



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

**A report on**

**Newton Primary School**

**New Road  
Porthcawl  
CF36 5BL**

**Date of inspection: February 2023**

**by**

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

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

## About Newton Primary School

Name of provider	Newton Primary School
Local authority	Bridgend County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	209
Pupils of statutory school age	170
Number in nursery classes	21
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%)	18.2%
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%)	*
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/10/2015
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/11/2015
Start date of inspection	27/02/2023

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

Nearly all pupils show a positive attitude to learning and enjoy their time in school. They behave very well in lessons and at break times. Most pupils engage in activities readily and work with focus. They collaborate thoughtfully with partners and work together well to meet the expectations set for them. As a result, most pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and skills and apply this well to their learning across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils participate enthusiastically in the various enrichment opportunities the school provides.

Teachers provide an exciting variety of learning experiences that engage pupils' interest and sustain their motivation well. They set clear objectives for pupils' learning and use effective teaching methods to build pupils' skills successfully. For example, the school's consistent approach to developing pupils' reading skills and their use of spoken Welsh impacts positively on pupils' progress and enjoyment. However, the teaching of writing is less effective, and teachers do not always use feedback purposefully enough to help pupils develop their work fully. Learning support officers contribute very beneficially to the progress pupils make. Across the school, all adults attend carefully to the individual needs and well-being of pupils.

Leaders have high expectations of staff and set a clear strategic direction for the school. They show a good understanding of the school's strengths and identify suitable priorities for development through their monitoring activity. Staff share responsibility for improvement and make good use of professional learning to strengthen their own skills. The school benefits from worthwhile partnerships with other schools to develop shared expertise and collaborate on changes such as the introduction of the new curriculum. Governors provide strong support for the school and ensure that leaders use resources efficiently.

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve the teaching of writing and increase the range of opportunities, particularly for older pupils, to apply their skills fully
- R2 Provide clear feedback to pupils that helps them to improve their work successfully
- R3 Provide suitable opportunities for all pupils to participate in acts of collective worship

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

During their time in school, most pupils make good progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding in a broad range of contexts across the curriculum. Those pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make at least good progress from their starting points.

Most pupils develop their language and communication skills well. Younger pupils listen with interest and share their thoughts and feelings readily. For example, pupils in Year 2 discuss their discovery of a dragon's eggs on the playground excitedly. As they move through the school, most pupils become increasingly articulate. Nearly all older pupils listen well. They offer opinions and give sensible reasons for their views. Most discuss their work attentively in pairs and groups and communicate effectively to achieve constructive results. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 confidently discuss differences in localities confidently during a digital meeting with pupils from a school in Caerphilly.

Many younger pupils enjoy hearing stories and talk about them enthusiastically. From the nursery class onwards, they begin to recognise letters and their sounds well. As they move through the school, most pupils develop good phonic skills, enabling them to read many unfamiliar words confidently. By Year 2, most pupils begin to read with fluency and confidence. Many older pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and most choose books written by their favourite authors or that reflect their personal interests. Most older pupils read aloud with accuracy, fluency and appropriate expression.

Generally, most pupils develop their writing skills well. Most younger pupils make good progress with their writing, from making marks and writing single letters in the nursery class, they progress well to attempting simple words and sentences in the reception class. In Year 1 and Year 2, many pupils begin to write more securely, using basic punctuation correctly, for instance when writing a recipe for making a good friend. Older pupils write for a range of purposes and many make interesting vocabulary choices, such as when writing a review for a holiday destination. However, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, in particular, do not write for a broad enough variety of purposes and many do not extend or improve their writing as well as they could. Throughout the school, many pupils use their literacy skills creatively across other areas of their learning and outdoors. For example, as part of the build up to their descriptive writing, pupils in Year 2 use a range of materials to construct a den for a dragon on the school playing field.

Many younger pupils make good progress from their starting points in developing their Welsh language skills. Younger pupils sing songs enthusiastically and understand and respond to teachers' instructions with increasing confidence. By Year 2, many pupils use familiar sentences accurately and pronounce simple Welsh words clearly. As they move through the school, most pupils enjoy using spoken Welsh and begin using their growing knowledge more conversationally. For example, they share personal information in a range of everyday contexts, such as to describe what they like to do in their leisure time. By Year 6, most pupils ask a good range of questions and extend their own responses to include relevant and engaging detail successfully.

