



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

A report on

Sully Primary School

**Burnham Avenue
Sully
Penarth
Vale of Glamorgan
CF64 5SU**

Date of inspection: July 2022

by

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

About Sully Primary School

Name of provider	Sully Primary School
Local authority	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	413
Pupils of statutory school age	297
Number in nursery classes	64
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 21%)	7.9%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 22.2%)	8.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.7%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	7.1%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/12/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/04/2014
Start date of inspection	04/07/2022
The school is a lead school for initial teacher education.	

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Sully Primary School is a nurturing and vibrant place for pupils, staff and visitors. All pupils and their families receive a sincere welcome. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are proud to be a part of such a reassuring learning environment. Teachers and support staff are always there to help when needed. The headteacher, teachers and support staff take very good care of the pupils and want them to thrive in learning and in life. They offer pupils an impressive variety of school experiences, all of which help to keep pupils interested and make learning exciting. The school grounds offer a wonderful environment to extend pupils' learning. However, the school does not always make good enough use of this learning opportunity.

Pupils know that staff expect them to behave well and respect everyone in the school and the community. The engagement of pupils in their learning, and their excellent behaviour, are notable strengths of the school. Many pupils make good progress and achieve well, especially considering the disruption to their learning caused by the pandemic in recent years. Leaders have identified that teachers need to provide more challenging learning experiences for pupils to improve their progress and independence.

The headteacher provides strong leadership and generally knows the school well. She has identified important areas of the school's work that she wants to improve. This includes improving elements of day-to-day classroom assessment that will help to move pupils on in their learning. The headteacher values the opinions of staff, pupils, parents and governors, and uses these to improve the school. The current leadership team is relatively new, but members trust each other and work well together to provide good support for colleagues.

Recommendations

- R1 Address the health and safety issue raised during the inspection
- R2 Strengthen teaching to ensure that it meets the needs of all individual learners
- R3 Develop pupil independence, including when using the outdoors

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Many pupils begin school with levels of understanding and skills at or above those expected for their age. Overall, many pupils make effective progress from their individual starting points. However, more able pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of.

Nearly all pupils develop strong speaking and listening skills. In the nursery, nearly all pupils' language as they enter the school is well developed for their age. They respond appropriately to complex teacher questions and answer them correctly. Pupils speak in extended phrases or sentences and express themselves well to the teacher and to each other. For example, when in the pirate ship role play area, they discuss 'sailing the whole pirate world to find treasure'. In reception, pupils share their ideas confidently with adults and their peers when explaining how to make a lighthouse shine, using circuits. As they progress through the school, pupils use the skills of speaking and listening well when asking questions or sharing ideas. In Year 4, pupils use mathematical language accurately to explain their method for rounding up to one decimal place and in Year 6 they consider the language and style appropriate for recording a podcast, discussing whether 'school days are the best days of your life'.

Across the school, pupils' reading skills are at least appropriate for their age. In the nursery, many pupils enjoy looking at and talking about the pictures in books. In Year 2, most pupils use strategies to decode unfamiliar words well. When reading non-fiction, these pupils recall and identify the main aspects of the text. For instance, they talk about what equipment and materials are needed to make a sweetcorn salad. Year 6 pupils read confidently, with understanding for a sustained period. These pupils can predict the ending to stories and share details about the books they are reading with enthusiasm.

Most pupils have neat handwriting and present work to a high standard. In Year 2, most pupils consistently use full sentences, capital letters and full stops correctly. They write at length, for example when writing postcards to pen pals in France. In Year 5, pupils write accurately in a range of interesting and contemporary contexts, for example 'How to cook safely', 'Are the royal family good for the UK?' and an informative pamphlet about the Commonwealth Games in 2022. In Year 6, pupils write accurately and with expression, such as when writing a poem entitled 'The Journey Through Hell', describing soldiers landing on the beach in France during World War II. In addition, pupils use their creative skills well, for example when playing a simple tune on the glockenspiel to accompany their peers singing.

