



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

A report on

Black Lane C.P. School

**Long Lane
Pentre Broughton
Wrexham
LL11 6BT**

Date of inspection: November 2023

by

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

About Black Lane C.P. School

Name of provider	Black Lane C.P. School
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	148
Pupils of statutory school age	112
Number in nursery classes	18
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%)	25.1%
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%)	4.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	
Date of headteacher appointment	01/02/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/05/2015
Start date of inspection	06/11/2023

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

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

Overview

Black Lane Primary School is a caring and nurturing school. Senior leaders promote a vision that focuses on striving to ensure that everyone is happy, healthy and safe. All staff share this vision. They are compassionate and support the needs of individual pupils well. As a result, pupils have high levels of well-being across the school. Most pupils behave well in class and when moving around the school. At playtimes, nearly all pupils play well together and enjoy spending time with their friends.

Within the positive learning environment, most pupils make good progress in all areas of learning during their time in school. Pupils and staff enjoy being a part of Black Lane Primary and they are proud of their school.

Senior leaders, supported by governors, work diligently to evaluate the school's strengths and to identify areas in need of improvement. They plan for change effectively and have a strong track record of improving teaching and learning. For example, they have improved provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills.

The support for pupils in need of additional help with their learning is a strength of the school. There are effective arrangements in place to identify and meet pupils' needs during their time at the school. This supports pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) to make good progress in relation to their individual targets.

Teachers plan exciting and engaging activities for pupils and learning is fun. Nearly all pupils are highly engaged in lessons. Staff support pupils well to develop the skills they need to improve their own work. Teachers generally have suitable expectations for the standard of pupils' work and the progress they make. However, they do not always match the level of challenge well enough to pupils' capabilities, especially in the mixed age classes. Senior leaders have supported staff to develop engaging learning areas outdoors, to further develop pupils' skills and opportunities to explore the natural environment. However, the provision for purposeful and meaningful outdoor learning, especially for older pupils, is at an early stage of development.

The school collaborates well with parents and the local community. Parents have beneficial opportunities to visit school and engage in their child's learning journey through regular 'come and see' sessions. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to perform and to meet people that live and work in the local area, to enhance their learning experiences.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that teaching and planned activities challenge all pupils and support them to make the progress of which they are capable of
- R2 Further develop outdoor learning experiences for pupils

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils start school in nursery with skills in literacy and mathematical development at a level expected for their age. They generally make good progress in their learning during their time at the school, with many making stronger progress with their writing and numeracy skills. Progress is most rapid where the provision is well matched to their needs. Overall, pupils with ALN and those eligible for free school meals make good progress during their time at school.

In Nursery and Reception, most pupils develop their communication skills well and talk with confidence to adults and each other, for example when talking about their visit to a firework display. As they move through the school, nearly all pupils make good progress with their oracy skills and use a broad range of suitable vocabulary in their learning. For example, in Year 3 and Year 4, most pupils give clear directions to their peers when orienteering.

Most pupils' reading skills are developing well. They enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors. The youngest pupils use an appropriate range of phonic strategies to read. They use their skills well to read familiar and 'nonsense' words. Most older pupils read accurately with good expression and fluency. They develop useful reading skills and use these purposefully to gather information, for example, when skimming and scanning texts to find information about the greatest contributors to sea pollution.

Nearly all pupils develop their writing skills well and make strong progress as they move through the school. Most pupils in nursery and reception develop their early writing skills well. By Year 2, most pupils write simple sentences independently and make good attempts at spelling descriptive words, for example when writing to describe a setting for the story of Goldilocks. Most pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 identify the features of different genres of writing confidently. Most older pupils write maturely for a range of purposes. For example, when writing a balanced argument, pupils give comprehensive reasons for and against banning single use plastic. However, pupils have too few opportunities to write at length in their work across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils edit their work skilfully to further improve their writing.

Pupils across the school make strong progress in developing their mathematical skills and use these skills at the same level across the curriculum. In Year 1 and Year 2, most pupils estimate weight well, for example when testing the stability of their bridges. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 use their mathematical skills to solve problems accurately, for example when calculating the cheapest taxi fare to travel to the Recycling Centre. By Year 6, many pupils calculate fractions to analyse information,

for example when calculating the fraction of food wasted by older pupils in comparison to the whole school.

