



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

A report on

Corneli Primary School

**Greenfield Terrace
North Corneily
CF33 4LW**

Date of inspection: October 2022

by

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

About Corneli Primary School

Name of provider	Corneli Primary School
Local authority	Bridgend County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	242
Pupils of statutory school age	208
Number in nursery classes	24
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%)	42%
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 22.2x]%)	15.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	3.1%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	03/09/2012
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	05/05/2014
Start date of inspection	03/10/2022

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

Pupils at Corneli Primary like and enjoy being in school. They feel it is a happy and caring place, where all staff value their opinions and ideas and treat them equally. All staff work well to create a caring community to ensure that pupils and their families are supported sensitively when in need. Pupils are polite and keen to talk to adults. They speak positively about their school and especially about how much they enjoy the activities that the school provides for them. Nearly all pupils feel safe and know whom to approach if they are worried or concerned about anything. Throughout the day, most pupils behave well around the school and treat each other and adults with respect.

Although many pupils begin school from quite low starting points, over time, pupils, including those in the learning resource base, make good progress in most areas of their learning. By the time most older pupils are ready to move on, they speak articulately, write interesting stories and poems and are digitally competent. Most pupils across the school enjoy learning Welsh and improving their Welsh language skills and this is a strength in the school. Many pupils enjoy being leaders and supporting staff to make decisions about improving their school, they also provide thoughtful opinions and ideas about what they would like to learn.

The headteacher, with support from school leaders and governors, have successfully placed wellbeing and the care, support and guidance of all pupils at the heart of school life. Partnerships with parents are strong, the school has earned their trust, particularly when deciding the right approaches to take so that their children can make best progress. All staff develop their professional skills and knowledge together suitably and this enables them to adapt provision to best meet individual pupils' needs. Leaders and staff are confidently on their way to implementing a curriculum that is real and reflects the needs of the community. Leaders and governors keep the work of the school under review and there are appropriate measures in place for monitoring the quality of current developments. However, leaders do not always focus sharply enough on ensuring that the quality of teaching across the school is consistent, for instance on the way teachers support pupils to improve their work or on how their planning might improve pupils' independence.

Recommendations

- R1 Sharpen self-evaluation processes to focus more specifically on the impact of teaching on learning
- R2 Improve the quality of teachers' feedback to pupils to enable them to identify the next steps in their learning
- R3 Ensure that professional learning impacts positively and consistently on the quality of teaching and learning across the school
- R4 Provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills

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 supported the development of pupils' understanding of financial awareness, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main evaluation

Learning

Many pupils start school with communication and mathematical levels below their chronological age. However, most pupils make good progress from their different starting points, including pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), English as an additional language and those eligible for free school meals. This includes pupils in the learning resource base who make strong progress towards their individual goals and targets and a very few who make accelerated progress.

Most pupils develop their language and communication skills well. On entry to the school, most improve their vocabulary quickly and develop speaking skills that enable them to engage well with adults and with each other. Younger pupils communicate their needs and thoughts confidently. They talk knowledgeably about the subjects they are interested in. For example, younger pupils talk excitedly about a recent school trip linked to their current theme about their local community. Many older pupils have a good understanding of what makes a good question when preparing to 'hot seat' the author of a book they are studying. Many pupils listen well, although there are a minority of pupils across the school who, at times, do not listen well enough to teachers during whole class teaching time.

Most younger pupils use their phonetical knowledge and a range of other strategies well to decode unknown words. The better readers read chapter books with fluency and understanding. Older pupils read fluently and understand and comprehend what they read. Most can predict what might happen next and describe characters well. Most read with expression and take good notice of punctuation. They recognise different genres, such as fairy tales, science fiction and biography and can talk confidently about their favourite authors. Across the school most pupils enjoy reading, they seek quiet areas to read, read for pleasure and to help them to complete projects and research.

Most pupils make good progress when writing. Younger pupils make phonetical attempts at spelling in their writing and are beginning to use simple punctuation, for example full stops. Many are beginning to choose language to engage the reader, for example, by adding adjectives to describe the treasure box when retelling a story. By the time pupils leave the school many pupils write imaginatively for a range of purposes, and make interesting vocabulary choices, such as when creating a poem, 'ode to a pizza'. Many pupils are beginning to use poetic devices appropriately in their writing and they consider well, how vocabulary and sentence structure make a story more interesting. Throughout the school, most pupils use their literacy skills creatively across other areas of their learning. For example, younger pupils write descriptions of Mary Seale and her role in the First World War. Older pupils use skimming and scanning reading skills to find relevant information when writing chronological reports.