Across the school, most pupils' Welsh speaking and listening skills are consistently good. Most of the younger pupils respond to simple, every day Welsh instructions effectively and many older pupils can hold simple conversations independently, based on a variety of learned patterns. The 'Cryw Cymraeg' pupils are powerful role models in promoting the use of conversational Welsh around the school. Their weekly 'Ymadrodd yr Wythnos' videos, provide useful reminders to all pupils to speak Welsh.

Many pupils develop secure mathematical knowledge and skills, especially in their work using number, and use these in their learning across the curriculum. In Year 1, many pupils use non-standard measures, measuring the distance paper planes travel using their feet and hands. In Year 3, pupils use fraction charts to find equivalent fractions well, they multiply 3-digit numbers using the column method accurately and use Venn diagrams successfully, including when comparing the best way to keep money safe. In Year 6, when handling data, pupils collect and use data to find the mean, median and the mode, such as when using a deck of cards. When given the opportunity, many pupils transfer their mathematical skills to a variety of contexts successfully, for instance when creating bar charts to show how many people were evacuated from cities across the UK during World War II.

Many pupils have good digital skills, which, when given the opportunity, they use across the curriculum successfully. In reception, pupils use a bee bot to programme simple directions to navigate a maze to get to Buckingham Palace or a specific place on a map successfully. In Year 2, pupils successfully develop presentations about an international country, adding text, sound and images. In addition, nearly all pupils use their skills to build scenes digitally and animate characters using frames to make characters move. A few pupils use an electronic device independently to video a puppet show and in Year 6 many pupils use micro bits for programming.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils are proud to be part of Sully Primary School. The happy and inclusive atmosphere ensures that nearly all pupils feel safe, secure and listened to at school. The eight pupil 'Llais' groups work effectively to listen to other pupils and provide opportunities for pupils to use their leadership roles to drive initiatives that enhance school life for all. The digital leaders produce and share presentations on topics, such as staying safe online effectively. The Sully Senedd arranged for each of the beach sheds in the playground to have a different purpose. For example, the 'Darllen' shed is now somewhere quiet to read and the 'Ffrindiau' shed is a place to chat with friends. These activities successfully promote strong pupil well-being for learners.

Nearly all pupils arrive at school eager to learn. They have strong working relationships with both staff and their peers. In classes and around the school, nearly all pupils are polite and respectful towards each other, staff, and visitors. They understand the school's system for rewards and sanctions well and value the pupil of the week award.

Nearly all pupils behave extremely well in lessons. They settle quickly and concentrate well for extended periods of time. Most pupils show perseverance and resilience when completing tasks, for example solving problems in mathematics. Most pupils understand the feedback provided by their teachers and respond to it effectively to improve their learning.

Most pupils are enthusiastic learners who apply themselves confidently to new experiences. They work effectively with their peers in pairs or groups and support each other's learning. They treat the contributions of others with respect and respond positively to their ideas.

Across the school, nearly all pupils consistently demonstrate confidence in the way they interact with each other, and with familiar and unfamiliar adults. They are happy to share their views and ideas while respectfully taking on board what others have to say. Most pupils contribute creatively to lessons, and choose topics and themes of interest to the class. Older pupils understand that when they find work challenging or get stuck, the outcome of their decisions and actions is uncertain and learning is achieved as much through mistakes as getting things right. Younger pupils use a cheerful 'Can't do it yet' song as a reminder to take risks.

Nearly all pupils understand the need for a balanced diet, with many older pupils understanding the nutritional value of various foods. This enables them to make informed decisions about what they eat. A majority of pupils participate purposefully in lunchtime and afterschool sports clubs. These activities help pupils to understand how activity contributes positively to their physical and mental health and well-being.

Throughout the school, most pupils have a beneficial understanding of the children's rights and how these impact positively on their lives at Sully and on the lives of children across the world. Many older pupils understand a little Mandarin and are skilful at counting and greeting people in several different languages. Nearly all pupils have an extensive understanding of other cultures and religions, which they share effectively with parents at events such as 'international day.' Through their strong understanding of diversity, most pupils appreciate the need for a worldwide approach to saving the environment. For example, the youngest pupils know that plastic is a sea pollutant, while older pupils devised an invention to save the environment, for example a 'sea water sucker' which carries water to areas such as deserts, to allow trees to grow.