Most pupils develop their mathematical skills well as they move through the school. Younger pupils begin to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary in their play, for instance when going on a dragon hunt and subsequently ordering the dragons by size. By Year 2, most pupils apply their mathematical knowledge independently, for instance to interrogate a bar chart of their favourite activities. Many pupils use their developing understanding of multiplication tables and number bonds effectively to complete mental calculations confidently. By Year 5 and Year 6, most pupils work systematically and apply their numeracy skills in different contexts with increasing accuracy. For example, they calculate the cost of different items on a shopping list to work within an agreed budget. Most pupils apply their skills, knowledge, and understanding to new situations, both in and outside of the classroom, well. For instance, older pupils cost out their designs for a new outdoor area in the school grounds and plan train journeys for their family using an online booking app.

Most pupils use their digital skills very competently in a range of creative contexts, such as to collaborate on the design of a resort using a 3-D gaming app. Many younger pupils use technology seamlessly during their activity, for example to guide a programmable toy around a castle or to gather ideas for junk models they are creating. Many older pupils use their digital skills to support independent research very well. They share their findings through sophisticated presentations that engage and inform successfully. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are adept at storing and retrieving their work from online platforms and use technology efficiently as a resource to capture, share and develop their ideas effectively. However, pupils' use of databases and spreadsheets is limited.

Throughout the school many pupils develop their artistic and creative skills well. Pupils in the reception class use clay to design and make a medal for Dilwyn the dragon, following a stamping process they observed during a visit to the Royal Mint. Older pupils engage positively in creative activities such as music and art. For example, pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 combine traditional steps and repeating motifs to choreograph and perform their own folk dance to music by the Stereophonics. Older pupils enjoy performing original songs linked to their class topics and use their instrumental skills beneficially to add texture to poems they write about the local area. Most pupils develop their independence effectively and apply their skills to solve a variety of authentic problems linked to their current themes successfully.

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

Most pupils show pride in their school and feel safe within its inclusive and caring ethos. Pupils trust that adults in the school listen to their views and take them into account when considering decisions that affect them. Nearly all pupils behave well and show care and consideration for each other. They play together happily, take turns and support each other well while being physically active and socialising during break time. Nearly all pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. The school's digital leaders promote online safety effectively through assemblies.

Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude to learning. They show good levels of interest in their work and talk enthusiastically about it. Most pupils demonstrate qualities of being an ambitious, confident, capable and independent learner. For example, older pupils are particularly proud of writing and performing their own musical compositions and uploading them to their online video streaming channel.

Most pupils listen attentively to teachers and concentrate well on their work during lessons. They collaborate well in groups and many make positive contributions to discussions and show a good level of respect for the contributions of others. Most pupils respond well to verbal feedback or prompts, both from adults and their peers, during lessons. As they move through the school, pupils take an increasing role in monitoring their own progress. Most exercise independence in their learning and often succeed in tackling any difficulties they experience without reliance on direct help from adults.

Pupils are developing well as ethical, informed citizens. They are fair and caring in their dealings with others and demonstrate a good knowledge of children's rights. Pupils have recently convened an Equality Champion group to develop and promote the principles of equality and diversity throughout the school. Pupil groups also lead the school effectively in fundraising for a range of charities, for example Children in Need and Comic Relief.

Nearly all pupils realise the importance of making healthy choices when eating and drinking. They understand the need to take regular exercise to achieve a healthy lifestyle and many enjoy taking part in the Daily Mile initiative. Many older pupils enjoy participating in extra-curricular football, netball and rugby clubs and representing the school in matches and competitions with nearby schools. However, other pupils have few opportunities to participate in a wider variety of after-school activities currently.

Nearly all pupils take an active part in the life of the school and the pupil voice groups are inclusive. Their representatives demonstrate a range of good leadership skills. They fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and are proud of their valuable contributions. This includes whole-school involvement on matters that are important to them, such as the Rigs and Rags clothing recycling project undertaken by the Eco Council. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about Newton University, which is a curriculum enrichment initiative. Pupils' ideas contribute directly to the variety of the programme and nearly all pupils enjoy participating in the option they elect to follow. Examples of the courses available to the pupils include Newton radio, yoga, drama and coding.

Attendance is currently below what would be expected pre-pandemic. However, the overall trend in attendance is improving and most pupils show a good understanding of the importance of good rates of attendance.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school's curriculum aligns the principles of the Curriculum for Wales with the specific interests and priorities of the school's community successfully. Teachers plan whole school themes that bring together pupils' learning across the areas of learning and experience purposefully. They adapt their plans to take account of pupils' ideas skilfully. For example, pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 are eager to respond to a request for help from a 'detective' seeking to apprehend Goldilocks after her break in. Following the pupils' ideas, the teacher helps them to plan interviews with the bears and to create detailed wanted posters to seek help from the public. Similarly, after the discovery of a dragon's egg, adults in the nursery and reception class support pupils to search the school grounds for suitable nesting materials and follow their

suggestion to read the egg a story to help to keep it calm. These opportunities give pupils a strong sense of purpose in their learning and sustain their motivation well.

