



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

A report on

Cwmfelinfach Primary School

**King Street
Cwmfelinfach
Ynysddu
NP11 7HL**

Date of inspection: November 2023

by

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

About Cwmfelinfach Primary School

Name of provider	Cwmfelinfach Primary School
Local authority	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	213
Pupils of statutory school age	170
Number in nursery classes	22
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 23.7%)	19.8%
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 13.2%)	7.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2009
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	08/03/2016
Start date of inspection	27/11/2023

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

Cwmfelinfach Primary School is federated with Ynysddu Primary School. The headteacher works across both sites and is supported by a deputy headteacher at the Cwmfelinfach site and deputy headteacher at the Ynysddu site. Although the schools are part of one federation, they take pride in the fact that they have their own unique identity and community.

With the enthusiastic support of the staff, the headteacher has created a clear vision based on ensuring that pupils have every opportunity to thrive in a safe and nurturing environment. They know their pupils well and strive to ensure that all pupils feel safe and know where to turn if they have a problem. All staff across the federation work together purposefully to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of most learners. Teachers provide learning experiences that support pupils to make strong progress in their literacy, numeracy, and digital skills. However, staff across the federation do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop their Welsh oracy skills in authentic contexts.

Most pupils make very good progress in the school's warm and caring environment. They behave exceptionally well, treating each other, staff, and visitors with the upmost respect. Pupils enjoy the wide range of stimulating and engaging learning experiences that are provided for them. They work effectively in the learning areas and contribute maturely to class discussions. Most pupils concentrate well and engage conscientiously when responding to challenges independently in their work. They use the comments given by staff purposefully when drafting and editing their work, effectively improving the quality of the written work. As a result, many pupils' writing skills develop successfully during their time at the school.

Recommendations

- R1 Provide pupils with opportunities to develop their Welsh oracy skills in authentic contexts

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 developing pupils' independent learning skills highly effectively, especially as confident writers, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time at Cwmfelinfach Primary School, most pupils thrive and make good progress from their individual starting points. This includes pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes.

The majority of pupils start nursery with skills in language and communication below the expected level. They settle into school life quickly and make rapid progress, developing positive relationships with each other and staff. They respond well to routines and engage well in learning experiences.

Most younger pupils listen well to each other's contributions and follow instructions from adults. As they move through the school, nearly all older pupils' listening skills develop well when sharing their ideas in pairs and when working in groups. For example, Year 3 pupils listen carefully to each other's views when discussing the impact of deforestation in the Amazon Rainforest.

Most younger pupils' oracy skills develop well. They are increasingly confident when expressing their ideas. For example, pupils in reception use a wide range of familiar words when suggesting what foods they will need for a picnic on the moon. By Year 4, most pupils speak clearly using a varied range of vocabulary. For example, they talk with confidence about their roles and responsibilities in school and the techniques they use to improve their work.

Most pupils develop their reading skills well across the school. Most reception pupils are beginning to identify letters and sounds, recognise familiar words and join in with familiar stories. In Year 4, pupils use skimming and scanning strategies to gather and collate information in a text. By Year 6, pupils read with good expression, fluency and understanding. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and books.

Across the school, most pupils' writing skills develop highly effectively. In the nursery class, most pupils develop their mark making skills in a variety of ways, for example while using crayons to make patterns of shapes in the outdoor area. By Year 1, most pupils write familiar words to create simple texts, for example when writing instructions on how to make a Dreidel sandwich. As pupils move through the school, most develop into confident, independent and capable writers. They use their thinking skills well to overcome challenges. By Year 6, most pupils plan, draft and edit their own work diligently, making changes to grammar, punctuation and spelling independently. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the features of different texts. For example, they write a newspaper report with a dramatic headline, rich vocabulary and good descriptions to catch the reader's attention.

In formal Welsh language sessions, the majority of pupils make appropriate progress in developing their Welsh oracy skills. The youngest pupils respond appropriately to simple instructions given by adults in Welsh. With support from adults, they repeat familiar words and sentence patterns, for example when counting the number of pupils in school that day. By Year 5, the majority of pupils understand and are beginning to use a wider range of patterns to describe, for example, what foods they

like and dislike. With support from adults, they are beginning to extend their sentences to include reasons behind their choices. However, nearly all pupils do not use and apply the Welsh they have learnt in sessions independently in less formal and social situations.