Most pupils develop simple Welsh language skills well. Younger pupils sing songs in Welsh enthusiastically and understand and respond to teachers' instructions appropriately. Most pupils respond confidently in Welsh when asked questions. Younger pupils write simple sentences in Welsh describing the clothes they wear, who they live with, their families and many make a good attempt at reading their own

work. Older pupils ask and answer questions using extended sentences patterns when talking about the weather.

Many pupils develop their mathematical and numeracy skills well. Many younger pupils are beginning to grasp a sense of number. Younger pupils count and develop an understanding of number bonds to 10 and a few use them to subtract successfully. Many pupils are developing an awareness of times tables. Many older pupils have a secure understanding of the four rules of number and apply a range of suitable strategies to solve problems. Older, more able pupils have a good grasp of number and place value. Many pupils transfer their maths skills appropriately in a variety of contexts. For example, Year 6 pupils successfully apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems such as calculating how much barbed wire is needed to create a security fence around a perimeter and the cost.

Pupils in the learning resource base work successfully to measure lines and objects, they classify objects according to their properties and position them in a Venn diagram.

Across the school, most pupils' digital skills develop well. Younger pupils successfully use a word processing program to write diary entries. They use data handling programs to create bar charts measuring how many pupils visit certain beaches in the local community. Older pupils use a range of applications to present research on current themes, non-chronological reports, and famous people. Many pupils' creative skills are developing suitably. Younger pupils use finger paints to paint pictures of autumn leaves and explore how colours mix inspired by the artist Wassily Kandinsky. Older pupils study the work of Welsh artist Helen Elliot to inform how they will create and decorate a clay tile.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of the school's work. All staff work well to create a caring community to ensure that pupils and their families are supported sensitively when in need. Most pupils start the day feeling understood and cared for due to the well-structured way that staff welcome the pupils in the morning. Most pupils feel safe and secure and have a strong sense of belonging, they are confident that adults and other pupils will help them if they have a problem or are upset. Most pupils understand their role in caring for each other, such as when being on hand to console a friend who is upset. Most pupils are polite and treat each other, adults and visitors with respect and are confident when discussing their work and the experiences they enjoy at school.

Many pupils settle quickly to tasks and work purposefully, they behave responsibly and move around and between rooms safely and sensibly. Many collaborate well and show respect and care for the ideas of others when working in pairs and groups. Most pupils play co-operatively, take turns and support each other well when playing games and socialising at break times. Most pupils act considerately towards other pupils and adults. Overall, pupil behaviour across the school is good. As a result of these positive attitudes and the work staff have done to create a strong nurturing ethos, the school is a calm and orderly learning environment. However, at times, a few pupils can cause low level disruption during teacher inputs, and this distracts other pupils from their learning.

Nearly all pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe online. For example, they know the importance of protecting their personal information and not to share passwords with friends. Most pupils appreciate the valuable opportunities for exercise and outdoor experiences at school. Most pupils make the most of a range of effective extra-curricular activities that promote their physical wellbeing and social development effectively, such as rugby, choir and yoga clubs.

Many pupils develop well as ethically, informed citizens, especially through activities such as their community litter pick and investigating the effects of plastic on the local beach. They recognise a range of their rights in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). For example, older pupils designed a voiceover presentation to explain their rights and pupils have co-constructed class charters. Pupils also participate in planning activities to support charities locally and internationally. This develops their understanding of the importance of becoming good citizens, for example by raising money for children suffering from the war in Ukraine, working closely with governors to establish a uniform exchange to support local families and writing to members of the community during the pandemic to counteract the effects of loneliness. This work led in part to the school, achieving a national award for their work with families during the pandemic. However, overall, pupils do not sufficiently contribute to planning what and how they learn.

Most pupils can make healthy choices. Younger pupils have investigated what should be included in a healthy lunch box and the Eco Committee promote healthy eating by monitoring the contents of lunchboxes regularly. They encourage their peers to make sensible choices by rewarding them with certificates. Pupils develop as ambitious and capable learners, demonstrating resilience and compassion. For example, the introduction of Playground Peacemakers develops the pupils' confidence in their abilities to resolve playtime disputes.

Many pupils, including those with ALN and those in the learning resource base, take on leadership roles within the school. They participate effectively in a variety of groups, which include the School Council and 'Criw Cymraeg'. This provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to contribute to decision making processes within the school. For example, the School Council led a change in the lunch menu to include a vegetarian option and informed school leaders that more outdoor play equipment at break times would help to improve pupil's well-being.

Teaching and learning experiences

Corneli Primary school's leaders and teachers have worked collaboratively with governors to gain an understanding of the principles and culture of the Curriculum for Wales and how these can be best reflected in the school's curriculum. Leaders have carefully considered the needs of all pupils within their school to create an authentic and purposeful curriculum that reflects the school's local context and that of Wales successfully. Staff work together well to plan interesting experiences that ensure that pupils are taught across the areas of learning and experience. This ensures that the curriculum is broad and balanced and builds systematically on pupils existing knowledge, understanding and skills.

