



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

A report on

Rumney Primary School

**Wentloog Road
Rumney
Cardiff
CF3 3HD**

Date of inspection: March 2024

by

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

About Rumney Primary School

Name of provider	Rumney Primary School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	none
Number of pupils on roll	443
Pupils of statutory school age	338
Number in nursery classes	53
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%)	24.1%
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 13.2%)	4.4%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.5%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	4.7%
Date of headteacher appointment	25/04/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/03/2016
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

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

Overview

This is a caring, nurturing school where the pupils feel safe and secure. Most pupils are polite and courteous, and many work well with their peers. They behave respectfully towards others, and the adults in the school. There is comprehensive provision for the pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), who make sound progress from their starting points as a result, for example in the Year 1 nurture provision.

There are pockets of strong, inspiring teaching. For example, in the youngest classes, pupils develop their sense of curiosity and exploration well, because the provision is engaging and interesting. Pupils contribute their views to what and how they learn. In Year 6, pupils think maturely about the history and culture of South Africa, for example to discuss and understand apartheid. However, in too many lessons across the school, teaching is not well paced, or matched closely enough to the pupils' needs. Where this happens, the pupils do not make the progress they could or should, because the teachers' expectations are not high enough. The headteacher has identified these shortcomings during her time at the school and is beginning to bring about improvements. However, it is too early to see the impact of these improvements in consistently strong classroom practice.

There is a whole-school culture of reading that supports most pupils to make good progress in learning to read and enjoy books. The new curriculum includes relevant, exciting topics that capture the pupils' interests. However, currently the provision is not structured well enough to ensure that all pupils acquire their skills systematically. For example, as they move through the school, pupils do not make enough progress in learning the Welsh language or developing their digital skills. In addition, over time, senior leaders have not demonstrated the capacity to ensure that teaching supports all pupils to achieve their best.

Recommendations

- R1 Develop the senior leadership team's capacity to strengthen teaching and learning across the school
- R2 Use the good practice currently in the school to ensure that all teaching is well matched to pupils' needs and enables all groups of pupils to make the progress they should
- R3 Ensure that the school's provision enables pupils to develop their skills progressively and systematically

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan to show

how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress about 12 months after the publication of this report.

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time in school, most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, make appropriate progress in their learning. Most pupils identified as having an additional learning need (ALN) make suitable progress from their individual starting points.

Across the school, pupils' speaking and listening skills are strong. Many pupils listen well, pay close attention to each other's point of view, and make effective contributions to conversations. They express themselves clearly from an early age and talk enthusiastically about their work. Most of the oldest pupils speak articulately and confidently for a wide range of purposes. They moderate their tone, expression and language depending on the audience. For example, Year 6 pupils read the Highwayman poem to an audience, working on expression and intonation, and review each other's work.

The youngest pupils handle books appropriately. Reception pupils develop a good understanding of letters and sounds and use this knowledge to begin to build simple words. By Year 2, many pupils develop effective reading skills to read with increasing independence. Many older pupils become confident readers who use a range of reading skills, such as skimming and scanning texts to locate and extract information. Many pupils have a love of reading and express their reading preferences with enthusiasm.

Overall, a majority of pupils make sound progress in their writing. The youngest pupils develop their early writing skills effectively when mark making using a variety of tools. In Year 2, many pupils write using suitable sentence structures and use basic punctuation accurately. By Year 6, a majority write successfully for a range of purposes using taught structures and scaffolding. For example, they write carefully researched biographies on people they admire. However, on the whole, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write freely without teacher direction or to present their written work in the style of their choosing.

Most younger pupils' Welsh language skills are developing appropriately. A majority respond appropriately to simple Welsh phrases and vocabulary. They sing Welsh songs enthusiastically. A few older pupils answer questions when prompted. However, most pupils do not develop their Welsh language skills well enough or communicate in Welsh to a good enough standard.

Many pupils make suitable progress in developing their mathematical skills. The youngest pupils begin to show recognition of numbers and count to ten confidently. By Year 2 many pupils successfully double numbers up to 20 and a very few can double two and three-digit numbers. Older pupils begin to deepen their understanding, exploring different methods of addition, subtraction, multiplication and

division at an age-appropriate level. However, pupils do not develop the full range of mathematical and numeracy skills systematically enough as they move through the school.

Overall, pupils' digital skills are at an early stage of development. A few younger pupils are beginning to use digital applications appropriately, for example to create pictures on a screen. Many older pupils successfully use film-making apps. For example, they film book reviews where they practise skills of filming, adding voice overs, cutting and linking their reels. Across the school, pupils use computers effectively to research, record and communicate information. However, overall, many pupils do not develop their wider digital skills progressively enough, for example when using spreadsheets or controlling devices.

