experiences for pupils, which successfully builds on their prior learning and meets their needs well. Long- and medium-term plans provide teachers with an appropriate curricular overview. Overall, there is a suitable breadth and balance in the curriculum. In the foundation phase, staff provide focused, continuous and enhanced activities that include regular opportunities for pupils to role play, investigate and practise their creative and physical skills. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to enrich their experiences in the outdoor learning environment.

The school plans well to develop pupils' skills. The focus on oracy and reading skills is having a positive impact and, as a result, many pupils are becoming confident speakers and readers. Planning for numeracy skills is particularly strong for older pupils in key stage 2. The school's ICT provision is developing successfully. However, occasionally the over-use of worksheets inhibits pupils' extended writing skills.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

In a very short period of time, the new executive headteacher has improved the working relationship and communication with parents. For example, the school is beginning to use social media to provide parents with information about their children's learning experiences and activities and new notice boards ensure that parents have updated, weekly information. Key stage 2 pupils have an opportunity to reflect on the academic year and to compile a report for their parents. Many pupils feel that this is a useful way to celebrate their successes and to highlight their areas for development. Most parents feel that they are able to share any concerns about their child with the class teachers.

At present, the school does not have effective systems to assess and track pupils' progress. The current system is unwieldy and the vast amount of information assembled is not used purposefully to inform teaching and planning. The executive headteacher is in the process of refining and modifying this process, but it is too early yet to see the impact of this. Teachers use a range of assessments appropriately to provide support for specific groups of learners, including vulnerable pupils. The data collected from the activities that support individual pupils shows that these pupils make good progress.

There are suitable arrangements in place to support pupils with additional learning needs. Pupils have purposeful individual education plans, with clear and specific targets, and staff use the plans appropriately to devise support programmes and activities for these pupils. Teaching assistants are aware of pupils' targets and support them conscientiously. This enables these pupils to make good progress in their literacy and numeracy skills.

Senior leaders have identified the need to improve a very few pupils' behaviour and are working to address this. Through various strategies, teachers are providing worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn how to respect one another. However, these initiatives have yet to impact fully on pupils' behaviour.

The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about eating healthily and keeping active. There are healthy snacks at break times and key stage 2 pupils participate in a range of activities to support their physical wellbeing, for example through cluster football and rugby events, physical education lessons and various after-school clubs. However, the school does not consistently encourage pupils to have healthy lunchboxes.

The school is beginning to encourage pupils to offer their views about aspects of school life, through the school and eco councils and as digital leaders. However, currently there are limited opportunities for pupils to participate in whole-school decision-making or to influence what and how they learn.

The school provides a suitable range of opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills. For example, local artists occasionally visit and there are musical lessons for a few pupils. In addition, as part of the lead creative schools scheme, staff help to promote the creativity of pupils through various projects. For example, older pupils research circus skills and produce effective pieces of writing based on this theme.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The very recently appointed executive head teacher is a highly motivated leader who provides a clear vision for the school, which focuses on ensuring the wellbeing of pupils and staff in a supportive and positive environment. In a very short period, he has successfully shared this vision with pupils, teachers and governors.

The head teacher and deputy head have high expectations both of themselves and of staff and pupils in the school. They model and promote professional values well and work with staff to bring about necessary improvements in provision and standards.

The school has a dedicated team of teachers and support staff who work conscientiously and support each other well. All teachers have clear and well-understood roles and responsibilities and senior leaders are beginning to provide staff with appropriate opportunities to strengthen their role in driving school improvement. However, these new arrangements are at an early stage of development and have yet to impact fully on teaching and learning.

The school has suitable processes to evaluate its performance and to plan for improvement. Staff make appropriate use of a considerable amount of data and information to identify broad areas for improvement, for example the need to improve pupils' reading skills across the school. However, staff have not always used the information they gather from various monitoring activities well enough to identify specific aspects for development.

There is an appropriate link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation process and the areas for improvement noted in the school development plan. The plan is an extensive document which identifies planned activities along with staff responsibilities and financial requirements. However, the school's priorities are not sufficiently specific or measurable to enable them to be understood clearly or for progress to be evaluated effectively. In addition, various senior leaders' and staff meetings have not always generated clear action points. As a result, there are shortcomings in the self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.

The governing body is supportive of the school and carries out its statutory responsibilities efficiently. Governors use their expertise appropriately to support different aspects of the school's work, for example to improve pupils' attendance rate. They have a sound understanding of the performance of different cohorts of pupils, undertake visits to scrutinise pupils' workbooks and conduct discussions with staff and pupils. However, their contribution to the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes is limited.

Leaders provide professional learning activities that link suitably to performance management outcomes, staff's development needs and school priorities. For example, recent training undertaken by teachers is having a positive impact on the development of pupils' ICT skills. However, opportunities for staff to share good practice within the school and with other schools are limited.

The governing body, in collaboration with a local authority finance officer, manages the budget appropriately. Over the last few years, the school has accumulated a significant deficit, but the governing body is now taking appropriate actions to reduce this without impacting on the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders use the pupil development grant effectively to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of those pupils who are eligible to receive it.

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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