Most teachers, including those in the learning resource base, successfully use a range of authentic experiences to engage pupils in their learning. For example,

younger pupils visit a local nature reserve to learn more about their local area and older pupils learn about William the Conqueror to better understand the historical context of a local castle. Visitors to the school further enrich the curriculum by providing exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of careers and the various jobs people have in their community, for example working the local lifeboat station.

Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to their develop literacy, mathematical and digital skills. These are built on systematically to secure progression in lessons and over time. They ensure beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their well-being. For example, the school offers opportunities for pupils to engage in yoga and mindfulness sessions.

Overall, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is responsive to the needs of its pupils. For example, following the pandemic, it took account of the specific needs of all its pupils and created an effective curriculum to support pupils on their return to school. This recovery curriculum focused on pupils' well-being and creating a sense of community. For instance, younger pupils wrote letters to elderly members of the community to check on their well-being and find out about their lives as children. Older pupils made presentations to explain the plight of orangutans in the wild and how deforestation has affected their lives and separated them from their habitats. As a result, most pupils were emotionally well supported and settled quickly back into learning.

Teachers ensure 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 also plan effective opportunities to develop pupils' Welsh language skills well.

Teachers and support staff work successfully together to create strong working relationships with pupils which contribute to good levels of engagement in many classes. In these classes teachers consider how the pupils will learn best and use a range of approaches to capture their imaginations. In the best lessons, teachers set a brisk pace to learning. They ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of how they will learn and develop their independent skills. Many teachers make links to prior learning, reinforce key concepts, and meet the needs of learners well. They match tasks to the pupils' ability and challenge appropriately. They create positive environments for learning and often plan authentic learning experiences including opportunities to use creativity and problem solving. For example, older pupils use clay to design fridge magnets and decorate them based on the work of famous artists. Many teachers use everyday Welsh confidently to support pupils' Welsh language development, they are good role models and extend pupils' vocabulary well. However, in a minority of classes, learning experiences can be over directed by adults and this limits opportunities for pupils to explore, try things out and develop their own ideas. In addition, the provision to support younger pupils independent learning is not always purposeful enough to support them to consolidate key skills.

Support staff work purposefully and productively to support pupils' learning. They create resources to stimulate engagement, partner teachers in observing learning and contribute to ongoing assessment of progress.

Overall, the school makes good use of assessments to track pupil progress in areas of learning as they move through the school. However, there is not a shared,

thorough understanding of the impact that effective feedback could have on pupil progress. This includes developing pupils' own knowledge and understanding of how well they are doing and how they could improve. As a result, many teachers do not consistently provide effective feedback for pupils and this hinders the progress they make across the curriculum and over time.

Care, support and guidance

The school knows its pupils, their backgrounds and the local community very well. Leaders and staff have developed a range of effective systems to ensure that pupils and their families receive the encouragement and support they need to thrive at school. The school provides a caring environment, which supports the whole school community. This close bond between families and school proved to be crucial in protecting pupils' well-being and learning throughout the pandemic. The school's 'recovery' curriculum supported the emotional and social needs of the pupils effectively to overcome anxiety and build confidence as they returned to school. In addition, as part of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Wales awards, the school recently received recognition for providing the best mental health support to families during the pandemic.

Staff enable pupils to make strong contributions to the life of their community and these experiences help them to respect and care for others. The school makes good use of visitors to enrich pupils' experiences. For example, a visit from a local artist and a member of the local RNLI. There are also valuable opportunities for pupils to undertake entrepreneurial projects during enterprise week where pupils create and sell items to the school community, enabling pupils to understand more about the world of work.

The school's support for pupils with additional learning needs is strong. The school's additional learning needs (ALN) co-ordinator and class teachers use pupil tracking information effectively to identify and plan provision to address the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. The co-ordinator works effectively with class teachers to devise a useful one-page profile of individual pupils and specific plans to support their progress. This helps to ensure that pupils with educational, emotional, social or health needs receive the provision and intervention that suits them most appropriately. As a result, most pupils are ready to learn and make good progress from their starting points.

The school tracks vulnerable learners well. Staff identify social and emotional needs and target appropriate interventions. They also provide a worthwhile opportunity for pupils to develop good habits about money management through running a savings club which develops the pupils' understanding of financial literacy. Personalised learning programmes for pupils attending the learning resource base (LRB) match their needs closely and these have a positive impact on their individual progress and achievements. Successful relationships between the staff of the LRB and mainstream staff aid pupils' integration into the daily life of the school well.

