



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

A report on

Ynystawe Primary School

**Clydach Road
Ynystawe
SA6 5AY**

Date of inspection: March 2024

by

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

About Ynystawe Primary School

Name of provider	Ynystawe Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	200
Pupils of statutory school age	145
Number in nursery classes	30
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%)	8.3%
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%)	16.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	26/01/2014
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

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

Overview

Ynystawe Primary School is a happy and inclusive school where staff and pupils treat each other with care and respect. Throughout the school, pupils behave well, engage positively with their learning and welcome visitors happily.

The headteacher has established a culture that values and celebrates the school as a focal point for its community. Teachers make very good use of the local area to enrich the school's curriculum and visits by local groups, residents and governors support pupils' sense of belonging and togetherness positively. The school's curriculum gives pupils the chance to make good progress in their learning and well-being through a range of interesting activities both inside and outside the classroom. The school uses its grounds very well to provide pupils with an interesting range of practical, first-hand experiences.

Across the school, teachers work diligently to provide pupils with exciting and rich learning tasks. They work together purposefully to ensure that the curriculum stands pupils in good stead for the future and develops them as ambitious, ethical and capable learners. Overall, pupils develop a good range of literacy, numeracy, Welsh and digital skills by the time they leave the school. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write creatively or to redraft their written work.

The school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is a strong aspect of its work. There is a wide range of carefully planned programmes and interventions that meet ALN pupils' learning, physical and well-being needs effectively. Under the able leadership of the ALN co-ordinator, well-trained support staff provide pupils with high levels of care, compassion and guidance.

Leaders and governors know the school well. They work together productively to ensure that they have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. There is a worthwhile culture of professional development that enables staff to develop their current practice and to take the next steps in their careers. However, staff do not currently use the expertise that exists in the school well enough to support improvements to the overall consistency of teaching. The school has established strong partnerships with outside agencies and other schools, which contribute purposefully to the school's curriculum, ALN and extra-curricular provision.

Recommendations

- R1 Use the highly effective practice that exists in the school to support improvements to the overall consistency of teaching
- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to write creatively and to redraft their written work

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

A majority of pupils begin school with skills at or above those expected for their age. Most pupils, including those affected by socio-economic disadvantage, make good progress in their learning by the time they leave the school. Nearly all pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make strong progress from their individual starting points.

During their time at the school, most pupils develop valuable oracy skills. In the youngest classes, many pupils quickly begin to communicate their ideas clearly, listen attentively to stories and play alongside each other amicably. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils listen well to their friends and teachers and make thoughtful contributions to discussions. For instance, when examining plans for affordable housing in the local area, they share well-considered reasons to justify their opinions and take account of each other's ideas maturely.

Throughout the school, pupils show high levels of enthusiasm for the Welsh language. In most cases, pupils use the vocabulary they have learnt to communicate effectively for their age. Across the school, pupils respond accurately to familiar Welsh instructions and ask and answer a good range of Welsh language questions ably and with correct pronunciation. By the time they leave the school, most pupils extend their responses with skilful detail, begin to talk about events using the past and future tenses and are proud of the progress they have made in Welsh.

Most pupils make good progress in reading as they move through the school. Many of the school's youngest pupils develop their knowledge of sounds, letters and common words rapidly. They develop useful early strategies to help them build words when reading an interesting range of simple texts. Most older pupils read with good fluency and apply their reading skills well in support of their learning across the curriculum. By the time they leave the school, most pupils are confident, enthusiastic and capable readers.

Across the school, most pupils' writing skills develop appropriately. Most younger pupils form legible letters and numbers and spell a good range of familiar words correctly. As they move through the school most begin to craft suitably formed sentences and continue to develop their handwriting and presentation efficiently. In the main, older pupils use a solid range of effective vocabulary to make their writing interesting to the reader. They use their knowledge of different sentence structures and technical vocabulary to write with suitable effect in various non-fiction genres. However, limited opportunities to write creatively mean that pupils across the school do not develop a fully comprehensive range of compositional skills.

Pupils of all ages are confident in their use of digital technology and most develop effective skills by the time they leave the school. Most younger pupils use programmable toys well to demonstrate their understanding of position and direction. They use digital devices capably to support their literacy and numeracy development and they access their previously saved work swiftly. Most older pupils use their digital knowledge and skills effectively to enhance their learning across the wider curriculum. For example, when learning about environmental issues they skilfully write codes to programme lights to turn on and off in a greenhouse and to control the heating in a house.

