



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

A report on
Trallwng Infants School

Bonvilston Road
Trallwn
Pontypridd
RCT
CF37 4RD

Date of inspection: July 2022

by

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

About Trallwng Infants School

Name of provider	Trallwng Infants School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	107
Pupils of statutory school age	48
Number in nursery classes	34
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 21.3%)	17.9%
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 22.2%)	2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Date of headteacher appointment	01/11/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	04/07/2022

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

Trallwng Infants school cares for its staff and pupils. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' wellbeing which results in happy pupils who are excited to come to school and learn. Leaders, staff, and pupils succeed in developing an environment where nearly all pupils feel safe at school and are valued and respected. Following the return to school after the pandemic closures, leaders and teachers recognised that many of its pupils had been adversely affected in their development of their literacy and numeracy skills and as a result made a significant investment to provide pupils with targeted literacy and numeracy support alongside an effective emotional health programme. This has resulted in many pupils making good progress in their reading, writing and numeracy skills from their starting points.

Nearly all pupils engage well with their learning. They settle quickly to work, take turns, and follow instructions. Many pupils are beginning to reflect on how well they have completed tasks. However, they are less able to explain the purpose of their work or how it could be improved. Teachers at the school offer pupils a worthwhile range of learning experiences that engage pupils well in their learning. This is particularly so during their thematic immersion weeks where pupils participate in exciting activities from outside providers such as circus skills and drumming workshops and take trips to find out more about their local area. There is room however for teachers to ensure that the learning environment provides pupils with opportunities to stretch and consolidate their learning especially when involved in independent play activities. At times these activities are often over directed by adults and as a result this limits the opportunities for pupils to explore, try things out and develop their ideas by themselves.

Leaders and teachers are beginning to implement a curriculum that reflects the principles and culture of the Curriculum for Wales. Leaders have worked collaboratively with governors and parents to gain a deeper understanding of the four purposes and create and share a vision for their curriculum that is based firmly around the school's moto of learning and growing together. Leaders identify the professional learning needs of staff appropriately. For example, upskilling teaching assistants to be able to deliver valuable and targeted interventions to support pupils with additional learning needs. However, the schools plans to develop a wide range of teaching approaches to align with Curriculum for Wales are in the early stages and need further development.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that teaching and provision provides pupils with opportunities to influence how they learn and develops their independence
- R2 Focus professional learning for all staff on extending their range of teaching and learning pedagogies, particularly around early child development

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Although a majority of pupils start school with communication and mathematical skills below those expected for their age, during their time at Trallwng Infants School most pupils flourish and make good progress from their individual starting points. This includes pupils with additional learning needs. Pupils in nursery and reception develop their speech and language skills well. Most acquire a much wider vocabulary and talk readily and confidently to adults and each other. As pupils move through the school, they continue to expand their vocabulary and their knowledge of language patterns. Most older pupils speak clearly and confidently, for a range of purposes, such as when talking about their learning and when providing clear explanations about their responsibilities as pupil leaders.

Nursery and reception pupils enjoy listening to stories and retelling exciting things that happen in school to their friends and adults, such as when a dragon was spotted flying in the school yard. As they move on, most pupils begin to recognise and name a range of sounds and use this knowledge to help them start to read simple but age-appropriate texts. Pupils reading skills progress well, with Year 1 and 2 pupils developing an understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds and how sounds blend to form words. By the time they leave school, many pupils read in line with their stage of development and more able pupils can read with increasing fluency and understanding and show an enjoyment of stories and traditional tales. A few talk knowledgeably about their favourite books such as *My Secret Unicorn* and about their favourite authors.

From a young age, most pupils show enthusiasm for writing when experimenting with mark making. They develop their fine motor skills appropriately and begin to use a suitable pencil grip. They start to form a few letters correctly and use their knowledge of sound and symbol relationships to help them sound out and write a few simple words. In reception, a majority of pupils identify the first and last sounds when writing words and more able pupils are beginning to put spaces between the words that they write. A few pupils use a range of adjectives to describe their dragons to write spine poems such as, 'flapping', 'massive wings' and 'dangerous hot fire'. In Year 1 many pupils make good attempts at writing simple sentences about their pets and facts about Queen Elizabeth II. A few write thoughtful letters to the queen saying thank you for the Jubilee festival. In Year 2 pupils receive many opportunities to develop their writing skills and write at length. For example, when writing a poem about 'Remembrance Day' or a funny story based on a reading book.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their Welsh language skills. Younger pupils use familiar words, phrases and sentences to talk about themselves, the weather and their feelings. Older pupils in Year 2 enjoy speaking and writing in Welsh. Many describe the weather and what they like well and write short sentences, for instance, when describing a Welsh ladies' costume.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their Mathematical skills. Younger pupils use resources such as money, counters, and dice well to develop their early understanding of number. Many reception pupils recognise numbers to 10. A few

more able pupils confidently state which numbers are one more or one less than numbers up to 20. A few pupils are beginning to identify half full, half empty and nearly full and nearly empty bottles of liquid when measuring rice and water to create potions. More able pupils in Year 2 understand the relationship between simple fractions and multiples of twelve. Most pupils develop positive mathematical knowledge and skills and use these in their learning across the curriculum. For example, younger pupils apply their skills well when weighing bags of gold as part of their independent play. Year 2 pupils use simple data handling skills, collecting information in tally charts when investigating pupils' favourite circus acts.

