



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

A report on

**Allensbank Primary School
Llanishen Street
Heath
Cardiff
CF14 3QE**

Date of inspection: January 2020

by

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

About Allensbank Primary School

Allensbank Primary School is located just outside the centre of Cardiff. There are currently 213 pupils on roll between the ages of 3 and 11. This includes 21 pupils who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. There are seven classes, three in foundation phase and four in key stage 2. The school also has a specialist resource base which supports one pupil. The local authority is in the process of phasing out this facility and developing early intervention provision within the school.

The three year rolling average for pupils eligible for free school meals is around 23%. This figure is above the Welsh average of 18%. The school identifies around 15% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is below the national average of 21%. Six pupils have a statement of special educational needs. About 42% of pupils come from homes where English is the first language. No pupils speak Welsh at home. Around 75% of pupils are from an ethnic minority background.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2013 and the last inspection was in December 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

All staff at Allensbank Primary School work diligently to create a happy, caring and inclusive ethos at the school. The positive and supportive relationships between pupils and with all adults are a strength of the school.

Most pupils make good progress from their starting points, particularly those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Many pupils have very good opportunities to be involved in leadership roles within the school and these have had a strong impact on school improvement. Attitudes towards learning are very positive, and throughout all classes pupils enjoy their learning and participate enthusiastically.

Leaders and staff work skilfully to create effective provision for pupils who need additional support. They use a range of approaches, which impact very positively on pupils' achievement and their sense of wellbeing.

The headteacher provides clear strategic direction alongside a dedicated team of staff who show a strong commitment towards supporting all of their pupils to achieve and thrive.

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 Develop pupils' standards in numeracy and problem solving across the curriculum
- R2 Develop further opportunities across the foundation phase for pupils to develop their independence in selecting challenging learning activities indoors and outdoors
- R3 Develop meaningful opportunities for pupils across the school to influence what and how they learn

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to provision for learners with English as an additional language, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

When they start school, many pupils have skills below the expected level for their age. As they move through the school, most pupils make good progress in their literacy and numeracy skills. Most pupils with special needs and English as an additional language make very strong progress.

Many pupils enter the school with under-developed oracy skills. As they move through the school, almost all improve these skills quickly and successfully. Most nursery pupils listen attentively to teachers and begin to join in with familiar songs and rhymes, including those in Welsh. By the end of foundation phase, many pupils develop good speaking and listening skills and use them effectively in their learning. Most pupils across key stage 2 develop highly effective speaking and listening skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 discuss, compare and explain their ideas about how different materials insulate against sound.

As they move through the foundation phase, most pupils gain strong early reading skills. They use their knowledge of phonics to decode words and begin to read appropriate texts with understanding. In lower key stage 2, many pupils read with expression and enthusiasm, developing a love of books. They discuss their favourite genres and authors, such as 'science fiction' and Roald Dahl. By the end of key stage 2, the majority of pupils read with fluency and accuracy. They use higher order skills effectively to make predictions, find information quickly and make sense of unfamiliar words using the context of the sentence. For example, when discussing the meaning of the word 'outlaw' within a book about 'Robin Hood'.

In nursery, many pupils are beginning to develop their writing skills effectively. They mark make within their role play, for instance when pretending to be a doctor, they take 'detailed notes' about a patient's illness. In Year 1, pupils that are more able, write short books independently about dinosaurs using words around the classroom to help them. By Year 2, most pupils use their phonic knowledge to help spell common words correctly and write using effective descriptive language. For example, when creating poems about fireworks, pupils describe the colours as shimmering scarlet, magnificent magenta and glorious gold.

In key stage 2, pupils write at length and for a wide range of purposes. For example, pupils write letters as a character in the book, 'Carries War'. Most pupils spell accurately and use an appropriate range of punctuation to organise their work. The majority of pupils take care and pride in the presentation of their work and while handwriting styles vary, most write legibly and fluently. Across the school, pupils write well in other subjects and contexts, and develop their skills effectively. For example, pupils in Year 3 write well balanced arguments about the advantages and disadvantages of increasing the amount we recycle.