Overall, most pupils make good progress in the development of their mathematics skills. Most younger pupils recognise and name two- and three-dimensional shapes accurately and are aware of their features. In general, they know and use numbers to 100 suitably and develop a solid understanding of place value. By the time pupils are in Year 6, most develop as capable mathematicians, handling five-digit numbers confidently when adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Most older pupils apply their mathematics skills confidently and effectively in a range of worthwhile contexts. For example, they use their knowledge of place value, multiplication and division to calculate affordable mortgages based on family income, savings and local house prices.

Most pupils develop their problem-solving, creative and physical skills well and use them successfully in a good range of contexts. In Nursery and Reception, most pupils take on challenges such as 'How can we move teddy across a river?' with glee and suggest creative ideas to solve the problem. Pupils generally enjoy using and developing their creative skills and use a good variety of media to showcase their talents, such as through art, pottery and dance. By Year 6, most pupils develop secure ball and movement skills. Boys and girls alike represent the school with pride in sports matches and tournaments that enable them to use the skills they have learnt purposefully.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

There is a strong sense of pupil well-being and contentment throughout Ynystawe Primary School. Most pupils feel safe and secure and have confidence that staff will support them if they have a problem. Nearly all pupils develop good relationships with staff and each other. They welcome visitors enthusiastically, respond happily when greeted and speak confidently and clearly when talking about their school experiences.

Across the school, pupils treat each other with fairness and respect and the standard of their behaviour is good. Nearly all older pupils have a good understanding of the importance of rules and rewards and why they are important during the school day and in the wider world. For example, they talk about the importance of their class charter in the smooth running of the classroom, its positive impact on their well-being and relationships and how this is similar in the adult workplace. Most pupils attend school daily and by Year 6 they have a sound understanding of the importance of their education on future career prospects.

Most pupils enjoy school and have a positive attitude towards learning. They engage well with their education and demonstrate enthusiasm for the opportunities the school

provides them with. In general, pupils communicate effectively with each other and respect their friends' ideas. From an early age, most pupils show resilience in their work and persevere for a good amount of time, particularly when faced with a challenge. Impressively, most of the school's youngest pupils maintain their focus on their independent tasks until they are happy that they have completed them successfully. Older pupils thrive on challenges and show visible determination to outscore their teacher when tasked with finding multiple ways to make 23 using given numbers.

Many pupils value the feedback they receive from staff and understand how it can help them to improve their learning. In all classes, pupils use a suitable range of methods to assess the quality of their own work. By Year 6, most pupils self-evaluate their work effectively and provide their friends with useful feedback using a given set of criteria. In a few cases, older pupils are confident in independently identifying the next steps in their learning and making the necessary improvements.

Nearly all pupils who have leadership roles and responsibilities carry them out diligently. They have confidence that their views are listened to and acted upon and understand their potential to impact positively on the school. Recently, recommendations made by the pupil 'Safety Squad' have led to additional maintenance on playground equipment taking place. Over time, most pupils develop a good understanding of their own rights, the rights of others, environmental issues and sustainability. Older pupils talk passionately about the negative impact of single-use plastic on the local and wider environment.

There is a strong awareness and understanding of the need to eat and drink healthily across the school. Pupils of all ages speak confidently about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and the steps they can take to look after their bodies. In most instances, pupils take good advantage of the opportunities the school provides to develop their physical health, both during and after the school day. In general, pupils' awareness of their emotional well-being is developing well. They know who to speak to if they are upset and have confidence that staff will take their concerns seriously.

Most pupils actively participate in an appropriate range of activities during the year that enable them to begin to learn about, and celebrate, diversity. They sensitively discuss issues such as racism and talk empathetically about what it would feel like to be an outsider in various situations. Many pupils collaborate well and encourage each other considerably during lessons. Pupils generally recognise the challenge some of their friends face and show understanding and compassion towards them.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school's staff work industriously to ensure that Ynystawe is a stimulating and attractive place for learning. The school makes excellent use of its outdoor spaces to enhance the learning opportunities available to pupils and this is a strong feature of the school's overall provision. Recently, valuable investment has been made to upgrade areas of the playground to provide pupils with beneficial opportunities to develop their physical, creative and social skills. Pursuits such as the weekly sessions in the forest area provide valuable support for pupils' play and exploration through engaging hands-on experiences.