Nearly all pupils develop their entrepreneurial skills purposefully. Younger pupils make decorations from sea shells and pebbles to sell. The eco council ran a bird box design competition. The winners' designs decorate bird boxes in the local community. Older pupils sold items at Easter and used the money raised to support a local cancer charity.

Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not report pupils' rates of attendance during the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Inspectors will, however, consider the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of inspection area 4 (care, support and guidance).

Teaching and learning experiences

The school is taking effective steps to redesign its curriculum and long-term planning to align with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales. Leaders and staff work collaboratively with pupils, parents and governors to create and share a vision for their curriculum.

Staff work together successfully to plan interesting experiences that build systematically on pupils' skills and understanding as they move through the school. However, over-directed activities often limit opportunities for pupils to make choices about their learning and teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge. As a result, a few pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers promote pupils' literacy skills particularly well, including encouraging a culture of

reading. They also provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their numeracy, digital and physical skills.

The curriculum offers a range of engaging learning experiences that reflect the school's local context and that of Wales successfully. Teachers use resources from within the local area effectively to extend learning opportunities. For example, pupils in reception visit Sully Beach as part of their 'Beside the Seaside' topic to explore what they might see, hear, and smell at the beach. Visitors to the school further enrich the curriculum by providing exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity through dance, drama and enterprise activities.

The school's provision for personal and social education develops pupils' understanding of their own well-being and identity successfully. Teachers skillfully integrate aspects of diversity into planning, for example studying the lives of Amelia Earhart and Betty Campbell through their work on International Women's Day. The school grounds further enhance curriculum provision for games, physical education, and the development of pupils' creative skills. However, whilst the majority of pupils can access outdoor learning daily, planning for the use of the outdoor learning areas to enhance pupils' experiences is limited. All topics result in a celebration that pupils are excited to share with their parents. For example, international week culminated with a whole school exhibition of pupils' work in the school hall.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they manage this successfully. A particular strength is the respectful professional relationships between staff and pupils. This contributes to a calm working environment where pupils feel listened to and can ask questions if they need help with their learning. Teachers successfully deploy support staff to assist the development of pupils' skills and well-being. Many staff use basic Welsh sentence patterns in the classroom, for example to give instructions to their pupils. The provision to develop pupils' Welsh skills across the school is effective. Teachers and support staff are good language role models and most use questioning effectively to extend pupils' responses and deepen their understanding. As a result, pupils engage well during lessons, and most are keen and enjoy their learning.

Teachers provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to respond to their feedback and written comments. For example, they ask pupils to complete tasks or provide answers to questions that will improve their learning. The school makes effective use of assessment procedures to track pupil progress in areas of learning as they journey through the school. There are regular pupil progress meetings that include leaders, class teachers and the additional learning needs co-ordinator. These help to ensure that staff are aware of the progress pupils are making.

Care, support and guidance

The school's ethos successfully fosters a respectful, caring and nurturing learning environment, which promotes nearly all pupils' personal development. Most pupils benefit positively from the stimulating topics delivered, such Black History and the negative side of social media. These activities are powerful in developing most pupils' empathy and tolerance towards one another, and their understanding of what it means to be responsible global citizens.

The school provides effective support for nearly all pupils with additional learning needs to make consistently good progress against their individual targets. The purposeful tracking system monitors pupils' progress, at all levels, successfully. The school utilises its well-established partnerships with several external agencies to tailor bespoke and effective support programs for the few pupils with more complex needs.

The school's supportive approach ensures strong relationships between pupils, their families and the school. Staff understand that learning and personal and social targets are equally important in supporting each pupil's well-being. For example, the system of meeting pupils on arrival is beneficial to the few pupils who feel anxious about coming to school and supports a smooth transition between home and school at the start of the day.

The school promotes most pupils' spiritual and moral development effectively through a variety of purposeful collective worship and group prayer sessions. The shared and discussed monthly values, such as friendship, remind nearly all pupils how to treat each other. Activities such as mindfulness and yoga encourage nearly all pupils to be still, take notice and reflect on their own feelings and emotions.