In reception, most pupils recognise and order numbers to 10 correctly and know the names of simple shapes such as squares and circles. More able pupils count in 10s and are beginning to count in 5s. In Year 2, most pupils use their number skills to solve simple problems involving money and many are beginning to describe the

properties of common three-dimensional shapes. Many pupils in key stage 2 develop strong mathematical skills and in Year 4, they can find simple equivalent fractions, create their own bar charts and measure to the nearest millimetre with some accuracy. By the time they reach Year 6, many pupils have a very good range of number skills. They use their times tables effectively and use a range of mental and written strategies. For example, when calculating the cost of producing different ice-creams, Year 6 pupils choose their preferred method to carry out calculations accurately. However, throughout the school, pupils do not regularly use their numeracy and problem solving skills at an appropriate level in other subjects.

Many pupils have positive attitudes towards speaking Welsh and respond appropriately to instructions and questions from staff. In the foundation phase many pupils use Welsh in daily routines, express their likes and dislikes and are confident when speaking in familiar contexts. Many older pupils read with suitable level of fluency and write in a variety of contexts. For example they write interviews with celebrities and produce weather reports using a variety of connectives and tenses well.

As they move through the school, many pupils make suitable progress in improving their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. By Year 2, pupils use ICT to help them improve their numeracy and literacy skills by playing games and create simple procedures to allow them to control a toy robot. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils use ICT appropriately to support their learning in other subjects. Year 6 pupils create good quality videos using a range of editing tools to refine and improve them. For example, they create a video for other children across the school to explain how to stay safe online. However, pupils do not have strong enough skills in all areas of the ICT curriculum, such as using spreadsheets and databases.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

The high standard of pupils' wellbeing is a significant strength of the school. Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure within a friendly and inclusive environment that recognises and celebrates diversity. They recognise each other's differences and show tolerance and respect to all members of the school community.

Pupils' enjoy school and most display exemplary behaviour in lessons, moving around the school and at playtimes. Many pupils display high levels of care and concern for one another and have strong, respectful working relationships with adults in the school. They know where to turn for help when needed. Many older pupils show kindness towards their peers and support others to be a part of the school family.

Nearly all pupils concentrate and participate well in lessons. They are ambitious and enthusiastic learners who are ready to learn and take on new challenges. They approach their work positively and can persevere with unfamiliar tasks showing resilience when they face difficulties. Across the school, most pupils work independently and collaborate effectively with their friends. They show respect towards peers' contributions and listen and respond carefully to their ideas. For example, when struggling on tasks, older pupils persevere by comparing their work with others and collaborating to improve their own understanding.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. Many pupils across the school can explain very clearly which foods are healthy and they make good choices in their lunchbox selections. They keep fit taking part in regular physical activity during and after school and nearly all pupils know how to stay safe on the internet.

Many pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities and key leadership roles, to which they show strong commitment. These roles develop pupils successfully as ethical, informed and active citizens. For example, the school council have engaged with the 'Schools of Sanctuary' project to audit and improve provision for cultural diversity. They work with determination and rigour to educate their peers about the need for a healthy diet and are currently developing further extra-curricular provision for sport.

The eco committee encourage recycling and reduce the amount of electricity the school uses. They promote 'active' journeys to school, holding events and carrying out competitions that encourage more pupils to ride bikes, scooters or walk. This has a positive impact on reducing the number of children who travel to school in cars.

Pupils from Year 2 onwards take on the role of 'Young Interpreters' and support new pupils with little or no English to transition easily into school life. They work with sensitivity and care to help pupils around the school and encourage their social inclusion during lunch times. They run a regular reading club to support language development and use their personal experiences and multi-lingual skills to embrace new pupils into the school family.

Pupils have further opportunities to develop leadership skills as reading buddies, playground buddies, super ambassadors and digital leaders. The extensive involvement of pupils within these leadership groups is very effective in developing them as responsible members of their school community.

While the school's attendance levels have placed the school in the lower 50% when compared with similar schools for the last three years, there has been a significant improvement over time.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers and teaching assistants have very positive relationships with pupils across the school. This a particular strength that results in nearly all pupils feeling supported and challenged to achieve to the best of their ability.

Teachers share learning intentions and success criteria with pupils which helps them develop a firm understanding of the way self-assessment can help to improve their work and that of their peers. Teachers plan an engaging range of activities that challenge pupils to practise their skills at the appropriate level. In many cases, staff encourage pupils to develop increased independence, and think for themselves. Classrooms are generally stimulating and engaging, including working walls, which pupils use to support their learning. As a result, most pupils concentrate well on their activities, and make good progress over time.