Over the course of the pandemic, both at home and in school, most pupils developed their digital competency skills well. The younger pupils confidently use tablet computers confidently to photograph and upload their work to be viewed online. More able pupils access files, load and save their work. Older pupils use a wide range of apps and tools to develop their skills. For example, most pupils collaborate effectively using an app designed to create a book. Many work diligently together to create a missing dragon poster, they add text, choose appropriate photographs, and save their work carefully. Overall, most pupils apply their literacy and digital skills well in other areas of the curriculum, however pupils have less opportunity to use their numerical skills.

Nearly all pupils develop their physical skills well. The youngest pupils use small scooters and bicycles sensibly. Many pupils crawl under blankets and hop through hoops as they participate in the knights' challenge in the outdoor area. They develop their fine motor skills through a variety of mark making and cutting activities, where they use a range of tools and equipment. During playtimes pupils improve their throwing, catching skills and jumping skills as they play with skipping ropes and balls. Older pupils enjoy multi skills club where they eagerly practice their rugby skills, passing sideways, dodging and weaving as they play tag on the school yard.

Nearly all pupils enjoy developing their creative skills. To celebrate the Queen's Jubilee nursery pupils made carnival tee shirts and royal sandwiches. They learned to play the drums and made royal crowns from flowers and leaves. Pupils in reception built castles from recycled materials and pretended to be knights, jousting, and riding a horse. Older pupils use construction toys creatively to make different shaped buildings. Most pupils enjoyed making diva lamps and creating short films about why wild animals should not be kept in a zoo.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

The clear focus on the wellbeing of pupils, staff and families of Trallwng Infants is a strength of the school. As a result, pupils feel safe and cared for. They are happy to be at school and benefit from a strong sense of togetherness. As a result of the school's calm and nurturing ethos they are comfortable in their surroundings and develop positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils persevere to complete activities with a sense of achievement and thrive when given opportunities to be independent in their learning. Many are keen to show visitors around the school and confidently share their work and ideas.

Nearly all pupils are friendly and polite. They are respectful towards children and adults alike and show empathy for others through their actions. They console friends

who are upset and give a helping hand to those who are finding problems in their work difficult to solve. They know that either another pupil or member of staff will always help when they need it. They are beginning to show resilience in their learning experiences, for example when patiently waiting for the strawberries they have planted in the school garden to grow and when models they are making don't turn out the way they had planned.

The school has a number of active pupil voice groups. The pupils involved in these groups, including those disadvantaged by poverty, are beginning to take on leadership roles which influence the life of the school. For example, the Criw Cymraeg introduce the Welsh phrase of the week and digital leaders create rules for using mobile devices carefully. The Eco Warriors involve the whole school in actions such as litter picking and recycling Easter egg wrappers. Many pupils are beginning to understand their own rights and those of others. For example, they listen attentively as others, share their ideas and they play nicely together inside and outside the classroom. They are beginning to explore ways to be enterprising, for example when preparing a menu of goodies for a Jubilee tea party.

Pupils are beginning to contribute their ideas to teachers' planning. They suggest challenges for their classmates to complete and create imaginative learning experiences such as the Knight Camp where they learn to joust and how to be a princess. Generally, however pupils have limited opportunities to influence how they learn.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and why exercise is important. They eat a healthy snack and lunch and enjoy opportunities to be active in physical education lessons and in clubs such as drama and dance. They understand the importance of staying safe, including how to stay safe online. They know not to talk to people they don't recognise and to tell an adult if something unexpected pops up.

Nearly all pupils engage well with their learning. They settle quickly to work, take turns, and follow instructions. Most work well in pairs and small groups. They enjoy chatting about home life, holidays, and their aspirations for the future as they form friendships. Many pupils are beginning to reflect on how well they have completed tasks. Generally, pupils are less able to explain the purpose of their work or how it could be improved.

Pupils behave exceptionally well at all times. Across the school, they explore important values such as courage and kindness and they often demonstrate these qualities in class and when playing at break and lunchtimes.

Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not report pupils' rates of attendance during the academic year 2021-2022. Inspectors will, however, consider the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of inspection area 4 (care, support and guidance).

Teaching and learning experiences

Trallwng Infants school is beginning to implement a curriculum that reflects the principles and culture of the Curriculum for Wales. Leaders have worked

collaboratively with governors and parents to gain a deeper understanding of the four purposes and create and share a vision for their curriculum that reflects the school context. Leaders and teachers have reflected on their planning and refined their curriculum appropriately. Teachers planning sets out clearly termly topics for teaching across the areas of learning and experience. This structure helps the school to ensure there is a balance of rich, authentic learning experiences across the curriculum that meet the needs of all pupils. Through carefully considered and exciting immersion weeks, teachers encourage pupils to contribute to leading their learning. For example, for the summer theme of 'A Right Royal Knees Up' pupils were enticed into the topic by visiting Margam Park, listening to a drummer, and going to the local park to create crowns from leaves and flowers. Pupils then decided they wanted to learn more about castles, dragons and how to drum. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to their develop literacy and digital skills. These are built on systematically to secure progression in lessons and over time. Overall, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is responsive to the needs of its pupils.

The school enriches its curriculum well with a range of extra-curricular activities and visitors to school. For example, all pupils took part in drumming sessions, and visiting the local museum. Teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their wellbeing, creativity and to collaborate with others. For example, older pupils enjoy gardening, drama and dance club and multi-sports during lunchtimes. Pupils have a range of worthwhile opportunities to learn about the history and culture of Wales, for example by celebrating special events such annual Eisteddfod and visiting local places of interest. Teachers plan effective opportunities to develop pupils' Welsh language skills well and invite a range of local visitors to the school to extend their knowledge of the local environment, Welsh history and culture effectively.

Leaders and staff work successfully together to build positive working relationships with all pupils. This contributes to a calm working environment where pupils feel listened to and can ask questions if they need help with their learning. Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well and most pupils are engaged and remain on task during lessons. Many pupils are suitably challenged in their work, for example in Year 2 pupils choose the level of challenge they undertake and are encouraged to attempt the next level if they complete their tasks well. Teachers provide suitable provision to support independent, active learning. However, these learning experiences do not always allow pupils to consolidate their learning well enough. As a result, pupils are limited in their opportunities to stretch and challenge themselves and develop their independence.

Across the school the majority of lessons move at a steady pace. Most pupils engage well and enjoy their learning. However, learning experiences at times are over directed by adults, and this limits opportunities for children to explore, try things out and develop their own ideas. In most classes, teachers use questioning well to move pupils' learning on and support understanding according to the needs of pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed thoughtfully and assist the development of pupils successfully, for example when delivering interventions or leading group activities. However, at times, there are missed opportunities for teaching staff to respond to pupils as they learn, to encourage them to think and improve their understanding. Most staff are sensitive to pupils' needs, allowing them to explore and make mistakes before stepping in to offer support. Teachers provide suitable opportunities for active

learning and hands-on experiences. However, the provision to support pupils independent learning isn't always purposeful enough to support pupils to consolidate their numeracy, literacy, and cross curricular skills.

The school makes good use of assessment procedures to track pupil progress in areas of learning as they move through the school. There are regular pupil progress meetings that include leaders, class teachers and the additional learning needs coordinator (ALNCo). These meetings discuss the progress and wellbeing of individual pupils and, if required, how provision can be adapted to support improvement. In the best practice, teachers and teaching assistants monitor pupils learning effectively and provide them with helpful verbal feedback to improve their work and extend their learning. For example, many older pupils have a good understanding of self-assessment and edit their own written work before they receive verbal feedback from an adult. However, teachers' approach to feedback across the school is variable. All pupils have worthwhile opportunities to show their work to their peers during assembly in 'proud to share' moments, for instance, when reading aloud 'the best bits' from their stories. A recent worthwhile initiative, 'look back and learn' allows small groups of pupils to discuss their learning alongside their teacher to identify what they have done well and how they can improve.

Care, support and guidance

The ethos at Trallwng Infants school is underpinned by a commitment to building strong positive relationships across the community. Leaders, teachers, and support staff know families well. As a result, the school's community driven purpose ensures that pupils, parents, and carers are supported sensitively when in need. This intuitive approach contributes significantly to pupils' happiness and well-being.

The school's focus on values such as respect, courage and kindness contribute to a strong sense of belonging. This nurturing approach was particularly successful in supporting pupils to settle back into school life after the pandemic. The learning environment is colourful but calm and displays celebrate pupils' work and achievements as well as acting as reminders of how to look after the school and each other. Teachers use effective strategies to reward effort, recognise positive behaviour and encourage cooperation.