Nearly all pupils develop as confident Welsh speakers. Younger pupils show their understanding of Welsh by responding appropriately to simple commands in Welsh and joining in with action songs. They develop a range of simple vocabulary relevant to their learning, including colours, numbers and parts of the body. They answer simple questions about themselves and the daily weather. Older pupils use their Welsh language skills enthusiastically to greet visitors. They ask and answer a range of questions using past and present tense superbly, both in Welsh lessons and throughout the school day.

Most pupils develop their digital skills confidently. For example, younger pupils programme a toy to order pictures when telling the story of Goldilocks. Pupils of all ages use green screen technology skilfully to deliver news reports or factual recounts, to share with their class. By Year 6, most pupils use their coding skills purposefully to create online games. However, they do not use databases and spreadsheets confidently.

Many pupils progress well in their physical development during their time at school and have a good understanding of the importance of keeping fit. When playing outdoors, younger pupils show good co-ordination and balance as they explore the outdoor play trail. Older pupils practise their ball skills independently during playtimes, when playing netball and football with their peers. Most pupils develop their creative skills competently and demonstrate their creativity skilfully through dance, music and artwork. For example, younger pupils design and make Rio Carnival headdresses. Older pupils produce an innovative video for parents presenting the highlights of their trip to the Oswestry Iron Works.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Most pupils enjoy school and nearly all feel safe there. They feel that they are treated fairly and understand how to treat others fairly too.

Most pupils know the importance of eating a balanced diet and exercising regularly. For example, they understand why they are allowed to eat fruit but not sweets at breaktimes, and why drinking water throughout the day is a good idea. Most know how to keep themselves safe. They know that there are risks and dangers online. For example, they understand that they should not share passwords or personal data.

Across the school, most pupils behave well. They move sensibly between the activities that the adults provide, and at playtimes, nearly all pupils play well together. They share the extensive outdoor provision with their peers and enjoy spending time outdoors, either being active with hoops, skipping ropes and ball games, or chatting to their friends. On a few occasions, for example when pupils squabble, they are confident that adults will help them to sort things out, using the school's agreed processes.

Most pupils enjoy the engaging and exciting activities that their teachers plan for them, although a few need encouragement in tackling new or unfamiliar experiences. In classrooms, most pupils focus well on their learning and sustain their

concentration for appropriate periods of time. Many pupils resist distractions and work single-mindedly. They begin to show resilience and persevere when they find things tricky. Pupils willingly offer support to each other. For example, in mathematics, Year 6 pupils support their peers without prompting, to use a protractor correctly and read accurately from the dial.

Pupils make good use of the feedback that teachers provide to help them to improve their work. This is particularly evident in improving their writing. Pupils find that dialogue with their teacher and the school's approach to presenting feedback, helps them to identify what is going well and supports pupils to know what they should work on next. Most pupils listen carefully to their peers and the adults. They engage thoughtfully in discussions with their peers about their work, waiting their turn patiently to put across their ideas but conveying their point coherently and enthusiastically.

Nearly all pupils enjoy making choices in their learning. Younger pupils particularly, decide how they want to approach tasks and what equipment they should use. Older pupils often make choices about which activities they complete, or what they would particularly like to learn about within a given topic. However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to think for themselves, to decide how they will complete a task.

Pupils of all ages are proud to represent their classmates on one of the many pupil voice groups, and encourage everyone to contribute. For example, the School Council use an online platform to enable everyone to share their ideas for a better school.

Teaching and learning experiences

All staff plan collaboratively to provide a balanced curriculum that contains a breadth of exciting learning experiences. Teachers support learning well with a vast range of visits within the local community. For example, visits to the local allotments, the Recycling Centre, Brymbo Steelworks and the Heritage Fossil Forest help many learners to understand more about where they live and the landscape around them.

Overall, teachers ensure that pupils develop their literacy, numeracy and well-being skills progressively as they move through the school. Many teachers support their pupils effectively to share learning experiences with parents through termly 'come and see' afternoons. Many teachers provide exciting and motivating digital tasks that engage pupils well. However, teachers do not ensure that pupils develop and use the full range of digital skills.