Teachers make effective use of the outdoors and the school's locality as a context for pupils' learning. For example, younger pupils visit the park, the beach and the duck pond in their search for items lost by a genie. Teachers organise a sensory walk in the neighbouring area for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 to gather ideas for a performance poem about Porthcawl. They make very effective use of a collaboration app in class to enable pupils to pool their observations as a shared resource for their writing. These experiences provide a powerful stimulus to pupils' learning that hooks their interest and kindles their creativity well.

Staff make good use of the available space within school to support pupils' learning beneficially. For example, they zone the hall area to provide break-out areas for older pupils to work independently and in small groups with adults. This enables learning support officers to provide valuable guidance and intervention during lessons. The learning environment for the youngest pupils is calm, homely and well organised. Staff maintain clear and consistent routines that help pupils to settle and feel confident. This atmosphere impacts positively on pupils' well-being and security within the setting and enables them to make good early progress in their learning.

Teachers focus pupils' activity on clear objectives for their learning during lessons. They identify what pupils need to do to be successful in their work and refer back to these expectations usefully during pupils' activity. Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to challenge themselves, for example by planning linked tasks with increasing levels of difficulty and by encouraging pupils to improve on their previous best in timed activities that develop their mental agility. Teachers make good use of questioning during lessons to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to share their ideas and opinions. By Year 6, most pupils develop a strong sense of their responsibility for managing their own progress. However, teachers do not always provide precise feedback to pupils to help them know what they can do to develop their work further.

Teachers create an inclusive climate for learning that encourages the active participation of all pupils successfully. They plan for the progressive development of pupils' numeracy, digital and creative skills effectively. Provision for the development of pupils' reading is strong. All pupils participate in focused sessions that develop their early reading skills well. These sessions proceed at a lively pace and build pupils' knowledge systematically in an engaging way. As a result, nearly all pupils make good early progress and go on to develop as confident independent readers. However, planning for the development of pupils' writing is less consistent. Older pupils, in particular, do not have enough opportunity to write for a broad range of purposes or to extend their writing sufficiently.

All classes provide frequent opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their use of spoken Welsh. Adults support pupils to play a lead role in short, daily sessions that build their familiarity and confidence and enhance their vocabulary successfully. Adults act as good role models for the language. They encourage pupils to build on their previous learning and to be ambitious in extending their range of questions and spoken responses. Because of this, nearly all pupils enjoy taking part in focused sessions and show a positive attitude to learning and using Welsh.

## Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring and inclusive community where pupils, staff and families feel valued and respected. The school's core values are well embedded in its daily life and provide a strong foundation for upholding the rights and responsibilities of each member of the school's community. This is evident in the positive relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves. Courtesy, consideration and mutual respect are strong features of these relationships that contribute markedly to the school's friendly ethos.

Teachers and learning support officers know pupils well. They place a high priority on securing pupils' well-being and fostering their sense of belonging. They make thoughtful provision to address the specific needs of vulnerable pupils through nurture support and respond sensitively to problems pupils may encounter on a day-to-day basis. As a result, all pupils are confident to place their trust in staff and feel well cared for.

The school makes effective provision for pupils with ALN. Staff work well together to identify where pupils will benefit from additional support and take appropriate action quickly to enable their progress. They draw on the expertise of specialists for guidance and use this purposefully to enhance within-school provision beneficially. The school's ALN leader has developed strong professional relationships with colleagues in the neighbouring primary and secondary schools. They work together as a cluster to develop common approaches, for instance to mapping intervention for pupils with ALN and to gathering evidence for specialist support. This partnership working impacts positively on the skills and knowledge of the school's ALN lead and strengthens the school's overall capacity to meet the needs of pupils successfully. Because of this, the school has had notable success in particular cases where the need for additional support has lessened over time because of the strong progress made by individual pupils.

The school's learning support officers play a valuable role in supporting the progress of different groups of pupils, including those with ALN. They run a beneficial range of targeted interventions that help identified pupils to narrow gaps in their learning and to develop their social skills and emotional self-regulation. This support is well planned and efficiently delivered without disrupting pupils' access to, and enjoyment of, their learning in class. As a result of the school's concerted actions, nearly all pupils with identified needs, including those with ALN, make good progress relative to their individual starting points.

The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to take on leadership responsibilities. For instance, the elected Head Boy and Head Girl host regular celebration assemblies that highlight pupils' interests and achievements in a wide variety of out-of-school activities. These assemblies give older pupils a platform to share their individual passions and to inspire and inform their peers. The school's Cymraeg are active in promoting the use of Welsh through games in class and at break and lunch times. Their role contributes positively to the profile of Welsh in the school.

