



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

A report on
Cwmfelin Primary School

**Maesteg Road
Cwmfelin
Maesteg
Bridgend
CF34 9LD**

Date of inspection: January 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Cwmfelin Primary School

Name of provider	Cwmfelin Primary School
Local authority	Bridgend County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	217
Pupils of statutory school age	161
Number in nursery classes	32
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 23.0%)	11.5%
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 16.1%)	4.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/11/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	18/01/2016
Start date of inspection	23/01/2023
<p>The substantive headteacher was appointed in April 2015, however, she took on a full-time secondment with Central South Consortium from November 2022. The acting headteacher is the school's substantive deputy headteacher. She is currently supported by two acting assistant headteachers.</p>	

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

Cwmfelin Primary School is a nurturing and inclusive environment where pupils feel safe, happy and valued. The effective acting headteacher, senior leaders and skilled staff create an ethos where pupils know that they matter and can develop as confident learners. Most pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning and show high levels of interest and enthusiasm in their lessons. They thoroughly enjoy the many clubs and additional activities they attend, such as craft club and violin lessons. Nearly all pupils behave very well in lessons and at break times.

Staff across the school develop strong working relationships with pupils. They show consistent care and kindness and, as a result, almost all pupils are comfortable to seek help and ask for support when needed. Teaching meets the needs of pupils well. Staff regularly offer individuals bespoke experiences that support their learning successfully. Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals, make strong progress. They develop effective numeracy and digital skills and make particularly good progress in their speaking, listening and reading skills. However, older pupils' progress in developing writing skills and Welsh oracy skills is not as strong.

The school's curriculum enables pupils to follow specific interests and develop their independent thinking well. For example, pupils explore a range of questions within an overarching topic called an 'inquiry'. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to learn within authentic contexts. The 'Big Bocs Bwyd' project, where affordable food is provided to the local community, is an excellent example of this. The school's approach to this provision is highly effective in supporting pupils' life skills such as cooking and using money. Additionally, it supports older pupils to take on useful leadership roles as they undertake specific responsibilities such as stocking the shelves. All pupils across the school benefit from regular, beneficial outdoor learning sessions. For example, they deepen their knowledge of wildlife living in the school grounds and develop their fitness by running the 'daily mile'.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the teaching of extended writing to ensure that older pupils develop and organise their ideas effectively
- R2 Ensure that Welsh language teaching builds progressively on pupils' oracy skills across the school
- R3 Evaluate the effectiveness of provision funded by the pupil development grant, to ensure that leaders know the impact it has on outcomes for vulnerable pupils

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 providing authentic learning experience through their highly beneficial Big Bocs Bwyd provision.

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs, make strong progress from their starting points in most areas of learning.

Nearly all pupils make very strong progress in developing their English oracy skills. Younger pupils talk with confidence about their learning and use a good range of vocabulary. Most older pupils use their speaking and listening skills exceptionally well to support their learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 listen to each other's ideas with interest and justify their own thoughts clearly as they work in groups to discuss the most important aspects of teamwork.

Most pupils across the school develop their reading skills successfully and show a strong passion for books and stories. Younger pupils develop their understanding of storyline and character well. For example, pupils in the reception class talk excitedly about the three bears after receiving a letter from Goldilocks. By Year 2, most pupils read simple texts confidently, taking good account of punctuation. Older pupils build on this progress very effectively and develop a range of strategies to become fluent independent readers. By Year 6, most complete challenging reading tasks well. For instance, they use their knowledge of texts to order detailed sections of persuasive writing successfully.

From a young age, most pupils show enthusiasm for early writing, such as when they experiment with mark making on a large scale in the nursery class. From reception to Year 2, they develop their writing skills well through engaging contexts. For example, younger pupils decide to write a birthday card for Baby Bear after learning to write the letter 'b'. By Year 2, most pupils include simple punctuation such as capital letters and full stops successfully. They develop their understanding of different texts well, such as when they write helpful letters to a story character who is feeling sad.

Most older pupils develop their writing skills suitably and apply them in a range of relevant contexts across the curriculum. In Year 4, pupils begin to develop a good awareness of the reader, using language and punctuation to good effect. For example, they write stories about a skeleton, building tension through phrases such as 'Then someone heard a scream...'. However, overall, older pupils' progress in writing is too varied. Opportunities for them to develop technical elements within different text types, such as plot and paragraphing, are often underdeveloped. As a result, many pupils do not develop and organise ideas in their writing in line with their ability.