Most younger pupils have a good understanding of number. For example, reception pupils count, order and recognise numbers to 10. By Year 2, most pupils have a sound understanding of number facts to 100 and can count up and down confidently using a number line and number square. They recognise the value of coins as they use money to pay for items in the class shop. By Year 6, many pupils have a sound understanding of place value in numbers up to a million and can add and subtract three-digit numbers confidently. They have a good grasp of shape and measure. For example, they calculate the area of compound shapes and measure angles correctly while representing data in pie charts. The numeracy skills of most pupils across the school develop well. For example, most Year 2 pupils develop their understanding of the value of money by selecting the correct coins needed to pay for a train fare. Most Year 4 pupils use a wide range of calculation methods effectively to solve problems, for example when working out the costs and profit as part of their enterprise project selling pom poms.

Across the school, most pupils develop their digital skills appropriately. Reception pupils coding skills develop well, for example as they instruct a programmable device to visit various planets in the Solar System. By Year 6, most pupils use spreadsheets purposefully, for example when comparing the percentage of Welsh speakers from Victorian to present times. They use multimedia software confidently by adding images and text boxes when creating a presentation about themselves.

Across the school, most pupils' creative skills develop well. Reception pupils make Rangoli patterns and lamps while learning about Diwali. In Year 3, for example, pupils use a wide range of media, including paints, pastels and materials to create a rainforest in a shoebox.

Nearly all pupils' physical skills develop well through a variety of beneficial experiences and activities. For example, the younger pupils develop their physical skills by building mini houses in the construction area. The older pupils develop their physical skills successfully by taking part in activities that develop their ability to balance and stretch, for example when participating in circuit training.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils attend school regularly and are happy and confident in the school's inclusive environment. They say that they feel safe and free from issues of alleged bullying. Nearly all pupils understand the school's rules and expectations, and as a result their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils readily refer to the school rules: to be ready, respectful and responsible. They are polite and friendly, and treat their peers, staff and visitors with respect and care. They feel well supported by staff, know where to turn if they need support and are confident that staff will listen and deal appropriately with any concerns.

Through the values they are taught, most pupils develop a strong understanding of the importance of being responsible citizens and protecting the environment. For

example, as part of their topic work, Year 4 pupils learn about the environmental challenges facing people around the world. They build models of defence systems to see what materials could protect against the impact of a tsunami. Nearly all pupils have a strong sense of pride and belonging within their school and community. They enjoy participating in whole-community events, for example to raise money for good causes or keeping their village clean and tidy.

Nearly all pupils are proud to take on leadership roles that develop important skills such as co-operation and perseverance successfully. Pupils fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and are proud of their valuable contributions and achievements. Through these groups, pupils have been able to positively influence change across the school. For example, members of the school council take an active role in improving the outdoor provision for pupils, including the creation of the 'den dysgu' for pupils who want a quiet space during break times. As a result, nearly all pupils feel that the leaders include them in decisions which are important to them.

Nearly all pupils show positive attitude to their learning. They are quick to settle in lessons, listen attentively to teachers' instructions and engage purposefully with the class topics. All pupils enjoy participating in whole-school activities such as collective worship and 'enrichment' sessions. These sessions include working in the community allotment where they grow fruit and plants and learn how to manage and care for the natural environment. Nearly all pupils enjoy contributing ideas about learning experiences at the beginning of new topics. For example, as part of their topic 'The Human Body', Year 4 pupils suggest making an animation on the human skeleton. A notable feature of the school is how well most pupils use a range of techniques independently when facing challenges in their work. These include using their thinking skills and discussing and sharing their ideas with a partner. They confidently use a wide range of resources available to them to research their work independently, including reference books and the internet. Older pupils enjoy the freedom to choose how they present their work. As a result, most pupils display high levels of interest in their topics and a desire to remain and persevere on task to complete activities to the best of their ability.

Nearly all pupils value feedback on their work and have positive attitudes towards making improvements. Older pupils know the value of improving their work and of re-drafting pieces of their writing. They value the verbal feedback given by staff during lessons and use the written comments on their work purposefully to make improvements, adding detail and interest to their writing. As a result, most pupils make strong progress in developing their writing skills, with increasing independence.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance exercise has on keeping them healthy. They enjoy participating in the wide range of physical activities such as ball games, circuit training and dance lessons. Many pupils engage enthusiastically in after-school activities including football, netball, and fitness club, proudly representing their school in various sports tournaments. They recognise the benefits that eating a balanced diet has on fitness and overall well-being. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of digital safety and how to stay safe online. For example, they know how to keep their passwords secure and when not to share personal information.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff across the federation collaborate highly effectively to develop a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of most pupils well. They have successfully developed and embedded a vision where the school provides learning experiences that are enriching, engaging, inspiring and accessible to nearly all pupils. The school's curriculum is intelligently designed and builds upon pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding systematically. This supports most pupils to make strong progress over time.