A particular strength of the school's provision is its 'Newton University' enrichment initiative. This provides an opportunity for pupils from different year groups to



participate together in a programme of planned activities not generally available in lessons. Options arise from pupils' suggestions and staff interests and provide experiences such as hairdressing led by a parent and local business owner, fitness sessions run by coaches from a nearby boxing club and the opportunity to work as a team to produce a radio show. Pupils value these sessions highly because they enjoy the novel experiences, the chance to learn with other children and adults and the opportunity to choose activities that are of interest to them.

The school makes beneficial use of trips and visitors to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of their local community, their Welsh culture and the wider world. For example, pupils visit St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff Castle, Big Pit and the Royal Mint to learn about changes in people's lives and the role of business in Wales' modern economy. Pupils also have good opportunities to participate in sporting events, including regular after school football, rugby and netball clubs and to create and perform as part of their annual Eisteddfod celebration.

The school gives good prominence to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of human rights and their awareness of their role as responsible young citizens. Lessons in class, rights-based assemblies and environmental activities help all pupils to learn how to care for one another and their environment effectively. As a result, pupils show respect for others regardless of individual differences and characteristics. However, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is less consistent and acts of collective worship are not planned for or delivered appropriately.

Rates of pupil attendance have increased following a significant drop after the pandemic. The school has effective systems to track and analyse attendance information and takes appropriate action where needed. Staff pay particular attention to the attendance of vulnerable pupils and work closely with the education welfare service and other agencies to support improvement. All staff are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils in their care. They show a strong understanding of the role they play in keeping pupils safe and discharge this responsibility diligently. As a result, the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher provides strong, purposeful leadership. Along with senior leaders, she creates and maintains a positive team ethos that focuses clearly on enabling the good progress of pupils and the well-being of the whole school community. Learning support officers are a valued and effective part of this team and contribute significantly to realising the school's aims. All staff promote and sustain a shared interest in the safety of pupils. They demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviours consistently and set a good example to pupils.

The headteacher works conscientiously with the governors, staff, pupils and parents to develop a shared vision and to set high aspirations for the school. Her commitment to developing and improving the work of the school accurately reflects the school's ambition to 'Inspire, discover, achieve and shine'.

Leaders know the school well. They have developed suitable processes to evaluate its performance and to plan for improvement. They use timely, focused monitoring activities to develop an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. For example, following monitoring of pupils' books, leaders identified the need to increase opportunities to develop pupils' writing across the curriculum. Leaders, staff and governors review progress against improvement priorities regularly. They work well to address national and local priorities. For example, leaders pay close attention to the current reform of ALN provision and ensure that the school addresses the needs of all pupils effectively. All staff have a good understanding of the Curriculum for Wales and the school is making good progress in realising its curriculum design.

Leaders make effective arrangements for the management of staff performance. Targets link well to the school's priorities and ensure a collaborative approach to improvement among staff. Leaders make comprehensive provision for professional learning and promote this equitably across the school. Professional learning links clearly to national and to school improvement priorities. Staff at all levels show a strong commitment to developing their own skills. Leaders make good use of partnerships with local schools to enable staff to collaborate on improvements and to share their practice. For example, the ALN leader has developed a beneficial partnership with staff from other local schools that has supported the school to manage complex changes successfully.

Governors are very supportive of the school and have a keen oversight of its finances. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of development and fulfil their statutory obligations appropriately. However, they currently make little contribution to setting the school's strategic priorities and have limited first-hand experience of the school's day-to-day work. Leaders are aware of this and have recently begun to engage governors more directly in evaluating the quality of the school's provision. Governors ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

Parents and carers are kept well informed of school news and developments. For example, the school makes effective use of a communication app and sends out regular electronic newsletters. Parents and carers appreciate how quickly leaders and staff respond to any concerns and suggestions they raise. School leaders provide suitable opportunities to help parents learn about recent changes in education. For example, they used a presentation evening about the school's implementation of the Curriculum for Wales to share the school's journey and to listen to parents' views. In addition, staff meet parents and carers at drop-off and pick-up times to maintain a close contact with the extended school community. As a result, parents and carers feel that the school is a safe and caring family environment.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances carefully. They balance short-term and longer-term needs prudently and ensure that spending is prioritised on improving pupil outcomes. The school uses grant funding, including the pupil development grant, effectively. This enables pupils to access bespoke interventions and to benefit from access to a broad range of enrichment activities.

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

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**This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).**