The support provided for pupils with additional learning needs is highly effective and a strength of the school. Arrangements to identify and address pupil needs ensure that those requiring specific additional support make good progress from their individual starting points. Every pupil in the school has a one-page profile shared with parents. Pupils contribute to these by sharing what makes them special, what makes them happy and how they think people should support them in their learning and in life. This approach ensures that pupils views are listened to when teachers and teaching assistants make decisions about the unique support needed. The school provides an extensive range of purposeful intervention strategies to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy, and emotional well-being. Staff monitor pupil progress carefully both intuitively and through tracking progress, adjusting the support when necessary.

Staff support the school's pupil voice groups in their work in influencing the wider life of the school. For example, they help the Eco Warriors to collect plastic bottle tops to show how much plastic is used by the community. They ensure that Criw Cymraeg

have opportunities to promote their work throughout the school. Teachers gather pupils' suggestions about what they would like to find out about at the start of topics. They choose Challenge Experts who give their ideas about extra activities pupils can attempt as part of their learning experiences. However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to choose how they learn.

The school ensures that pupils learn about their Welsh heritage and culture. They work with local artists and museum curators to create junk models of the Welsh dragon and add drawings and paintings of their own homes to a mural of their town. The youngest pupils share the story of a dragon who lands at the Royal Mint and all pupils listen to folk tales and sing Welsh songs regularly. The school provides a thoughtful range of visits and visitors to engage pupils in their learning. They visit Margam Castle as part of their topic on castles and learn about pattern following a visit from an animal handler of lizards and snakes.

The school promotes healthy lifestyles well. They learn about how a balanced diet and daily walks, for example, have a positive impact on health. They explore feelings and are beginning to practice empathy by recognising the emotions of characters in books they share. The limited outdoor areas are used well to promote play and physical games at breaktimes, and pupils benefit from a range of activities which help them to practice and refine team sports skills.

Teachers plan topics that allow pupils to develop their creativity and imagination. They join in with a visiting drumming group to explore a marching beat using a variety of instruments and use the beat to march in time. They enjoy collecting natural materials from the local park to make crowns fit for a queen and create impressive collages of Queen Elizabeth II. Teachers find engaging and fun ways to encourage expression in a variety of media, for example when designing and making new, highly decorative underwear for the queen after reading a favourite picture book.

The school uses collective worship effectively to explore diversity, reflecting on core values, identity, and belief. Pupils particularly look forward to visits from a local Pastor who shares Bible stories through puppetry and music when exploring what it means to be kind.

The school monitors pupils' attendance closely. Leaders respond appropriately to families finding it difficult to get their children to school on time and as a result there is very little persistent absenteeism or lateness. Pupils have suitable opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe, for example through lessons about internet safety. The school's arrangements to safeguard pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is based firmly around the school's motto of learning and growing together. This is communicated well to all staff. After a time of uncertainty and change within the school the headteacher has demonstrated strong and effective leadership which has focused on the wellbeing of its staff and pupils. This has resulted in happy staff and pupils who feel well supported and cared for.

Leaders have a good understanding of the schools' strengths and weaknesses through conducting a range of valuable self-evaluation and monitoring processes, such as scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and learning walks. Staff work together closely in pairs, to evaluate each other's teaching and plan for improvements. Senior leaders support the headteacher well and collaborate strategically to drive improvements in identified areas. For example, the recent introduction of a more structured approach to teaching writing has resulted in an improvement in pupils' writing skills across the school. Plans and policies are strategic and have a suitable focus on the priorities of the school. However, plans do not always have a strong enough focus on what the pupils understand, know, and do.

Governors have an appropriate knowledge about the work of the school and provide a suitable level of challenge to support and challenge leaders. They discharge their roles and responsibilities well. They ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. They carry out their work diligently as a full governing body and as members or sub-committees. They make appropriate spending decisions, prioritising spending appropriately. For example, having identified the need to develop pupils' digital skills, they recently made a significant investment in ICT equipment.

Leaders identify the professional learning needs of staff appropriately. For example, upskilling teaching assistants to be able to deliver valuable and targeted interventions to support pupils with additional learning needs. However, the schools plans to develop a wide range of teaching approaches rooted in a deep understanding of child development to align with Curriculum for Wales are in the early stages of development.

The school uses its pupil development grant funding effectively to ensure good level of support for disadvantaged pupils and to provide experiences that they might not otherwise receive. These experiences raise pupils' awareness on what the world has to offer and supports them to develop new skills and interests. For example, the opportunity to participate in dance and drama workshops.

The school responds purposefully to local and national priorities such as developing the Curriculum for Wales, and they are well based to deliver on the Additional Learning Needs Reform Act. There is also an active culture within the school in the approach to develop pupils' Welsh language skills.

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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).