Pupils are beginning to influence their learning purposefully. For example, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to suggest interesting and exciting activities that they would like to complete during their work on a particular topic. As a result, nearly all pupils feel a strong sense of ownership in their learning and approach their tasks with enthusiasm. Teachers and support staff plan and deliver a wide range of learning experiences that effectively spark pupils' natural curiosity and a desire to learn. This effectively promotes pupils' enjoyment in their tasks and instils a natural motivation to achieve to the best of their ability.

Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills across a wide range of authentic contexts. The school's planning and delivery to support pupils to develop their English writing skills within authentic contexts is a notable strength of the school. Teachers support pupils skilfully at the start of writing tasks as they identify key features of genres and agree success criteria together. Pupils draft their ideas purposefully, using a range of effective methods to improve their work. For example, older pupils use the 'uplevelling flap' highly successfully to improve aspects of their work independently, such as improving grammar or their choice of adjectives. Pupils make rapid progress as they produce final drafts that are of a commendably high standard. Over time, they become skilful and highly independent writers who gain joy and fulfilment from their finished work.

Staff provide sound opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh oracy skills in formal Welsh sessions. They introduce pupils to vocabulary and language patterns purposefully, which have a clear focus on their day to day lives. However, the provision for developing pupils' Welsh oracy skills within authentic contexts and outside of formal language sessions is inconsistent. As a result, very few pupils use and apply the Welsh they have learnt in sessions independently.

Without exception, teachers and support staff know the pupils well. They employ a wide range of effective teaching styles that ensure that most pupils make good progress in developing their skills. All staff have high expectations of all pupils, and they model positive attitudes and approaches to learning successfully. In turn, pupils become highly motivated learners who aspire to be the best that they can be. Teachers have clear aims for learning experiences and provide effective explanations to support pupils to make good progress. Most teachers and support staff employ a range of purposeful questioning techniques that promote pupils' thinking, reinforce understanding and guide the next steps in learning. Most learning experiences proceed at a good pace and classrooms are a hive of energy and activity. Staff make effective use of the outdoor learning areas to enrich pupils'

experiences. For example, the allotment area is used purposefully to develop pupils' love for the outdoors while also improving their well-being.

The school plans for pupils to develop their understanding of diversity and equality successfully. Pupils are provided with valuable opportunities to celebrate different cultures and learn about the life stories of well-known inspirational black, Welsh figures such as Richard Parks and Betty Campbell. They develop a strong sense of empathy towards the challenges and struggles that others face on a day-to-day basis.

Staff provide useful opportunities for pupils to review their own and their peers' work. Staff provide pupils with timely and useful feedback and, as a result, pupils have an in depth understanding of what they have done well and where they could improve their work. Most pupils respond positively to feedback. For example, Year 4 pupils consider teachers' feedback carefully as they adapt their fairy tale dialogues to make the actor's instructions more engaging.

Annual reports to parents detail pupils' progress and the next steps in their learning appropriately. They include useful advice as to how parents can help support their child's learning at home.

Care, support and guidance

Both schools in the federation are safe, caring, and inclusive communities that promote the well-being of pupils and staff effectively. Staff know the pupils well and develop strong working relationships with them. The school has high expectations for all pupils, with a strong emphasis being placed on developing key values such as respect, kindness and fairness. As a result, nearly all pupils are well behaved and considerate of others. They express their views sensitively and with increasing maturity.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) has robust processes to identify pupils' needs at an early stage. Leaders track pupils' progress in detail and evaluate the effect of support programmes on their progress effectively. Appropriate one-page profiles include useful information about pupils' individual needs and what they need to develop further. The ALNCo provides opportunities for parents, staff and pupils to contribute purposefully to pupils' individual development plans. Staff evaluate pupils' progress against their targets well to support them to make progress in their skills over time.

The school has valuable arrangements for collective worship. For example, teachers and pupils hold assemblies on themes such as the rights of the child and good citizenship. Staff actively encourage pupils to be kind, tolerant and respectful. Pupils are provided with opportunities to learn basic sign language and learn about the barriers that others face in their daily lives. Teachers inspire pupils by sharing the stories of influential famous people, such as Rosa Parks and Betty Campbell. They take opportunities to celebrate key cultural festivals such as Diwali, Hanukka and Ramadan. As a result, nearly all pupils' understanding of diversity and the need to respect everyone in society is developing well.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of Welsh culture, heritage and traditions effectively. For example, pupils participate in activities to mark 'Diwrnod Shwmae, Shwmae', St David's Day and dydd Santes Dwynwen. The school uses educational visits effectively to reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding of their cultural heritage. For example, through their history topic work, pupils deepen their understanding of past lives in Wales by visiting local landmarks and museums.

