



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

**A report on**

**Afon-Y-Felin Primary School**

**Heol y Parc  
North Cornelly  
CF33 4PA**

**Date of inspection: June 2022**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About Afon-Y-Felin Primary School

Name of provider	Afon-Y-Felin Primary School
Local authority	Bridgend County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	152
Pupils of statutory school age	104
Number in nursery classes	28
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 21.3%)	48.8%
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%)	34.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	
Date of headteacher appointment	March 2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/10/2013
Start date of inspection	27/06/2022

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](https://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

Pupils' well-being is at the heart of Afon-Y-Felin Primary School and nearly all enjoy attending school. Pupils state that the school is a calm and caring place where they feel safe and able to speak to staff if they feel worried or anxious. Most pupils are polite and treat adults and each other with respect. Over their time in school and from low starting points, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good use of the wide range of learning experiences on offer and make good progress in most areas of learning. Many pupils are well motivated to learn and collaborate enthusiastically on interesting topics. They enjoy helping leaders to make decisions about improving their school and are very proud of the important changes they have made.

Leaders have created a good team ethos amongst staff who successfully support pupils' well-being. They have formed close working partnerships with many outside agencies, earned the confidence of parents and established a range of effective approaches to identify the correct provision so that pupils can achieve. Leaders and staff are beginning to develop a curriculum that reflects the environment and community in which they live. It offers pupils a suitable range of learning experiences that encourage pupils to explore and learn. A strength of the school is the way leaders, staff and pupils work together to promote the school's Welsh identity and the language of Wales. As a result, many pupils enjoy improving their Welsh language skills and are confident when speaking Welsh around the school.

Leaders, alongside the governing body, keep the work of the school under review and there are suitable arrangements for monitoring the quality of school improvements. On a few occasions monitoring activity does not always identify areas that need improving, for instance on the way teachers support pupils to improve their work or how their planning might improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Strengthen self-evaluation processes to focus more specifically on the impact of teaching and learning
- R2 Ensure that teachers use assessment and feedback approaches effectively to support pupil progress
- R3 Plan purposeful opportunities for older pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum

## **What happens next**

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

At Afon-Y-Felin Primary School, many pupils flourish and make good progress from their individual starting points, this includes those identified as having ALN. When pupils join the nursery class, most have poor communication and numeracy skills, yet many make good progress relatively quickly. Most settle well into school life, develop good relationships with staff and their peers and engage positively with learning experiences.

Pupils in nursery and reception classes develop their speech, language and communication skills well. Many acquire a wide vocabulary and talk readily and confidently to adults and each other. As pupils progress through the school, they continue to expand their vocabulary and their understanding of language patterns successfully. Many older pupils speak clearly and confidently for a range of purposes, such as when debating current affairs and providing clear explanations when talking about a range of current topics in the news.

The youngest pupils exhibit clear enjoyment when listening to stories or retelling their favourite parts to friends and adults, for instance when describing a Gruffalo's huge footprint. Most handle books gently in the book corner and begin to recognise and name a range of sounds. They use this knowledge to help them start to read simple but age-appropriate texts. By Year 2, many pupils read in line with their stage of development and more able pupils can talk about authors they like to read. Many older pupils talk enthusiastically about how they enjoy reading and completing book reviews for their peers to read. They can identify key themes in both novels and poems and can extract information to back up their opinions.

Younger pupils develop their fine motor skills suitably and soon begin to use a pencil grip and start to form letters correctly. Many reception pupils develop their knowledge of sound and symbol relationships well in relation to their starting points and are keen to express themselves in writing such as when making marks with chalks on a board. Across the school, teachers support pupils to extend their vocabulary and to use this within their writing. For example, pupils in Year 2 write thoughtful and descriptive poems following a sensory walk in the school field. In Year 3, many pupils use a range of synonyms and adjectives to engage the reader in their writing. For instance, they write a thoughtful, persuasive letter to the government, asking them not to cut down the 'Kapok tree' in the amazon rainforest. Many older pupils write with a growing maturity. They use imaginative vocabulary when writing a memoir and then more detailed and informative accounts for a newspaper article about the floods of Tryweryn.