Teachers plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills and solve real-life problems across the curriculum. For example, in Years 3 and 4, most pupils apply their skills effectively when exploring the strength of materials as part of their topic on 'plastic pollution'. They use their understanding of weight and measure to find out which shopping bags are the strongest.

Teachers plan engaging opportunities for pupils to write at length. Many teachers provide feedback on writing tasks and support pupils to identify their next steps in learning well. Teachers support pupils to develop their writing skills progressively

over a sequence of sessions. As a result, most pupils write accurately and independently at length. For example, Year 6 improve their letter writing skills when writing to the headteacher, sharing concerns for food waste in the school. However, across the school, there is an over reliance on worksheets for topic related tasks, and this limits the opportunities pupils have to choose how they will present their topic work.

School staff foster a strong Welsh ethos, which helps pupils to feel proud to be Welsh. Provision for developing pupils' speaking skills in Welsh is a strength of the school. The school promotes Welsh language skills highly effectively around the building and within classrooms, ensuring that Welsh and English language interchange seamlessly. All teachers incorporate Welsh language effectively into other lessons across the curriculum.

The school works well with an outside provider to develop pupils' creative skills. Adults support pupils to create, design, and deliver exciting performances for audiences, including their families and other pupils in the school. All classes experience interesting forest school sessions within the year. Currently, the provision for purposeful and meaningful outdoor learning, especially for older pupils, is at an early stage of development.

Teachers plan engaging activities that successfully develop pupils' understanding of diversity and attitudes towards people from different races in Wales, and the wider world. For example, Year 5 pupils present opinions about Betty Campbell's impact on multiculturalism in Wales, whilst many older pupils write effective letters expressing their concerns for ethnic minority groups employed to build the football World Cup stadium in Qatar.

In most instances, good quality teaching supports purposeful learning. The pace of learning for older pupils is brisk. Most teachers share relevant learning objectives and provide clear explanations of concepts and new ideas. Many staff ask valuable questions to probe pupils' understanding and extend learning successfully. Teachers' use of school assessment information to plan for pupils next steps in learning is variable. In around a half of classes, teachers ensure that pupils consistently receive the right level of challenge. However, in other classes, particularly the mixed age classes, the level of challenge does not always meet pupils' needs well enough.

All staff have positive relationships with pupils, and this helps to ensure that most pupils are confident in their school environment. The valuable training for staff on supporting pupils' emotional well-being allows all staff to support pupils sensitively through the challenges that they face daily. Provision for personal, social and well-being development is a strength, and most pupils make good progress in these areas. Annual reports to parents provide appropriate information on their child's progress and suitable steps for them to improve their learning.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring, nurturing and inclusive community where pupils feel valued. There are warm, supportive professional relationships that support pupils to make good progress, to flourish as individuals and to ensure that pupils are confident to ask for help whenever they need it. In addition, there is thoughtful help for pupils

whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to underachievement, for example through nurture provision and skilled adult support.

There is effective provision for pupils with ALN. The ALN Co-ordinator works with class teachers to assess pupils' needs at an early stage and devise valuable support plans where appropriate. These include manageable targets, focused on the small steps that support pupils to progress. Adults monitor and evaluate the progress that pupils make in achieving these targets regularly and thoroughly. Where appropriate, additional outside agencies such as health services and the behaviour support team provide further support for the school staff. As a result, over their time at the school, most pupils with ALN make at least the progress they should against their targets.

The school's curriculum supports pupils particularly well to understand their identity, develop a sense of *cynefin* and belonging to their local community. For example, following their work to understand the local Gresford mining disaster, older pupils write and present compassionate accounts of the tragedy, that they present and record as news reporters, and share with their parents during a 'come and see' session.

There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their musical, creative and performance skills both within and beyond the curriculum, and as a result many are confident performers who enjoy the limelight.

The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to prepare for life as citizens in modern day Wales. Residential trips to Cardiff and Nant BH support older pupils to develop their enjoyment of the outdoors. In addition, a week of language immersion in a local Welsh-medium school supports the development of older pupils' Welsh language skills effectively. The school supports pupils to consider possible career choices for the future imaginatively. For example, pupils consider becoming goldsmiths, ophthalmologists, veterinary surgeons and dressmakers.