Many teachers use effective questioning techniques to challenge and develop pupils' understanding and provide useful feedback for pupils during activities. Written feedback is generally beneficial, but does not always focus well enough on the next steps for learning. Teachers use a broad range of assessment information to ensure that activities provide the appropriate level of challenge for individuals and groups.

The school ensures that there is a broad and balanced curriculum which is engaging and can be adapted to the needs of all pupils. Most pupils enjoy the topics studied and are enthusiastic about their learning. They are keen to ask questions and talk about their knowledge to others. For example, pupils in the foundation phase talk at length about their clay eggs and the dinosaurs that may be inside, depending on the shape and size of the egg.

Teachers plan a successful range of activities which cover all subjects and areas of learning throughout the foundation phase and key stage two. They collaborate well to plan meaningful activities which link to themes. For example, making Tudor biscuits from a recipe of the time. Teachers ensure that they integrate the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT into their planning. As a result, pupils develop skills in oracy, reading and writing successfully throughout all of their work. However, teachers do not always identify sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy and problem solving skills in context across the curriculum.

Intervention groups are organised so that learners do not regularly miss out on activities in class. Teachers ensure that pupils in the specialist classes integrate very well with their peers and have access to a rich curriculum.

The school plans activities that celebrate its cultural diversity successfully. Staff welcome members of the wider community into school to enrich the curriculum. They integrate pupils' special festivals into planned work and this helps pupils develop an understanding and tolerance of each other's beliefs and values.

Teachers use Welsh in school regularly and act as good language models. There is appropriate use of Welsh in classes and on displays. All children study Welsh stories and learn about the culture, history and geography of Wales. School trips enhance pupils' sense of place and belonging within Wales.

Teachers planning for the foundation phase ensures there are good opportunities for continuous and extended learning within all classes. However, while activities are often engaging, pupils do not always have opportunities to make choices in their learning and develop their independence. Despite the limitations of the Victorian building, teachers plan for a range of outdoor activities. While this provision supports the development of pupils skills it does not always provide sufficient challenge, especially for older and more capable children.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a very caring and supportive learning environment where children and adults promote respect and tolerance in every aspect of school life. It celebrates the diversity of culture and language of pupils and their families at every opportunity and uses highly effective strategies to support pupils who need to develop their English language skills. This is a particular strength of the school.

Staff use a wide range of assessment data to identify and support vulnerable learners quickly. They track individual pupil progress rigorously and ensure that the moderation of standards is effective and accurate. Senior leaders and teachers meet regularly to discuss the needs of individual learners and review the effectiveness of interventions.

All staff carefully monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as additional language (EAL). The additional learning needs coordinator works skilfully alongside staff to identify and support vulnerable learners. Staff use a wide range of tools to assess language acquisition, progress in literacy and numeracy, attendance and wellbeing. They use this information to plan effective teaching provision and interventions which result in very positive outcomes for almost all pupils.

Leaders are innovative in developing a range of individual, group and small class interventions which impact very positively on pupil progress. These include a specialist EAL class with a language rich environment that supports learners very effectively as they enter school. Almost all pupils who access this provision make rapid progress and integrate successfully with their peers.

Staff use individual education plans to set appropriate targets which they use well to inform planning and carry out regular reviews of these plans with parents. The school has recently introduced detailed pupil profiles that assist effective personalised approaches to teaching and learning. Staff monitor pupils' wellbeing using a range of information to create 'vulnerability profiles'. Teachers use this information skilfully to address pupils' social and emotional needs.

Learning support assistants provide a range of highly effective interventions that support EAL pupils and develop literacy, numeracy, emotional wellbeing and motor skills. The school has strong links with a variety of external agencies to support teachers, including speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and local authority support teachers. A specialist teacher works well with the EAL class to support pupils' language development.