During their first years in school, many pupils make rapid progress in understanding and using number. Most pupils in Year 2 know number bonds to 20 and can identify which numbers are larger or smaller up to 100. A particular strength is the way that most pupils apply their skills in relevant, authentic contexts. For example, in Year 3, pupils investigate the difference between a running and a standing jump by measuring them using metres and centimetres. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils are confident, competent mathematicians. They add and subtract to 100,000

successfully and work with money to two decimal places in real life situations, for example when costing out a recipe.

Nearly all pupils throughout the school develop their thinking skills successfully. They are familiar with taking an 'inquiry-based' approach towards developing their ideas and solving problems. This involves exploring questions within an overarching topic called an 'inquiry'. For example, Year 1 pupils investigate the best materials to make ear defenders for a story character during a 'Light and Sound All Around' inquiry. They make predictions about which materials will block sound the best and test their finished product by creating sound with percussion instruments. Most pupils across the school develop their creative and physical skills effectively. For example, many older pupils explore colour well, as they paint with tinted mud.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their digital skills as they move through the school. The youngest pupils quickly become adept at using a tablet computer in purposeful situations, for example adding voice recordings to pictures they have taken of themselves. By the time they reach Year 6, almost all pupils use code successfully to begin to devise games that others can use.

Most pupils have a positive attitude to learning the Welsh language and respond to teachers' instructions well. Many younger pupils use simple greetings and phrases accurately, for example when discussing their feelings. However, most pupils' progress slows from Year 3 to Year 6 and, too often, pupils repeat the words and sentence patterns they have learnt from previous years. As a result, many older pupils do not make enough progress in learning the Welsh language.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils' well-being and attitudes to learning are a strength of the school. Most pupils show great pride in themselves, their school, and their work. They value and respect the learning opportunities they receive and make the most of lessons and the many clubs and additional activities available to them.

Most pupils behave very well in lessons and at break times. They move around the school calmly and respectfully. Nearly all pupils are polite and well-mannered. They greet visitors warmly with a smile and often hold doors open for them. Most pupils feel valued and happy at school. They trust the staff and know whom to ask for help should they need it. Most pupils show a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. For example, nearly all younger pupils wear safety helmets when they ride bikes and trikes in the outdoor area. Most older pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online. For instance, they understand the importance of protecting their passwords and personal information.

Most pupils convey enthusiasm for learning, engaging well and sustaining concentration successfully from an early age. Pupils show high levels of perseverance and resilience when completing tasks. They understand the importance of maintaining positive attitudes to their work and how this will help them to overcome challenges in their learning. As a result, nearly all pupils develop very well as independent learners. Older pupils work well together, listening and responding thoughtfully to the ideas and suggestions of others, such as when they create a prayer to acknowledge and celebrate their achievements.

Most pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and drinking and appreciate the benefits of physical exercise. For example, most pupils participate with energy and enthusiasm during physical education lessons. Many pupils participate keenly in the extra-curricular sports activities that the school provides such as cross country and netball. Pupils speak with energy and interest about the learning experiences they have outside the classroom. For example, all older pupils take part in 'Muddy Mondays' where they enjoy the fresh air and engage in a range of stimulating activities to support the curriculum.

Most pupils embrace opportunities to contribute to what they learn. In Year 4, pupils interested in deepening their knowledge of outer space choose to study an 'Out of this World' inquiry. Most pupils respond well to verbal feedback provided by teachers and understand how to improve their work.

Most pupils recognise a range of rights in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Older pupils talk about their rights with understanding and an awareness of how to apply them in school. Many older pupils identify countries where pupils' rights are not being met and make comparisons with their own lives. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of caring for others. For instance, they raise money to support children suffering from the outcomes of war in Ukraine.

Pupils with positions of responsibility take their roles seriously and use these opportunities to learn new skills. All pupils in Year 5 and 6 take on purposeful leadership roles. For example, the Well-being Leaders provide support and help for younger pupils and the News Task Force Leaders write the 'Cwmfelin News' newsletter every fortnight.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has a clear vision to develop a curriculum that nurtures every child as an individual. A range of engaging inquiry-based topics capture pupils' interest effectively. For example, pupils in Year 6 speak enthusiastically about their 'Digital Discovery' inquiry and the opportunities it gives them to build on their existing interest and understanding of coding.