Nursery pupils enjoy counting as they play and many reception pupils are able to recognise numerals and name them. More able pupils can automatically state what is one more than or one less than for numbers up to 20. By Year 4, many pupils develop their mathematical skills appropriately. They recognise multiples, simple fractions, can draw reflections of shapes accurately and are able to calculate the area of rectangles well. By the time pupils reach Year 6, many are confident mathematicians; they can calculate and compare the volume of cuboids and solve

money problems accurately, for example when calculating a budget for a friend's birthday party.

Across the school, many pupils develop their Welsh language skills very well. Younger pupils reply confidently to simple questions and sing along happily to a wide variety of Welsh songs. Most pupils in Year 2 confidently reply to simple Welsh questions correctly. Most pupils across the school greet each other and adults with simple Welsh phrases. Year 3 pupils describe where they live in Welsh well and many Year 4 pupils have a sound understanding of Welsh words and pronunciation. Older pupils read Welsh books confidently and follow more complex Welsh instructions from adults successfully.

Most pupils are developing their digital skills well across the school. Many younger pupils use tablet devices confidently to take and use photographs. Year 2 pupils use devices to take pictures outside and record sounds to support their writing. Most pupils in Year 3 can code a character to escape the impending natural disaster from the virtual world they have created. Most older pupils use their digital skills well. They select and use resources confidently to enhance their learning, such as when using spreadsheets and data bases to support their research.

Across the school, most pupils take pride in their creative work, and their efforts are attractively displayed throughout the school, giving them a sense of achievement and ambition. For example, after reading the story of Goldilocks, nursery and reception pupils create paintings of bears in the style of Van Gogh using natural materials. As part of the theme 'Alive and Kicking', pupils in Year 1 create a healthy menu to be served in the 'crunchy café' whilst older pupils use technology creatively to design and program mini robots.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's work. Most pupils speak confidently and with pride about their school. They state that it is a calm and caring place, where staff listen to their ideas and treat them with respect. Pupils feel safe and know who to talk to if they are upset. Many make good use of the well-being and emotional support that is available to them and appreciate the many outdoor and physical learning experiences the school has to offer, such as the forest school. Most pupils are polite and treat each other, adults and visitors with respect. Most behave very well in lessons, when moving around the school and during break and lunch times.

Nearly all pupils have a good awareness of fairness and equality. These important values are developed and strengthened effectively by teachers during lessons and when sharing valuable messages during collective worship. Many pupils value purposeful class sessions that allows pupils to reflect on their and other people's actions. Many pupils are beginning to develop as ethically, informed citizens and have a sound understanding of their rights. They contribute effectively to class discussions on issues such as racism and anti-bullying. In addition, through the school's 'Green Team', pupils are aware of the importance of using less energy by turning off electrical appliances resources when not needed.

Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the importance of being healthy and keeping fit. They speak knowledgeably about what makes a healthy packed lunch

and participate enthusiastically in physical education lessons and creative dance sessions. Most pupils make very good use of the school's outdoor areas and various equipment to promote health and well-being during the school day. For example, they develop their gross motor skills effectively by using the adventure playground and the exercise and fitness equipment. Most pupils have successfully enhanced their health and well-being through their involvement in a national scheme, which encourages pupils and parents to cycle or use a scooter to travel to school.

Many pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and are motivated learners. Many work together effectively and learn to stay focused on their work to complete their tasks. Most younger pupils listen attentively to their teachers and work consistently well together and on more independent tasks. Many older pupils show good levels of enthusiasm and interest in their work. At times, however, a few lack enthusiasm and motivation during lessons. As a result, these pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

Most pupils respond positively to the opportunities they are given to influence what they would like to learn. They contribute to teachers' planning during weekly evaluations of their work and suggest ideas for tasks in the forthcoming week. Most pupils share their views and ideas in a variety of ways including through discussion and by using technology. Many pupils, including those with ALN, take on leadership roles within the school. They participate effectively in a variety of groups, which include the school council and 'Cryw Cymraeg'. These pupils play an active role in decision making in the school. For example, the 'Cryw Cymraeg' chose and purchased new playground equipment, and the school council met with the local authority's catering service to improve off-site lunch provision. In addition, pupils on the school's 'Tech Team' support pupils to learn about keeping safe on-line by taking part in e-safety activities and by leading a series of school assemblies.

Many pupils respond suitably to effective questioning and verbal feedback during lessons. As a result, they know how to make improvements to their work and this supports them to make better progress. However, pupils' responses to teachers' written feedback is variable. Many pupils reflect appropriately on their learning. They check whether their work meets the expectations set out prior to the task. In general, feedback processes are inconsistent across the school.