Staff organise valuable opportunities for members of the community to visit school to share their experiences and talents with pupils. For example, an engineer visited the school to discuss with Year 5 and 6 pupils how to make a moving vehicle as part of their technology project. The Fire and Rescue Service visits the school regularly, providing pupils with important information about how to keep safe, for example during bonfire night.

Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to influence a number of issues relating to school and community life through the activities of the various groups and councils. For example, members of the eco council organise litter picks in the community and have started a whole-school recycling scheme for paper and plastics. As a result, nearly all pupils feel that they have a clear voice and contribute purposefully to decisions that are important to them.

The school provides a range of appealing clubs and activities that enrich the curriculum and provide social and purposeful opportunities for pupils. For example, pupils are given opportunities to participate in choir sessions, football and bowls clubs. By doing so, pupils develop their personal skills and ability to work as part of a team very well.

Teachers provide a wide range of experiences that effectively encourage pupils to use their creative and imaginative skills. For example, as part of their work, younger pupils experiment with different materials while making a Gruffalo crumble in the mud kitchen, while older pupils design and create mosaics as part of their topic on the Romans.

There is a strong safeguarding culture across the schools in the federation. All members of staff have a sound understanding of their role and the processes involved in keeping pupils safe, including online safety and road safety awareness. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

Leaders have created a strong and consistent vision for both schools in the federation. Staff work together highly effectively to ensure that pupils are given every opportunity to thrive in a happy and safe community. Staff feel well supported and there is a strong team ethos that permeates across the federation.

Leaders provide valuable opportunities for all staff across the federation to work collaboratively to provide stimulating and engaging learning experiences that meet the needs of most pupils. They place a clear priority on developing pupils' literacy skills and ability to develop as independent learners. As a result, most pupils

communicate their ideas articulately. As they move through the school, their ability to take ownership over what and how they learn develops well.

The headteacher has high expectations of himself, the staff and pupils. All members of staff have targets that link purposefully to the improvement priorities and their individual professional learning needs. The school has robust arrangements to ensure that pupils have positive attitudes to learning and engage well in school life. As a result, nearly all pupils enjoy their time at school and their behaviour is exemplary.

The headteacher has worked diligently to share responsibilities effectively between the staff. Across the federation, all staff work in teams to develop the curriculum, standards of learning, and improve pupil well-being. Support staff are given beneficial opportunities to lead in a number of areas, for example by providing intervention sessions for pupils with emotional and social needs and holding sessions to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

Leaders organise beneficial learning opportunities for all staff. For example, they are given opportunities to attend training, which have been highly effective in developing pupils' well-being, attitudes to learning and key skills. Teachers in both schools are given beneficial opportunities to work together to improve the provision, for example developing teaching styles and techniques. This has impacted positively on older pupils' ability to develop their thinking skills as they plan, draft and complete their written work.

Leaders make effective use of funding, including the pupil development grant, to enhance the learning experiences for all pupils. This has included a significant investment in developing well-planned outdoor learning areas, which are engaging and stimulating for all pupils. Leaders support families of low-income households with the funding of extra-curricular trips and residential.

Governors and staff have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They take part in a wide range of monitoring and self-evaluation processes. These include analysing information about pupil progress, scrutinising their work and conducting learning walks. As a result, leaders and staff identify what the next steps are in learner progress and how to further improve the provision. This includes developing a range of enrichment activities for all pupils, such as gardening, cookery, animation, and Spanish lessons. These valuable opportunities are effective in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in a wide range of authentic contexts.

Leaders make sure that there is a strong safeguarding culture across both schools. Governors ensure that pupils are encouraged to make healthy eating and drinking choices. For example, the school provides fruit for pupils during break times and all pupils are encouraged to drink water during the school day.

Across the federation, staff have built effective relationships with parents and the local community. Parents are given regular opportunities to attend the school to participate in class activities and gain an understanding of what their children learn. Parents are encouraged to share their views regularly through completing questionnaires and contributing their ideas through open evenings. Leaders consider

the information gathered carefully, making reasonable changes to the provision where needed. Pupils are purposefully encouraged to consider how they can support people in their community. For example, they contribute to local initiatives such as the community food pantry and clothes swap shop.

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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