Positive relationships with the local community help develop a caring and tolerant ethos. The school has effective systems for promoting good attendance that lead to continual improvements in the number of pupils attending school regularly. Parents value the informative termly meetings with class teachers who also produce detailed annual reports which meet requirements.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking, as well as safe relationships. Most pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to take part in physical activity. Many attend after-school clubs and participate enthusiastically in physical education lessons. Pupils are developing healthy attitudes towards on-line safety, alcohol, drug awareness and personal safety. The school has a well-planned scheme of work for personal and social education and staff plan effective lessons that reinforce regularly the values of kindness, care and resilience. Senior leaders have listened sensitively to the community so that lessons in relationships and sex education show an understanding of the cultural diversity of the school. As a result, very few learners are withdrawn from these sessions.

A strong feature of the school is the excellent relationships between pupils and staff. The school manages behaviour well and there are robust systems in place to respond to allegations of bullying. All individuals strive to embrace the school motto 'only our best will do'.

The school promotes individual spirituality in its pupils, recognising the diversity of its faiths and cultures. Daily assemblies address a range of spiritual, ethical and moral issues sensitively. Nearly all learners are aware of their place in the wider world and there are good opportunities to investigate issues around sustainability such as fair trade and global warming. Pupils have a range of opportunities to engage in cultural experiences, including the celebration of Welsh language and culture. Pupils talk very enthusiastically about celebrating St David's Day.

Pupil groups, including the school council and eco committee are a significant strength of the school. However, involvement of pupils in influencing the direction of their learning in class is inconsistent across the school. Where staff do this well, pupils show pride in their contributions and enjoy this independence.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has a clear strategic vision for the school based on developing pupils' attainment and nurturing their wellbeing. Pupils, staff, governors and parents share and support this vision. Members of the senior leadership team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and ably support the headteacher. There is effective distributed leadership. The team promote the school's values and ethos successfully and provide good levels of support, guidance and challenge for teachers and teaching assistants.

Members of the senior leadership team and subject leaders produce valuable development plans for their areas of responsibility and, through regular team and staff meetings, promote whole school understanding of priorities. This leads to effective collaboration amongst staff, who work together diligently to develop the provision at the school.

Members of the governing body understand their roles well. They conduct regular full governing body meetings and meet as sub-committees to focus on specific areas, such as standards and wellbeing. They have a positive and mutually respectful relationship with senior leaders and staff. They meet with subject leaders regularly to discuss progress and take part in a valuable range of activities at school, such as learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' books. Governors have an accurate and detailed picture of the school, its strengths and areas for improvement that enables them to challenge and support leaders appropriately.

Leaders ensure that there is an ongoing programme of meaningful self-evaluation activity throughout the year. This is a well embedded cycle and involves all staff. Leaders ensure opportunities for parents and pupils to contribute to the self-evaluation process through questionnaires and discussion. They scrutinise planning, and regularly consider the standard of work in pupils' books. They use lesson observations and learning walks well to help them assess the quality of teaching.

Self-evaluation processes feed well into the school's priorities for improvement. Leaders and staff are clear about the school's priorities, the steps needed to achieve them and their role in carrying them out. The school's current targets for improvement are an accurate reflection of its developmental needs. Leaders demonstrate a sustained focus on school improvement over time, for instance in improving the progress of pupils with additional educational needs.

A strength of the school is the way all staff are encouraged to collaborate with their colleagues in school, with partners in other schools within the local authority and further afield. For example, the 'school leadership improvement programme' provides meaningful opportunities for staff to meet with colleagues from other schools who have similar responsibilities to them. They visit each other's schools and share good practice, which in turn enhances their skills and provision at their own school. There is a successful learning pathway for teaching assistants where individuals have opportunities to develop their skills for the benefit of the pupils. Staff value these opportunities and their work has had a significant impact on the provision and teaching within the school. For example, staff work in collaboration with colleagues from other schools to develop their skills in the teaching of oracy and then use these approaches to improve standards of speaking and listening within their own pupils.

Leaders plan for teachers to assess themselves against the professional teaching and leadership standards in order to identify areas which they may wish to develop further. Staff engage in elements of professional dialogue and research in order to trial different activities and strategies. This encourages and supports individualised personal development effectively.

Leaders monitor the school budget carefully and make appropriate decisions about spending specific grant funding. The school has an appropriate level of staffing across the foundation phase and key stage 2. Leaders deploy support staff effectively to provide successful interventions for different groups of learners. As a result, most learners make good progress over time.

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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