The school has a clear vision for its curriculum based around developing pupils as lifelong learners through authentic, purposeful and creative learning opportunities. Overall, the curriculum provides a wide range of interesting experiences that engage and motivate pupils well. Teachers plan the curriculum so that it builds suitably on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding over time. This ensures that pupils experience useful opportunities to make good progress in their numeracy, Welsh and digital skills. Experiences that enable pupils to make good progress in their speaking, listening and reading skills are plentiful. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write creatively or to draft and re-draft their writing.

The school makes good use of the local area and community and utilises an extensive range of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum effectively. For instance, a local Welsh folk group regularly visits the school to teach pupils music, dance and an appreciation of Welsh culture. The school's curriculum is inclusive, and teachers ensure that it is accessible to all pupils. In many classes, the curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and suitable adaptations are made to address the needs of pupils who require additional support, scaffold and challenge. The curriculum reflects the culture and diversity of Wales and the wider world appropriately. Staff provide pupils with good opportunities to learn about traditional Welsh myths and legends and for older pupils to develop empathy and compassion by exploring racism from the point of view of story book characters.

Most staff give clear explanations and have good subject knowledge. Many staff ask effective questions, which support pupils' thinking and learning well. In many cases, teachers support the delivery of the school's curriculum successfully and deliver learning experiences that are purposeful, engaging and well-planned. Where this is the case, pupils quickly develop their skills and understanding through a strong range of engaging contexts. In many classes, staff have high expectations of pupils and what they can achieve. They have clear objectives for pupils' learning and lessons engage and challenge pupils very well. However, this is not consistent across the school and, in a minority of cases, teachers do not plan learning experiences sharply enough to meet pupils' needs fully. In addition, too often there is an over-use of worksheets, and this inhibits pupils' ability to record their learning independently.

Many teachers and support staff provide effective verbal feedback that helps pupils to improve their work successfully. They ensure that pupils have suitable opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers. The school uses a good range of assessment approaches well to identify the progress made by individual and groups of pupils, and to identify next steps in learning. Teachers and school leaders routinely monitor pupils' progress and make sensible adaptations to provision as necessary.

The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills. There are well-planned programs for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the need to make healthy lifestyle choices and how to support their own mental and physical health. For example, the dedicated mindfulness area provides pupils with beneficial support for their emotional well-being and there are good arrangements for pupils to engage in sport and fitness activities.

Care, support and guidance

Ynystawe Primary School is a welcoming and friendly school where staff work productively with pupils and their families to establish positive and purposeful relationships. The school provides a comprehensive package of tailored care and support that enables pupils to engage happily with their learning and feel safe in school. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their learning and well-being and have positive attitudes towards school life. Teachers and support staff model positive behaviour well through their interactions with pupils and each other. The school's safeguarding culture is strong and gives no cause for concern.

Provision for pupils with ALN is a strength of the school. The ALN co-ordinator leads with passion and skill. She has established positive relationships with staff, pupils and parents and works constructively with a good range of external partners and providers. The school carefully plans a wide range of skilful provision for ALN pupils and takes very good account of these pupils' individual learning, physical and well-being needs. Leaders and staff use assessments effectively to identify both pupils' progress and beneficial opportunities for the provision of support. The school's approach demonstrates a diligent commitment to ensuring that pupils' additional needs are identified and supported from the earliest stages of their education. Teaching assistants receive valuable training that enables them to develop their skills effectively and to meet pupils' needs well. They deliver interventions with skill and care and are highly sensitive to pupils' needs and circumstances. This approach is valued by parents who respect and recognise the effort and commitment staff provide.

The school promotes good attendance well and works successfully with families and outside partners to ensure that most pupils attend school daily. The family engagement officer is a valuable asset to the school. She provides a vital point of contact for families and gives well-considered support, guidance and signposting. Useful 'Touchbase Tuesday' drop-in sessions give families the chance to discuss any concerns they have about home or school and the 'Family Matters' newsletter provides helpful information to support parents' and pupils' well-being. The parent, teacher and friends association works closely with the school and proudly raises funds to support enrichment activities. Recent projects include recycling and redistributing costumes to reduce the expense incurred by parents when there are concerts or theme days.