Many pupils develop their creative skills suitably across a range of genres, including dance, art, poetry and performing arts. The youngest pupils develop their physical skills well through a range of purposeful activities including riding trikes, climbing on large apparatus, and throwing balls and bean bags into buckets. They develop problem-solving and thinking skills effectively in the outdoors. For example, in the Nursery class, a group of pupils persevere when using lengths of guttering to create a run for balls. They adjust the guttering many times to enable the ball to roll along each length and successfully end up in a bucket.

When given the opportunities to work independently many pupils across the school develop their curiosity and thinking skills well in their 'missions'. However, too often, older pupils do not develop their thinking and problem-solving skills well enough, due to the limitations of the tasks.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Most pupils feel happy in school. They enjoy their playtimes and play happily with their friends. There is a caring relationship between staff and pupils, which develops positive attitudes towards school life. Most pupils feel safe and know that adults will support them.

Most pupils have an appropriate understanding of how to stay safe online. For example, older pupils recognise the importance of not sharing passwords. The digital leaders group provides clear guidance for their peers. Most pupils understand the benefits of healthy eating and they are active at playtimes. Most feel that they are encouraged to take part in activities including the few after-school activities.

Most pupils feel valued within the many new pupil voice groups. They take on leadership roles with enthusiasm and are beginning to influence the work of the school. For example, the school council have helped to develop learning characters such as Resilient Rhys, that pupils find helpful. As a result of this, for example, pupils in the Reception class demonstrate resilience in the outdoors, making bridges from natural resources.

Most pupils feel that they are treated fairly and that leaders value and listen to their suggestions to make changes. For example, in the playground, pupils identified that breaktime arguments were often about boys and football. As a result, they spoke to staff to schedule regular opportunities for everyone, including girls, to play football.

This fair outcome means that there are fewer arguments at playtimes. Pupils across the school appreciate the recent influence they have in planning their activities, such as their 'missions' and, take pride in having ownership of these.

Pupils are developing appropriately as ethical informed citizens of the world. They value others and enjoy learning about people who make a difference. For example, older pupils can explain how people like Martin Luther King and Betty Campbell inspire them. Most pupils know how to treat others well. They understand the procedures should any bullying occur, and have the confidence that this will be sorted out fairly. Most have a strong understanding of school rules. Older pupils confidently describe how they need to be 'Ready, Respectful and Safe'. They articulate their understanding of their rights well and understand the consequences of their actions.

Most pupils are polite and courteous, particularly to visitors and around the school. Many pupils behave respectfully towards others and staff in class including, for example, when the pace of learning is too slow to engage them fully in their tasks.

Across the school, many pupils are ready to learn and settle into their tasks. They are positive about their learning and engage well in work that interests them. Many pupils persevere with their learning using their classroom environments for support.

Many pupils engage appropriately in the daily reflection sessions. These reflection sessions are particularly useful where pupils support their peers, for example to identify things that they have done well. However, pupils do not have consistent opportunities to respond to any feedback from their teachers.

Across the school, most pupils are happy to work together, and many collaborate successfully. On occasions, however, a few pupils do not engage as well as they could. For example, where the task is overly long, pupils' concentration wanes and they lose focus. Many pupils show that they can work independently where the provision allows. However, on too many occasions, pupils do not develop their independent skills well enough, for example where the provision constrains the opportunities for them to think independently.

The school works hard to improve attendance. As a result of the robust and thorough monitoring, attendance has shown improvements in nearly all classes. The headteacher and the school office staff have developed positive partnerships with families, through a variety of communication methods and bespoke letters. As a result, attendance has improved, and more pupils attend school regularly. The gap between groups of learners, for example those pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils, is closing.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has recently taken appropriate steps to redesign its curriculum to align with the principles of Curriculum for Wales, along with its own vision to Nurture, Inspire, Believe and Achieve. Teachers are beginning to plan worthwhile learning experiences that develop pupils' knowledge and understanding well. They use resources from within the local area appropriately to support pupils' learning. For example, younger pupils enjoy visiting Rumney Hill gardens, and the local

supermarket where they learn about food packaging and how to reduce plastic waste.

Teachers are beginning to take good account of pupils' ideas about what they would like to learn. Pupils engage well in work that interests them, particularly where they have helped to shape that activity. For example, pupils in Year 6 make thoughtful links from their research, knowledge and understanding of the demographics of South Africa. They decide to use this information in their 'missions' to design a meaningful new flag. The new curriculum provides useful opportunities for pupils to understand the Welsh culture, the diversity of life in modern-day Wales, and learn from the experiences of people from different walks of life.

In the minority of classes where provision is most effective, pupils make valuable progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. In these classes, the environment is engaging and exciting. It allows pupils to practise their skills in purposeful and authentic contexts. For example, in the Year 2 outdoor area, pupils use several metre sticks placed end-to-end to measure the distance travelled by the buggies they have made. In a few classes, teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils consistently receive an appropriate level of challenge or support. For example, in the Nursery and Reception classes particularly, staff are not afraid to stand back to give pupils thinking and rehearsal space, but also know when to intervene and offer support.

Overall, however, there are too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school. Too often, the pace of lessons is slow, and the teacher focuses on the completion of activities at the expense of learning and progress. Where this happens, the activities are often not pitched at an appropriate level for all pupils to access. They do not take good enough account of previous learning. This means that pupils do not acquire, build on and embed their skills well enough.

A whole-school focus on the teaching of phonics in the younger classes, and progressive reading skills in the older classes, has been successful in improving reading. Staff have developed a positive culture of reading and supported pupils' enthusiasm for books and engagement in reading activities, for example through the introduction of class novels. This is beginning to promote a love of literature and encourage a breadth of reading across the school.

The school's work to develop pupils' Welsh language speaking skills is at an early stage. Many teachers use basic Welsh appropriately in the classroom, for example to give instructions to their pupils. However, they do not support pupils to develop their Welsh language skills well enough over time and older pupils are reluctant to hold simple conversations.

Whole-school classroom assessment and feedback strategies are in the early stages of development. A minority of teachers use a suitable range of strategies successfully in their daily classroom practice. For example, 'pitstops' and recaps during lessons remind pupils of the success criteria and provide opportunities to share good examples of work. Teachers and teaching assistants in a few classes are beginning to use written and verbal feedback effectively, alongside the pupils, to identify strengths and areas for development in their work. However, feedback is not used consistently well across the school. In too many classes, staff do not make good

enough use feedback or assessment information to plan work that meets the needs of all groups of pupils.

The school's recent assessment and tracking information document is detailed and comprehensive. The headteacher tracks the progress of all pupils, from their starting points, and works with class teachers to identify any at risk of falling behind. As the amount of data grows, this tracker will enable teachers and leaders to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress over longer periods of time, for example to identify when and where progress is more or less rapid. However, currently, teachers' use of this information is inconsistent. For example, only a few teachers use the information well enough to inform their planning or pupils' next steps in their learning.

Staff in the youngest classes successfully develop the outdoor provision. In the strongest examples, the environment is highly effective. These staff have created well-resourced areas that pupils use successfully to develop their problem-solving and physical skills, take risks, and make mistakes. They develop pupils' sense of curiosity and exploration well. For example, in the Nursery class, pupils mix 'cement' to build a wall, climb and swing from large purpose-built apparatus and build homes for pets from recyclable materials. In the Reception class, pupils role-play as pizza delivery drivers using the bikes and trikes, delivery addresses and a depot. However, across the school, teachers do not plan to use the outdoors well enough to enable older pupils to benefit from a broad range of purposeful outdoor learning experiences.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring community with a nurturing ethos. Staff encourage pupils to work together and be considerate of others. As a result, pupils are confident, polite and welcoming, and treat each other, staff and visitors with respect and courtesy.

Leaders have introduced a whole school approach for pupils to develop their understanding of children's rights and values. Consequently, most pupils develop a strong sense of belonging and responsibility within their school community and a keenness to make a difference to others locally and globally. For example, pupils in Year 2 raise money to support children in schools in the world's poorest countries.

The school provides pupils with worthwhile opportunities as part of one of the pupil voice groups, as a member of the 'Senedd', or as a prefect. The headteacher and governors meet with and listen to these groups, and provide pupils with valuable opportunities to play an active part in the work and life of the school. These roles empower and engage pupils. They support the development of their self-confidence and leadership skills successfully.

Provision for pupils with ALN is comprehensive. As a result, most of these pupils make sound progress from their starting points. There are clear procedures to identify pupils' needs at an early stage and the experienced ALN Co-ordinator works with the class teachers to devise appropriate plans. The school successfully works with a wide range of agencies and professionals, such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and the local authority inclusion and early years teams, to provide beneficial support for pupils who require it.

As a result of the robust identification systems in the early years, the most vulnerable pupils benefit from time in the Year 1 nurture class. This provision is calm, welcoming and well resourced. Staff know their pupils well and respond promptly and sensitively to their emotional and social needs. They support these pupils to reintegrate well with their peers wherever appropriate during and after the planned provision.

There are valuable opportunities for pupils to benefit from physical exercise during the school day. This work is enriched by visitors from local sports teams, and a few valuable after-school clubs such as football. Pupils participate in an 'active travel' programme that develops their understanding of the environmental benefits of having fewer cars on the road.

The curriculum is successfully beginning to support pupils to develop a sound awareness of issues relating to equality, diversity, identity and inclusion. For example, during their 'Connections Far and Wide' enquiry, Year 6 pupils compare similarities and differences between the Cardiff Docks Race Riots and Apartheid Riots in South Africa. These learning opportunities support pupils' moral, spiritual and cultural development well.

Staff organise worthwhile visits that support the curriculum and help pupils to learn more about their local area and the heritage and culture of Wales, for example to Saint Fagan's and the National Museum of Wales. Staff provide older pupils with opportunities for a residential trip that provides valuable new experiences. This builds pupils' confidence, resilience and team working skills successfully.

Leaders make good use of assessment information to identify any pupils at risk of falling behind. Generally, teaching assistants provide an extensive range of catch-up interventions to address these pupils' needs. However, this is a resource heavy option. These interventions too often take place separately, in areas beyond the classroom. As a result, these pupils miss the social integration and opportunities to learn collaboratively with their peers, and miss activities that they enjoy.

The headteacher, leaders and governors have worked together recently to create a strong culture of safeguarding. This includes beneficial improvements to the site security. There is a robust, thorough approach to recording incidents that may cause concern, and teachers and leaders take appropriate, timely actions to ensure that pupils are safe in school.

Leadership and management

In the relatively short time since her appointment, the headteacher has worked tirelessly with staff and the wider school community to establish a shared understanding of the school mission and purpose. This refreshed vision encompasses the importance of inspiration and aspiration, alongside care and nurture. The headteacher has high expectations of everyone, including herself, and is a positive role model. The staff are a cohesive team who support each other, and work to create a kind, nurturing school where pupils feel safe and secure. There are appropriately defined roles and responsibilities, and a palpable sense of school community.

There is no question that staff care for their pupils well, and provide a welcoming, comfortable and safe environment within the school. However, on too many occasions across the school over time, established senior leaders' and teachers' expectations and aspirations of what Rumney pupils could and should achieve have not been high enough.

There is now a shared commitment from the staff and governors to improve the quality of classroom practice, and the school's curriculum, in order to improve outcomes for learners. There are worthwhile plans for rapid improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this work, and in a majority of classes across the school the provision is not yet good enough. Monitoring to date has necessarily focused on compliance and the non-negotiables of the school's recent teaching and learning policy, rather than on learners' progress.

The headteacher has begun to implement a robust and rigorous self-evaluation process. Recently, staff have contributed by sharing their pupils' work, to explore the quality of learning in other classes and consider progress across the school. However overall, the processes are too new for stakeholders to contribute in enough depth to the school's self-evaluation, review and improvement planning processes.

There are appropriate arrangements to manage teachers' performance. Recently, teaching assistants have also benefited from an annual appraisal cycle, to support them to reflect on their work. Teachers have visited other schools over the past few terms to see strong practice for themselves and have reflected on and adapted their own practice as a result. Recent professional learning within the school has rightly focused on the curriculum and improving teaching.

Staff identified that their initial work to create a curriculum was not coherent and flexible enough to meet pupils' needs appropriately. As a result, leaders took the bold decision to introduce a new model of curriculum design and have provided appropriate professional learning to support this initiative. Plans are in place for a curriculum that provides breadth and progression and take suitable account of input from the pupils. However currently, its implementation is at an early stage.

There are productive and valuable professional relationships with parents. For example, leaders have recently established a parent and guardian group, to develop the school's inclusivity and partnership working. However, this useful sounding board is at an early stage and currently it is too soon to identify the full impact. Parents receive helpful information about important events in the school year in good time to plan ahead. There are beneficial, regular opportunities for pupils to share their work with their parents, for example at the termly open days.

Leaders have begun useful work to develop the outdoor areas of the large school estate, for example in creating spaces to grow fruits and vegetables and worthwhile spaces for pupils to learn outdoors and to play. Classrooms generally are inviting and engaging. However, despite the school's best efforts, the toilet provision, particularly for the youngest girls, is outdated and unpleasant.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties appropriately and act as a critical friend to the school. Recently, governors have resumed their programme of visits to the school, to

gather first-hand evidence of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the impact of improvement initiatives. They allocate grant funding appropriately, for example for those pupils eligible for the pupil development grant. However, they do not always evaluate the success of funded initiatives through their impact on improving pupils' outcomes. Governors monitor the school's finances carefully, although they have agreed a small deficit budget for the current financial year. They ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking.

There have been improvements recently. For example, attendance has improved markedly since the pandemic. Pupils' personalised assessments show improvements recently, and there is clear evidence of pupils' progress in acquiring social and emotional skills during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. The strengthened new tracking system is beginning to enable leaders to hold staff to account for pupils' progress. Pupils have a say in matters that directly impact on their school. There are small pockets of strong, inspiring classroom practice, strategically placed across the school. However, overall, too much teaching does not yet secure good enough pupil progress, and as a result too many pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

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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