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 has started to implement a curriculum that reflects 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. By sharing a range of approaches, most staff produce suitable ideas that provide pupils with interesting and relevant learning experiences that take account of the school's particular context.

Teachers set out termly topics for each year group. These topics are chosen thoughtfully by teachers and take account of the six areas of learning and



experience. Pupils are invited to contribute their suggestions and influence the direction the topic will take. This structure ensures that there is a balance of rich learning experiences across the whole of the curriculum. Overall, teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop literacy, numeracy and digital skills. However, these opportunities do not always build on pupils' skills systematically or secure progression in lessons and over time.

Overall, the school's curriculum is broad and balanced. It offers pupils a suitable range of learning experiences that encourage pupils to explore and learn. Many topics are enriched by offsite visits or visitors into school. For example, pupils were able to see how a fire engine works during a visit by the fire service. This linked effectively to the topic 'Disaster Zone'. In addition, the curriculum is enriched by themed days, which focus on a variety of topics linked to the topic being studied. For example, pupils learn about the importance of Fairtrade and celebrations that are important to the school's community, including Tales of Wales. This supports pupils to develop a better understanding of the diverse nature of Wales and the wider world.

Teachers plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the world of work and potential future careers. For example, pupils visited a dance academy and met dancers who discussed their profession with the pupils. As part of developing pupils' well-being, creativity and collaboration with others, professional sports players, teams and a local harpist visit the school to discuss with pupils the importance of motivation and resilience. These experiences are influential in developing all pupils' aspirations and self-esteem.

The school grounds enhance curriculum provision and all pupils participate enthusiastically in games, physical education and in the development of their co-ordination skills. Many pupils access outdoor learning on a daily basis. However, teachers do not always plan enough purposeful opportunities for older pupils to use the outdoor spaces to enhance their learning experiences and develop their wider skills.

Most staff collaborate successfully to build positive working relationships with pupils, creating welcoming, purposeful, and supportive learning environments. This contributes to a calm working environment where pupils feel that their views are listened to, and that they are well supported in their learning. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and most pupils are engaged and remain on task during lessons. Teachers set work that challenges most pupils to achieve well. For example, pupils in Year 3 are given opportunities to select appropriate tasks that challenge them to achieve at the next level.

Across the school, the majority of teachers develop pupils learning at a steady pace in lessons. However, on occasions, lesson introductions are too long. As a result, pupils lose their concentration. In most classes, teachers use questioning well to move pupils' learning on and support understanding, according to the needs of pupils. Teachers deploy support staff thoughtfully to assist the development of pupils' skills and well-being. Staff are sensitive to pupils' needs, allowing them to explore and make mistakes before stepping in to offer support. Overall, pupils engage well during lessons, and many are keen and enjoy their learning.

The school makes suitable use of assessment procedures to track pupil progress in the areas of learning as they move through the school. There are regular and effective pupil progress meetings that include leaders, class teachers and the ALN co-ordinator. These meetings discuss the progress and well-being of individual pupils and, if required, how provision can be adjusted to support improvements. Across the school there are sound approaches to provide worthwhile responses to pupils' work. In the best practice, teachers monitor pupils' learning effectively during lessons and support them with helpful verbal feedback that helps them to improve their work and extend their learning. However, the quality of feedback across the school is inconsistent and does not always assist pupils to improve their work and build on their current skills.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school is a caring and supportive community that promotes good behaviour, courtesy and respect highly effectively. The supportive and friendly working relationship between pupils and staff is a strength within the school. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of the individual pupils and work together successfully to adapt the learning provision and cater for their needs.

The school has effective strategies to support pupils' emotional and social needs and teachers work purposefully with a number of external services and agencies. These procedures have a positive effect on pupils' standards of achievement and well-being, and contribute successfully towards the school's caring and inclusive ethos. All staff address any behavioural issues amongst the pupils in a positive and respectful way.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which staff identify pupils' additional and personal learning needs from an early age. Support staff and teachers provide high quality support for pupils. The valuable range of support programmes and strategies supports pupils to make good progress in their learning. Individual development plans for pupils with ALN are concise and include specific and measurable targets. They are monitored and evaluated regularly, and pupils and parents play a full part in the review process. Early intervention ensures that pupils receive the necessary support for them to succeed in their work.