A wide range of pupil voice groups provide pupils with worthwhile experiences to develop their skills as leaders and teachers support pupils to contribute to the wider school community. This develops their self-confidence and self-esteem, alongside a sense of responsibility. For example, the *Criw Cymraeg* deliver a weekly assembly celebrating pupils' Welsh language skills, introducing the new phrase of the week and leading the singing of the national anthem. However, on occasions, adults over-direct the pupil voice groups and pupils do not have regular opportunities to influence decision-making.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well as an integral part of its daily life. From an early age, pupils are supported to care for those in challenging circumstances, and to think about the rights and wrongs of a situation. Furthermore, day-to-day activities promote their entrepreneurial skills and provide a real-life context to apply the skills they learn in lessons. A good example of this is work with the artist Rhiannon Roberts, who supported the pupils to paint scenes of local life in and around Wrexham. Pupils responded to their parents' requests for miniature copies of their work, using their craft skills to create coasters, key rings and other saleable items. Pupils chose to donate the money they raised to two national charities.

The school's safeguarding culture is robust. Adults are committed to keeping learners safe and understand their roles in applying the school's procedures. The school's arrangements to safeguard pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management

Leaders have a clear vision for the school based on nurturing pupils' well-being, with a strong focus on being happy, healthy and safe. Senior leaders have high expectations and encourage all to aim high and do their best. All staff share this vision. They know the pupils well and respond to their individual needs compassionately. The headteacher supported by senior leaders, creates a positive ethos where all pupils and staff feel valued and develop excellent professional relationships. Staff enjoy their work and are proud to be a part of Black Lane Primary.

Distributed leadership is a strength of the school and senior leaders understand their roles and responsibilities well. They track the pupils' reading and mathematical skills diligently. However, leaders have not ensured that teachers always use their ongoing assessment of pupils' progress to match the level of challenge in lessons and activities to pupils' developmental needs.

The governing body fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively, for example ensuring appropriate arrangements for pupils' healthy eating and drinking. Governors understand their responsibility in safeguarding pupils and support leaders to promote a strong culture of safeguarding. Link governors work closely with school staff to develop a good understanding of curriculum developments and the school's budget.

The school's finances are managed well. Leaders and governors ensure that school improvement priorities are properly resourced and think ahead to future spending priorities when managing school reserves. This enables leaders to maintain the support for vulnerable learners beneficially. The pupil development grant is used effectively to support the additional learning and emotional needs of pupils affected by socio-economic disadvantage.

Senior leaders plan many opportunities to evaluate the school's work to identify strengths and areas for development. Overall, leaders identify and address the most important priorities. The school has a strong track record of making good progress with planning for change and improving teaching and learning throughout the school. For example, professional learning enables teachers to teach digital skills well and develop a strong Welsh culture to improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills. Governors have a sound understanding of self-evaluation activities and how the outcomes influence current priorities for improvement.

Leaders pay diligent attention to local and national priorities. They collaborate well to identify actions, responsibilities and realistic targets for improvement. As a result, the school has made good progress with implementing ALN reform and the provision for pupils who need support with their learning is effective. Leaders have identified the need to develop provision for outdoor learning. For example, they plan beneficial opportunities for staff development and have used grants effectively to improve the outdoor learning environments. However, this is in the early stages of development, especially for older pupils.

The headteacher deploys staff strategically, using individual strengths to lead important areas for development throughout the school. Senior leaders regularly monitor performance of staff and support their development with agreed targets. Training activities link to school priorities suitably and ensure that staff develop the confidence to improve their own skills. For example, following cluster digital technology workshops, staff teach pupils coding skills confidently and pupils skilfully design their own gaming platform using coding technology.

Senior leaders collaborate well with parents and the local community. There are beneficial opportunities for parents to visit school and engage in their child's learning. For example, during 'come and see' sessions, parents and members of staff from the Brymbo Heritage Museum visit school to view the pupils' artwork following their visit. In addition, the school choir enjoy the beneficial opportunities to sing with the Brymbo male voice choir in the local church at Christmas.

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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