Teachers plan imaginative activities at the beginning of each inquiry that engage pupils' interest well. For instance, reception class pupils become excited as they discover a 'crime scene' in the outdoor area at the beginning of a story-based inquiry. Additionally, showcase events provide effective opportunities for pupils to consolidate and celebrate learning at the end of each inquiry effectively. For example, Year 2 pupils plan and deliver health and well-being sessions, including yoga for younger pupils at the end of their 'Healthy Body Healthy Mind' inquiry.

An outstanding aspect of the school's curriculum is the way teachers use the well-established Big Bocs Bwyd project, where affordable food is provided to the local community. This provision is highly effective in supporting learning within an authentic context. For example, pupils in Year 2 apply and develop their understanding of number and money well as they buy food and calculate the required change. Older pupils develop life skills successfully as they undertake

specific responsibilities involved in running the Bocs, such as stocking the shelves and monitoring the temperature of the fridge.

Staff provide an engaging range of provision indoors and outside that help young pupils to learn effectively through play and exploration. This has a particularly positive impact on their personal, social, and physical development. For example, pupils in the nursery collaborate well as they transport friends on a 'taxi trike'. Outdoor learning is a strong feature of provision throughout the school. For instance, older pupils take part in a range of worthwhile activities such as creating natural artwork and learning about wildlife that live on the school grounds.

Staff across the school develop very strong working relationships with pupils. They show consistent care and kindness and, as a result, almost all pupils are comfortable to seek help and ask for support when needed. Teaching meets the needs of pupils well. Staff regularly offer individuals bespoke experiences that support their learning successfully. Knowledgeable and competent support staff work skilfully with pupils, and this has a very positive impact on their progress across the school.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons. Often, teachers encourage collaborative working to encourage pupils to articulate their thoughts and listen carefully to each other. These sessions are managed very well and, as a result, most older pupils take part in discussions and develop their thinking maturely. Overall, most teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. For example, the teaching of reading across the school builds progressively on pupils' skills. However, when teaching Welsh, teachers do not always provide enough challenge for pupils and, as a result, older pupils do not develop their skills in this area as well as they could.

Most staff use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and check for understanding. They have clear objectives and provide effective explanations to help pupils make progress with their learning. In nearly all cases, they model positive approaches to learning and provide useful resources to support pupils. For instance, when exploring and sorting opaque and transparent materials, teachers provide pupils in Year 3 with netting to encourage and extend their thinking.

In nearly all cases, teachers and support staff know their pupils' strengths and areas for improvement well. Most use verbal feedback skilfully during lessons to help pupils understand the next steps in their learning. This ensures that most pupils know how to improve their work. For example, many pupils in Year 2 explain confidently how they will improve their writing.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a nurturing and inclusive environment where most pupils feel safe, happy and valued. The supportive ethos and high-quality provision across the school enable most pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning and strong personal and social skills.

The school has robust systems in place to identify and meet the needs of pupils with ALN. Staff monitor the progress of these pupils comprehensively. The leader responsible for ALN works purposefully with a range of external agencies. As a

result, pupils receive the support they need to make effective progress against their individual learning targets. The school is making good progress in implementing individual development plans that support pupils' learning well.

The school has beneficial arrangements to promote exercise and healthy eating and drinking and, as a result, most pupils understand the importance of choosing a healthy lifestyle. This has a positive impact. For instance, nearly all pupils enjoy keeping fit when taking part in running the 'daily mile'.

Provision to support pupils' emotional health and well-being is effective. Staff plan beneficial additional support for pupils when they need to strengthen their emotional resilience. Planned activities support pupils to relax, reflect and boost their well-being successfully. For example, older pupils learn the benefits of taking time to stop and be in the moment as they reflect on the things that make them feel happy. Younger pupils develop a range of strategies to support their well-being such as 'breathing fingers' when they take a slow breath as they track the outline of each of their fingers.

Staff are successful in involving parents in the life of the school. Parents have regular opportunities to discuss their children's well-being and progress with teachers. A recent 'Reflection Time' initiative involves pupils in selecting a piece of work to share with parents at the end of each week. This supports pupils' sense of pride in their work and provides parents with a starting point to discuss the things their children are learning.

The school provides a beneficial range of opportunities that contribute well to pupils' spiritual and ethical development. Daily collective worship sessions, when pupils have time for reflection, support pupils' understanding of the diverse nature of our society well and include celebrations from other faiths such as Diwali. Staff respond flexibly to spontaneous events, and this enables them to develop pupils' sense of awe and wonder successfully. For example, during a frosty day, they take nursery pupils onto the field to observe the 'sparkles' on the leaves and feel the crunch of the grass beneath their feet.