The school provides suitable opportunities, for example, through regular assemblies, and thoughtful collective worship, for pupils to participate in and to reflect on important issues and values. They promote principles that help pupils distinguish between right and wrong, for example, through celebrating anti-bullying awareness week. Most pupils are aware of their own religious beliefs and the similarities and

differences between the major world religions.. Many have a keen awareness of different festivals and celebrations of significance, such as Diwali and Eid. Teachers ensure that pupils regularly consider core values such as trust, honesty and respect through the curriculum through specific events and pupil voice groups. For example, the school council lead the school's work on human rights and help to ensure that pupils understand their rights and responsibilities.

Pupils' understanding of Welsh culture is developing well. For example, the pupils participate in annual events including 'Shwmae' day and a school Eisteddfod which provides opportunities for the pupils to perform and participate in various competitions.

The school has good systems for monitoring pupils' attendance and works effectively with welfare agencies to promote good attendance. There are effective arrangements to contact the home when pupils are absent and parents of pupils who have been identified as vulnerable are contacted as a priority should their children be absent. The school has developed effective systems to ensure the safety of all pupils, and all leaders and staff promote an active culture of safeguarding across the school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body work closely with the whole school community to establish and communicate a clear vision for Corneli Primary School. Leaders have created an inclusive culture, where pupils feel secure and have a strong sense of belonging. All staff support and maintain a strong safeguarding culture at the school. They have a good understanding of the diverse needs of individual pupils and the local community and want the best for the pupils in their care. All staff in the school's LRB ensure that their pupils integrate very expectations of what these pupils can achieve and, working alongside skilled support staff, provide purposeful and challenging learning activities.

The deputy headteacher supports the headteacher successfully. She has a clear understanding of her role and responsibilities and carries these out effectively. Senior leaders work well as a team and have implemented many improvements to support pupils' well-being. They meet regularly to discuss progress against the school priorities and to critically review their work as a leadership team. Leaders benefit from useful working partnerships with many agencies, such as the education welfare officer (EWO). These are highly productive. The team around the child approach enables the school to clearly identify the right support and provision to enable pupils to succeed. For example, the sound provision for pastoral care ensures that vulnerable pupils attend school regularly and that it meets their emotional needs effectively.

Leaders and staff enjoy close working partnerships with parents. Parents trust that the school is doing the right thing for pupils and always acts in their best interests. Specialist agencies attend the school regularly to provide parents with support and advice. Staff support parents sensitively. For example, they help parents to better understand behaviour management techniques when supporting their own children. The dedicated family support officer works effectively with parents and arranges for them to seek professional advice when needed, such as mental health support and bereavement counselling. Links with Bridgend College support parents to gain employability skills.

Leaders use a range of suitable evidence to evaluate the progress and standards of pupils' work. Self-evaluation processes are appropriate and suitably inform leaders of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. For example, after conducting an audit of maths across the school, pupils highlighted they would like teachers to provide more helpful feedback to improve their learning. This has led to a review of the school's assessment and feedback policy. Overall, information from self-evaluation is used appropriately to inform the school's development plan. However, self-evaluation processes are not always sharp enough, for instance in identifying shortcomings in the quality of teaching and learning.

Leaders ensure that all staff have beneficial opportunities to participate in professional learning. This is linked to the priorities in the school development plan. Most staff engage successfully in regional collaboration to enhance their own knowledge and skills, for instance in developing their approaches to ALN and by contributing to exemplar material to support local schools with universal provision. However, at times leaders do not always evaluate how well professional learning impacts on teaching and learning across the school.

Work to address national priorities progresses well. Leaders have embraced the current additional learning needs reform well and the quality of pupils' Welsh language skills across the school is a strength. The school is making good progress in realising the new Curriculum for Wales and all staff have a good understanding of their new design and planning process. As a result, staff are starting to prepare more authentic learning experiences for all pupils. Leaders provide a range of measures to address the impact of poverty and track the progress of learners well. For example, staff implement actions for the most vulnerable groups such as specific wellbeing intervention. In addition, the school provides support for parents. For example, governors supported the headteacher to provide hardware and free Wi-Fi to families who were financially challenged.

The governing body understands and discharges its duties well. Governors have a suitable understanding of the school's improvement priorities and the rationale behind these. They understand their role in supporting the school and implementing its improvement strategy. Governors contribute appropriately to monitoring activity and this helps them to keep up to date with the school's progress in implementing improvement work. They have opportunities to meet with staff and this supports them to understand how new developments are progressing.

The school uses grant funding effectively. Leaders ensure that all pupils who require bespoke interventions to improve their learning or wellbeing can access the support they need. For example, a resource to support mindfulness across the school has impacted positively on pupil behaviour and supports staff mental health. Leaders and teachers track individuals and groups thoroughly to ensure that any interventions funded by grants support pupils to make good progress.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers 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:

Publications Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales