



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

**A report on**

**Grangetown Nursery School**

**Avondale Road  
Grangtown  
Cardiff  
CF11 7DT**

**Date of inspection: March 2024**

**by**

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

## About Grangetown Nursery School

Name of provider	Grangetown Nursery School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	78
Pupils of statutory school age	
Number in nursery classes	78
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%)	
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%)	
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	48.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/03/2014
Start date of inspection	04/03/2024

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

Grangetown Nursery School is a warm, caring, and inclusive school. Leaders develop strong and trusting relationships with the pupils, their families, and the wider community. These relationships give pupils a strong sense of belonging and as result they are happy to attend school and excitedly participate in the wide range of engaging experiences on offer to them.

Staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of child development and apply this capably in their roles to support pupils' learning and development. Leaders have developed an effective curriculum that recognises and responds to the unique nature and needs of young children and is based on providing authentic and engaging first hand experiences.

The school have developed highly effective and engaging indoor and outdoor learning environments that enable pupils to explore, investigate, use their imagination, and express themselves creatively. As a result of these rich and varied experiences most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who have English as an additional language make good progress in their communication, numeracy, social and physical skills from their starting points.

Teachers are effective language role models and support pupils sensitively in their interactions. They are kind and compassionate and take time to understand the unique nature of each child and their attempts to communicate. However, they do not always model the use of Welsh frequently enough in their daily interactions with pupils. As a result, pupils' understanding of Welsh is underdeveloped.

The recent changes to the leadership structure at the school has enabled a greater distribution of leadership roles throughout the Nursery. This has resulted stronger school improvement processes. Leaders provide valuable and beneficial professional learning for staff that supports them in their roles. As a result, staff make valuable and informed contributions to self-evaluation processes and the setting of school improvement priorities.

## Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that adults model the Welsh language appropriately and provide suitable opportunities for pupils to become familiar with the language

## 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 how the school has developed a responsive approach to teaching and learning, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Most pupils enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge below the expected level, with around half of pupils having English as an additional language. The high level of support and teaching by staff, alongside the strong relationships that are fostered, ensure that most pupils make good progress from their starting points.

Most pupils make good attempts to communicate with familiar adults. They tune in and respond to questions and instructions given to them verbally and through visual clues. Many pupils demonstrate a good understanding of spoken language and gesture which is more advanced than their speech. Where pupils spoken language is more advanced, they talk confidently and excitedly about things that interest them. For example, finding worms in the school's compost bin.

Many pupils are beginning to develop a love of books and stories. They share their favourite books with their friends and show obvious delight when finding details in the pictures and illustrations. A minority of pupils choose to look at books independently. They demonstrate an early understanding of the conventions of reading. For example, they turn pages from left to right, hold the book correctly and turn pages back to a previous page to take a second look. Most pupils are beginning to recognise that words have meaning. For example, they look for and find their names when hanging their coats on their peg. A few pupils recognise the initial letters of their name and that of their friends.

During their time at the nursery most pupils develop strong fine motor skills. This gives them the strength and dexterity to hold a range of mark making tools. Many pupils hold pencils with a recognisable grip. This enables them to make controlled marks, form shapes and begin to write recognisable letters and numbers, for example when writing lists in the home corner, drawing maps of their models, and making detailed observational drawings.

Many pupils enjoy singing Welsh songs and rhymes and joining in games. They greet their friends at the start of the session and sing a goodbye song before going home. However, pupils' understanding of simple instructions and vocabulary is underdeveloped.

Most pupils make good progress in their mathematical development. They display a strong understanding of concepts such as shape, symmetry, size, and weight when playing in the areas of provision, such as the block play area. They enjoy and participate in a wide range of activities that encourage them to explore and investigate quantity, number, shape, and pattern. As they develop their understanding of number, many pupils begin to use this in their play. For example,

they count the number of blocks they have laid and use a measuring tape to see how tall they have built their tower.

Most pupils develop their problem-solving skills exceptionally well. They have daily opportunities to investigate and collaborate to find solutions to problems that occur naturally in their play. For example, when playing in the sand area, pupils use resources such as guttering, buckets and spades to investigate how they can refill the castle moat with water. They persevere in the task, refining and adapting their approach until successful.

Most pupils develop their physical skills well and have high levels of confidence in their physical capabilities. They develop their core strength and agility through experiences such as balancing on beams, swinging on rope swings, and using large tools to dig. They develop a good sense of spatial awareness through a variety of activities and experiences in the outdoor area. For example, they enjoy running in the outdoors, negotiating turns, and avoiding obstacles when pushing and riding bikes and trikes. Most pupils use a variety of handheld tools with suitable control. For example, pupils spread glue, cut paper with scissors, roll dough, slice vegetables with kitchen knives and use woodworking tools such as hammers and hacksaws with appropriate care and dexterity.

Most pupils enjoy participating in a wide range of creative activities. They explore the properties of clay imaginatively, mix and blend colours and look closely at real objects to make detailed drawings. They enjoy joining in singing familiar songs and rhymes and dance along to music as they play. A few pupils select percussion instruments to accompany their movements when splashing and stomping along to the story of the bear hunt.

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

Pupils develop warm and caring relationships with staff that help them to feel relaxed and secure in the school environment. This helps them to manage their feelings effectively and to settle into their group comfortably on arrival. Many pupils show excitement at the start of the school day and are eager to participate in the rich variety of opportunities inside and outdoors.

Nearly all pupils show respect and consideration towards adults, their peers, and their environment. They follow familiar routines readily and take responsibility for the resources and equipment they use. For example, pupils work together to clean their cooking area after making biscuits. They brush left over dough into the compost bin and use large brushes to sweep the floor. This helps pupils to play a role in maintaining an orderly environment and fosters their sense of belonging within the school community.

Nearly all pupils behave well. They respond positively to the consistent expectations modelled by staff and are friendly towards their peers. Most pupils share resources willingly, such as when reading books and using magnifying glasses to look at tadpoles. They cooperate with their peers in group activities well, for instance to work as part of a team to prepare toppings for pizzas. Most pupils show patience towards others and are beginning to reflect on their experience and to develop their own

views. For example, they consider whether feeling happy all of the time is necessarily a good or bad thing.

Most pupils engage positively when adults question them about their learning. They listen closely and often play readily alongside staff, communicating their ideas verbally and through their actions. Most pupils respond well to sensitive prompts and invitations that staff use to support and extend their play.

Most pupils show high levels of independence and self-reliance. They enjoy the many opportunities to make choices about their learning and play. This supports their self-motivation and curiosity beneficially. As a result, most pupils sustain their interest and concentration well. They show strong engagement in learning and often become absorbed in their activity. For example, pupils are engrossed when exploring how water flows through funnels during their play in the sand pit.

Most pupils persevere to develop their skills successfully. For example, they repeat and revisit activities, often applying their imagination to find creative solutions to difficulties as their confidence grows. This frequently results in breakthrough moments when pupils experience joy in their achievement. For example, pupils beam with excitement and exclaim happily when they succeed in building taller structures with blocks or finally saw through wood after prolonged effort.

Most pupils develop an appropriate understanding of how to manage risks safely. For example, they handle sharp tools with care, using techniques that have been modelled for them and show awareness of their movement and surroundings when climbing on large wooden boxes outdoors.

Most pupils show knowledge of where familiar foods come from and what it is good for them to eat and drink. They enjoy preparing and cooking food in the kitchen and when using the fire in the forest area. Nearly all pupils follow routines that promote hygiene effectively. For example, they know the importance of washing their hands and wearing aprons when preparing food.

Most pupils take advantage of the many opportunities to be physically active with enthusiasm. They are keen to spend time in the school's stimulating outdoor areas. They enjoy developing their understanding of the natural world through practical exploration. For example, they are excited to discover worms and beetles in the soil. They further their understanding by observing and discussing frog spawn and tadpoles in tanks around the setting. Pupils begin to develop an awareness of the characteristics of living things and to appreciate the need to show them care and kindness.

All pupils enjoy opportunities to be self-directed in their activity and to pursue their own interests. Most develop and use their imagination freely in their play and are creative when tackling problems and expressing themselves.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school has created an inclusive and responsive curriculum that is bespoke to its children and the diverse community in which they live. The school's values underpin their vision for the curriculum with an emphasis on building strong and effective

relationships with all pupils. There is a clear focus on how early years pupils acquire and make progress, in their communication, numeracy, digital and social skills through engaging and authentic contexts. It wholly supports the holistic development of early years pupils and is rooted in the principles of Curriculum for Wales.

Teachers have a strong understanding of child development and use this effectively in their roles. They keep the developmental needs of young children at the forefront of their practice. They provide an emotionally safe environment, which supports pupils to express their needs and feelings and in turn regulate their behaviours.

Across the school, teachers and staff model a joyful approach to learning and take delight in the accomplishments of the pupils. They are consistent in their care and model kindness and compassion to all. They support pupils with the choices and decisions around what and where they would like to play effectively. They provide numerous and varied opportunities for pupils to revisit learning to consolidate their skills and make connections.

Teachers provide a wide range of high quality and varied experiences that allow pupils to move freely around the areas of provision and express and challenge themselves physically, creatively and imaginatively. As a result, pupils develop a strong sense of autonomy and independence and have confidence to plan and follow through on their ideas and inquiries in their play.

Teachers are effective language role models. They model simple sentences to those who need support and extend vocabulary for those who are more able. They provide rich language experiences and activities that develop pupils listening, speaking and communication skills. They allow pupils time to think and consider their responses before intervening. They take careful notice of the attempts of pupils to communicate where there is limited understanding or those who do not rely solely on speech to communicate. They provide beneficial resources that support pupils to develop their mathematical concepts such as number, shape and pattern. In addition, they explore digital resources with pupils that spark their interest and develop their oracy skills appropriately.

Teachers offer worthwhile opportunities for pupils to experience a sense of awe and wonder to ignite a curiosity about the world. For example, they provide opportunities for pupils to find and observe frog spawn so that they can see how the eggs change and develop into tadpoles.

The school provides pupils with suitable resources, stories and experiences that reflect and celebrate the culture of Wales. However, teachers do not model simple Welsh vocabulary and instructions well enough during pupils play and activities. As a result, pupils do not gain a good enough understanding of these.

Across the school, teachers and staff monitor and review regularly the effectiveness of the well-resourced learning environment. They make worthwhile adaptations to best meet the needs of all pupils, for example providing clay in the creative area for the afternoon pupils to meet their need for exploration and sensory input.

Staff carefully consider how visits and visitors may enhance the learning experiences for the pupils. They plan opportunities that spark pupils' interests and ignite their

curiosity. For example, creating a beach in the outdoor area for pupils to explore, solve problems and develop their creativity and critical thinking prior to their visit to a real beach.

All staff carry out a range of useful observations and assessments of pupils' learning to help them understand what they do well and how they can improve. These practices inform their planning to ensure that all pupils make progress across the curriculum and in their skill development.

The school has established strong links with parents and values and acknowledges the experiences that pupils bring to the setting prior to starting. They use this information to support and guide pupils' learning, social and emotional needs effectively. As a result, pupils develop a strong sense of belonging and well-being. Reports to parents are informative and detailed and clearly explain the experiences that their child enjoys participating in and the progress they are making in their skills and development. The school shares with parents how they can support their child at home to make further progress.

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

Staff create a caring and nurturing community for pupils and their families. They provide a high level of support for all pupils and as a result they engage positively with the learning experiences that are on offer to them. The caring and supportive ethos that permeates the school, helps all pupils to settle and engage in the learning experiences and contributes positively to their well-being and happiness. Staff respond sensitively, kindly, and calmly to pupils' emotional and well-being needs. As a result, pupils develop confidence and resilience and enjoy attending school.

The school places a strong focus on inclusion. Staff work closely with parents through home visits and 'stay and play' events prior to entering school to understand children's individual needs and know how to best meet them. They highly value and involve parents in the life of the school through events and meetings where they have worthwhile opportunities to discuss their children's learning and progress.

The school's ALN co-ordinator has developed a comprehensive tracking system which identifies the relevant support that best meets the pupils needs. They monitor the impact of support carefully and work with staff to ensure that targeted support engages pupils successfully in their learning. Individual development plans are thorough and reflect pupils' needs effectively. Staff receive high quality training that enables them to identify, provide and review support for pupils with ALN to ensure that they make progress and are happy and settled at the school.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour extremely well. They have excellent relationships with pupils and know their likes and dislikes and how they interact with each other. They guide pupils sensitively and gently in their interactions. They give pupils time to think and consider their next moves in an unhurried manner. Where pupils do not wish to join in activities, they allow them time to observe and gently invite them to join in if they so wish to.

Teachers plan a range of suitable experiences and activities for pupils to learn about and celebrate the history and culture of Wales. For example, they hold a Welsh

celebration day, where they cook food, sing Welsh songs and paint pictures based on the work of Welsh artists.

The school plans interesting experiences where the pupils learn about the cultures and festivals of those in their school community. Teachers develop pupils' spiritual, moral, and social skills well. They plan and deliver a wide range of engaging and authentic experiences that support pupils to develop an understanding of the world they live in and how to take care of it, for example planting flower bulbs in the garden. Staff thoughtfully consider ways to enrich the curriculum, for example through the introduction of new experiences for the pupils to participate in, such as walks around their local area and visits to the beach.

Staff encourage pupils to think of others in need in their community and in the wider world who need help and support. The school actively raises funds for local and national charities as well as supporting those in need in their local community, for example, through 'The Big Bocs Bwyd' and 'Kitchen Garden' schemes where food and local produce is offered to parents, carers and the community at an affordable price.

All staff understand their roles and responsibilities to keep pupils safe and healthy. They understand their responsibility to safeguard pupils from harm. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. The school has appropriate systems in place to monitor attendance.

### **Leadership and management**

Senior leaders have engaged purposefully with pupils, parents, staff, and governors to establish a common set of values that underpin the work of the school. They set a clear strategic direction for the school that ensures these values are visible in the daily activity of staff and in the rich variety of learning experiences they provide for all pupils.

The headteacher and governors have recently introduced a new leadership structure that distributes responsibilities more widely across the staff team. Members of the new senior leadership team have clear roles and accountability in driving school development. This has enhanced the efficiency of leaders and strengthened capacity in the school, for instance by improving arrangements for the line management and professional development of staff. Leaders and governors balance professional expectations and staff well-being sensitively.

Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning robustly. For example, they use a good range of first-hand activities including learning walks, pupil observations and reviews of individual pupils' progress to evaluate the school's work accurately. They have established a vibrant culture of purposeful collaboration within the staff team that strengthens this practice further. For instance, all staff make valuable use of professional discussion at the end of sessions to reflect on the effectiveness of the school's curriculum and environment. This ensures that self-evaluation is an embedded part of every staff member's daily routine. Ongoing evaluation by staff supports leaders to identify key aspects for improvement precisely. As a result, all staff share a clear understanding of the school's priorities and the part they play in achieving these.

Leaders give thoughtful consideration to national priorities for improvement, such as implementation of Curriculum for Wales and changes to the arrangements for pupils with ALN. The school has a strong track record of managing and sustaining positive change. For example, in recent years leaders have adopted a coherent and highly effective approach to designing and refining the school's curriculum and to developing its arrangements for assessing the progress that pupils make. They have established a clear rationale that ensures all pupils benefit from access to well-planned experiences that develop their skills and well-being successfully.

Leaders plan professional learning strategically so that opportunities for staff to improve their expertise impact positively on the quality of teaching and learning. For example, the school has provided valuable opportunities for staff to deepen their knowledge of child development through training run in partnership with colleagues from nearby nursery schools. This ensures that staff are able to learn collaboratively and to consider carefully how they will apply what they learn to meet the school's specific needs. Teachers and teaching assistants engage in informative research visits to other settings in England and Europe that broaden their understanding of a range of effective teaching methods and approaches.

Members of the school's senior leadership team review the development priorities of staff collectively to establish a long-term plan that addresses these efficiently. Over time, leaders have developed an innovative staff team who reflect critically on their work and are committed to realising the school's vision. For example, following a whole staff evaluation activity, a recent reorganisation of staff into outdoor and indoor teams has improved knowledge sharing between practitioners and strengthened the skill and confidence of staff in facilitating play effectively. This means that pupils benefit from more expert provision and staff develop a deeper understanding of pupils' individual needs and their next steps.

Governors show a good understanding of the school's priorities and of the quality of provision. They bring valuable expertise and experience to their role. This supports them to question leaders effectively, for instance when establishing a more robust and sustainable leadership structure they ensure that responsibilities are distributed appropriately across the leadership team. They fulfil their statutory duties well, for instance to ensure that the school has robust and effective procedures to safeguard pupils and that there are appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Governors have good knowledge of the school's finances. They ensure that expenditure is well matched to priorities and that the school's pupil development grant funding supports the progress of pupils effectively.

Leaders plan to address the needs and interests of families and the local community successfully. For example, after listening to the views of parents, the school has partnered with a local food charity to establish the 'Grangetown Kitchen Garden'. This new partnership uses the school's community facility to host a twice weekly market that provides a range of affordable food products for local people, including members of the school's community. The market uses seasonal produce grown by pupils and provides a weekly café that enables residents to meet with others living locally. This provision is highly effective in developing the understanding of pupils and the skills of volunteers, and in reducing the impact of disadvantage and social isolation on members of the local community.

## 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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