Staff encourage pupils to support and help each other and have consideration for others, such as when they raise considerable funds for the Dogs' Trust charity. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' awareness of children's rights. As a result, nearly all pupils have a clear understanding of fairness and inclusion in their own lives and those of others.

The school provides a good range of activities and opportunities to help pupils develop an appreciation and understanding of identity, heritage and culture. For example, they attend an on-line Jambori, and Year 6 design their own Snoopy dog, 'Ci Cynefin Cwmfelin', to celebrate the history and natural features of Maesteg.

The school provides pupils with a useful range of activities to raise their awareness and understanding of topical issues. For instance, they discuss daily news programmes and weekly publications. Pupils deepen their understanding of important issues, such as equality and diversity, during Black Lives Matter Month.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school and the arrangements to keep pupils safe meet requirements and give no cause for concern. The school creates

and maintains a safe environment for all pupils, including effective site security and access arrangements for visitors. There is an established and well-understood system to report safeguarding concerns. The school makes good use of visitors and other agencies to support pupils' understanding of how to stay safe. For example, the local Police Community Support Officer raises pupils' awareness of road safety.

Leadership and management

Leaders have a clear vision for the school that drives the high-quality care and education pupils receive. All the school's plans and policies work together to this end. The effective acting headteacher, senior leaders and skilled staff create an ethos where pupils know that they matter and that they can develop as confident learners.

Leaders promote staff well-being effectively, ensuring that everyone's views are considered, and that staff feel they can make a difference. Leaders model and promote professional values and behaviours that contribute positively to school improvement. They provide staff with clear roles and responsibilities. These align well to the needs of the school but also take good account of the needs of individual staff. Leaders keep good track of how well staff with responsibilities are managing their work through purposeful, regular senior leader team meetings.

The governing body has appropriate committees in place to meet the needs of the school and its statutory obligations. These committees allow governors to monitor spending appropriately and keep a track on the overall finances. Governors' good understanding of the school's finances allows them to make decisions that contribute to the well-being of staff and make innovative adaptations to the staffing structure, such as the recent appointment of two acting assistant headteachers. Governors also lead initiatives to improve provision in the school. For example, they have recently formed a special committee to create a 'swap shop' for children's sports clothes and equipment. This aims to reduce the impact of the cost-of-living crisis for families in the community. Governors promote healthy eating and drinking well. They ensure that water and milk are provided in school and know that staff have been effective in encouraging healthy lunchboxes.

The pupil development grant is used purposefully to provide extra support for pupils eligible for free school meals and those from low-income households. However, leaders do not evaluate the impact of this support thoroughly enough to confirm that these pupils have benefited from the support provided.

Purposeful self-evaluation takes place in important areas. For example, a staff skills audit revealed the need to develop the teaching of thinking skills. Activities such as looking at pupils' work, observing learning and talking to pupils contribute well to the monitoring and evaluation process. Overall, leaders maintain a clear focus on the impact of provision on pupil progress and well-being. For example, scrutinising teachers' planning revealed important gaps in the provision for relationships and sexuality education (RSE). Leaders responded by organising staff training and purchasing resources to ensure that all relevant aspects of RSE are covered effectively. Effective self-evaluation also takes place informally. For example, a leader noted that pupils were not progressing systematically in the development of gross motor skills. More structured planning was put in place and now there is a clear progression of skills in physical education lessons. However, in a few areas, leaders

do not use monitoring carefully enough to identify areas in need of improvement such as pupils' Welsh language skills.

The school has a strong track record in making and sustaining improvements, which have led to a positive impact on pupils' learning and well-being. For example, the school has maintained high standards in reading by providing attractive resources during the pandemic and introducing guided group reading and whole-class storytelling on pupils' return to school.

Leaders have created a positive culture and ethos that promotes and supports the professional learning of all staff very well. Professional learning to improve teaching and develop the Curriculum for Wales results in effective classroom practice that meets pupils' needs effectively. The school links its professional learning clearly to self-evaluation findings and improvement priorities. A particular strength of the professional learning that takes place is the way leaders encourage innovation. For example, they wanted to encourage better ways of using the outdoor areas and provided outdoor learning training for staff. As a result, pupils across the school now benefit from regular, beneficial opportunities to learn outdoors.

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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