Staff provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to contribute to decision making processes within the school. There are a variety of pupil groups, which meet regularly to discuss how to improve standards of learning and resources across the school. For example, as part of the theme 'Glas Glas Blaned', the 'Green Team' engage pupils in a variety of activities including litter picking around the school grounds and encourage everyone to cut down on plastic waste during lunch times. They have also started a school clothes recycling scheme, whereby pupils bring in used clothes to be washed and distributed again to others who need them. Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to express their opinions about provision, for example when choosing aspects of learning that are of interest to them. However, opportunities to develop their views and contributions on a whole school level are less well developed.

Across the school, staff encourage pupils to make healthy choices in relation to their diet and physical exercise. As part of their planning, teachers provide purposeful

opportunities for pupils to learn to about healthy foods and the importance of eating five pieces of fruit or vegetables a day. They plan valuable activities which develop pupils' physical skills effectively, for example when playing games that develop pupils' agility and physical skills.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development successfully. Teachers ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the differences between right and wrong and what it means to be a good citizen. This is achieved through regular whole school assemblies and classroom sessions. During these periods, pupils are given time to discuss their thoughts on a variety of issues, for example the importance of honesty, respect and kindness. Teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the cultural and historical heritage of Wales. For example, pupils learn about significant historical events in Wales' history such as the drowning of the village of Capel Celyn, and the history of Owain Glyndwr. The school effectively challenges stereotypes in pupils' attitudes, choices and expectations. For example, when studying the topic 'Gwlad, Gwlad', older pupils enjoyed a visit to the school by a famous rugby player and were encouraged to discuss their identity and the differences between them and others.

Leaders monitor pupil attendance regularly and work closely with parents and other agencies to improve the attendance of pupils within the school. The school has built a purposeful safeguarding culture where all staff address concerns about pupil safety and emotional well-being effectively.

### **Leadership and management**

Leaders provide a vision for the school based firmly on developing pupils' well-being and raising standards. All staff work effectively together to provide a safe and caring environment where all pupils feel that their opinions and views are considered carefully. Overall, leaders address national and local priorities well. There is a clear focus on improving pupils' learning following the pandemic, reducing the impact of poverty on pupils' outcomes and preparing the school for the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales.

Leaders use a range of evidence to evaluate the progress and standards of pupils' work. Self-evaluation processes are appropriate and inform leaders of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. For example, after looking at pupils' work, leaders identified the need to improve pupils' number skills and their ability to apply them across the curriculum. Generally, information from self-evaluation is used effectively to inform the priorities, which are included in the school development plan. However, self-evaluation processes are not always sharp enough, for instance in identifying shortcomings in the quality of teaching and learning.

Leaders ensure that all staff have beneficial opportunities to participate in professional learning that is linked clearly to the priorities addressed in the school development plan. Most staff engage successfully in regional collaboration to enhance their own knowledge and skills, for instance in developing their approaches to teaching reading and by contributing to exemplar material to support local schools to develop their pupils Welsh language skills. However, opportunities for middle leaders to improve their leadership skills and take a more active role in the self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes are underdeveloped.

Leaders plan effective opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in formal and informal situations through a comprehensive whole school approach. They have developed the role of the 'Cryw Cymraeg' successfully so that pupils play a key role in improving the quality of Welsh being spoken in the school. For example, the 'Cryw Cymraeg' take responsibility for creating and organising playground games. This has improved pupils' enthusiasm and confidence when speaking Welsh within the school. Leaders work effectively with local schools to share good practice in raising pupils' standards in Welsh. They engage the pupils in activities successfully, which allows them to correspond with pupils in other schools through the medium of Welsh.

The governing body knows the school very well. Governors meet regularly in various sub-committees and as a whole body to discuss and make decisions that support the smooth running of the school. The headteacher provides governors with comprehensive reports that keep them informed about the improvement work of the school. Governors provide a suitable level of challenge and support. For instance, they ask purposeful questions about how well vulnerable pupils are progressing in their language skills and about the provision for those pupils with ALN. The governing body has appropriate arrangements in place for promoting healthy eating and drinking within the school.

Effective use is made of resources and grants that are available to raise pupils' standards in literacy and improve their well-being. Decisions on expenditure link closely with priorities for improvement. The school's budget is monitored carefully by leaders to develop provision and improve pupils' standards of achievement.

## 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' 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](http://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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