Across the school, there is relevant provision to support pupils to recognise the needs and rights of others. Thought-provoking whole-school projects provide pupils with suitable opportunities to learn about the challenges faced by other people and to draw comparisons with their own lives. The school shares and celebrates the experiences of people from a range of cultures, backgrounds and religions suitably. For example, pupils hear the stories of Holocaust survivors and discuss their feelings and thoughts sensitively. The school makes appropriate provision for acts of collective worship.

The school provides pupils with a good range of opportunities to gain new experiences and develop new skills away from the school site. Valuable use is made of the local area to develop pupils' sense of belonging and community through walks and visits to local amenities. Residential trips provide older pupils with good

opportunities to develop teambuilding skills and resilience. Staff ensure that pupils can meaningfully influence the life of the school. There is a valuable range of leadership groups which play an active role in identifying and acting upon the suggestions and needs of their peers. For example, the 'Well-being Warrior' group initiated and oversee the new 'affirmation stations', which encourage pupils to stay positive and maintain good self-esteem.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is determined, resilient and aspirational. She provides the whole school community with strong and purposeful leadership. She knows the school very well and has a strong and comprehensive understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. The governing body and senior leaders support the headteacher effectively. Together, all leaders ensure that the school meets pupils' wide range of well-being and learning needs well.

Processes for self-evaluation are well-considered and robust. Most staff and governors take part in a valuable range of activities that successfully enable them to establish a first-hand understanding of the school's work. The comprehensive information gathered from regular learning walks, work scrutiny and listening to learners is honest, reflective and evaluative. The strong and precise knowledge leaders have about the school helps them to accurately identify its improvement priorities and the work needed to successfully address them.

In recent years, there is a strong track record of improving provision and outcomes for pupils across the school. For example, work to improve digital skills has successfully ensured that by the time they leave the school, most pupils develop a comprehensive range of skills that they use proficiently in a wide range of contexts. Creative improvements to the outdoor learning area enable most of the school's youngest pupils to develop a valuable range of physical, creative and social skills that they use and apply to good effect.

The governing body is committed to providing the school with visible and effective support. Many governors are regular visitors to the school and a few volunteer their time to support teaching and learning activities throughout the year. They fulfil their role of critical friend efficiently by asking probing questions during meetings and careful interrogation of spending plans. Their engagement in self-evaluation activities enables them to deepen their understanding of the school's effectiveness successfully. Governors support the school's strong safeguarding culture well and have suitable oversight of arrangements for healthy eating and drinking.

The headteacher and governing body work together diligently to manage the school's budget successfully. They share a commitment to prioritising the needs of pupils when making decisions about expenditure. Recently, this has included ensuring that the ongoing training and deployment of support staff enables the continuation of valuable additional support for pupils' well-being needs. The school uses its pupil development grant sensibly to ensure that the very few pupils who are eligible for free school meals receive effective support for their learning and well-being.

Processes to track and monitor pupils' progress are developing well. Termly pupil progress meetings enable leaders to discuss and analyse the progress that individual

and groups of pupils make. Leaders and staff use this process well to agree next steps in teaching and learning and to allocate beneficial support for those pupils who need it. The ALN co-ordinator provides insightful leadership that benefits pupils, staff and parents alike. Useful collaboration with cluster colleagues has enhanced the school's work to address the ALN reform requirements.

There is a worthwhile culture of professional learning in the school. Leaders plan a useful range of activities that support both personal and whole-school development needs well. Purposeful performance management arrangements for all staff enable the identification of opportunities to support professional development through training programmes, visits to other schools and action research. In general, staff collaborate with each other appropriately to plan lessons, though opportunities to share the excellent practice that exists in the school are less well developed. In recent years, the school's curriculum development has benefited from staff working together ably to develop a shared understanding of progression in pupils' learning.

School leaders demonstrate a determination to support the career development of staff. This is a particularly strong feature of the school's work. The school is part of an innovative local project that provides senior leaders with opportunities to work in other schools as a means of broadening their skills, knowledge and experience. Recently this has led to a member of the senior leadership team gaining a promotion to a deputy headteacher position in another school. The reciprocal nature of this project means that the school has benefitted from receiving staff from elsewhere who bring valuable new skills and ideas that are benefiting pupils' learning positively. The school has a successful partnership with the local teacher training provider. By hosting student teachers each year and through providing effective support for newly qualified teachers, the school makes a valuable contribution to wider education system.

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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