Pupils and staff lead extensive work on the rights of the child, promoting the importance of children's rights in striving towards equality for all young people across the world. This ensures that many of the younger pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and most older pupils understand what is just and fair.

The purposeful Welsh activities provided by the school enable most learners to understand their heritage and culture thoroughly. Nearly all of the younger pupils use the locality to support their learning, while older pupils paint pictures in the style of Welsh artists. The school's eisteddfod provides valuable opportunities for many pupils to perform and participate in various competitions, such as cookery.

All pupils from Year 3 have appropriate opportunities to be part of the various pupil voice forums. These 'Llais' groups provide valuable opportunities for all pupils to participate in purposeful decision-making at a school level. As a result, when learning about compassion, a group of learners created Christmas cards for members of a local residential home, to counteract the effects of loneliness.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. However, a health and safety concern was raised with the school, which leaders are addressing. Pupils and parents report that incidents of bullying are extremely rare and, as a result, nearly all pupils feel happy and secure. The school monitors pupils' attendance effectively and addresses persistent absence well. The systems to support and challenge low attendance are robust and this results in a positive attitude to attendance across the school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that places pupils' well-being at the centre of the school's work. She works closely with her deputy to provide supportive leadership, which sets clear expectations for staff, pupils, parents and those with leadership responsibilities. There are strong professional working relationships

between all staff and the senior leadership team, and this helps to create a happy school for pupils and their families. The partnership between the school and parents is a strength and the school is very much at the heart of the community.

Parents speak highly of the commitment leaders and staff show to supporting their children's learning now and during the pandemic. Leaders model professional behaviours and values that contribute positively to effective collaboration among staff and they are making good progress in developing a whole-school ethos of self-improvement. They promote and support the professional learning of all staff, so that they have a growing influence on the school's work. For example, in small teams, staff carry out inquiry projects that encourage them to consider evidence and research to help them improve an aspect of their teaching, linked to one of the school's priorities for improvement. Most recently, this has had an impact on improving enquiry-based learning, which has had a positive effect on the quality of the curriculum. The school's collaboration with a higher education institution as a partner for initial teacher education has benefited staff through the opportunities for professional development this offers. Leaders ensure that individual staff, including learning support assistants, receive the right professional learning to support pupils in their learning.

Overall, leaders know the school's strengths and identify most of its areas for development accurately. The headteacher, ably assisted by the curriculum lead teachers, has been successful in making improvements to important aspects of the school's provision, for example improving the provision for Welsh and the standards pupils achieve in their use of the language. The considerable changes to the learning experiences provided have resulted in an enriched curriculum, which inspires pupils to engage in their learning. The school gathers the opinions of a wide range of stakeholders effectively as part of its approach to self-evaluation and improvement. There is a varied and planned range of activities that provide first-hand evidence about the school's work. Leaders track pupils' progress carefully and use the information gained from these processes to inform school improvement actions. Since the headteacher's appointment, all staff are involved in school improvement. This helps to ensure that they feel part of the school development process. They work together well in curriculum teams to improve provision.

Governors are experienced, skilled and knowledgeable about the school's work. Prior to the pandemic, they gathered first-hand evidence through activities, such as listening to learners and learning walks, to help them carry out their roles as critical friends. In place of this they have used reports from leaders, to question the headteacher about the school's progress towards its improvement priorities, including national priorities, such as the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act. Financial management of the school is effective. Leaders and governors ensure that priorities are affordable. They monitor expenditure closely and balance short-term and longer-term needs appropriately. The headteacher aligns professional development carefully to ensure that staff have the skills to bring about the success of planned improvement priorities. Leaders ensure that the pupil development grant is used well to benefit eligible pupils, for example through employing skilful support staff that deliver focused provision. Leaders and governors ensure that the school has robust safeguarding arrangements to ensure pupils' safety. Governors are very involved in ensuring that arrangements to promote pupils' healthy eating and drinking are effective.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer 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/carers 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' well-being, 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)

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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