



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

A report on

Cwmcarn Primary School

**Newport Road
Cwmcarn
Crosskeys
NP11 7LZ**

Date of inspection: September 2024

by

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

About Cwmcarn Primary School

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Name of provider | Cwmcarn Primary School |
| Local authority | Caerphilly County Borough Council |
| Language of the provider | English |
| School category according to Welsh-medium provision | None |
| Type of school | Primary |
| Religious character | None |
| Number of pupils on roll | 220 |
| Pupils of statutory school age | 179 |
| Number in nursery classes | 21 |
| 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 22.9%) | 30.2% |
| 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 11.1%) | 8.4% |
| Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home | 0.0% |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language | 6.3% |
| Date of headteacher appointment | 04/01/2021 |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable) | 08/05/2017 |
| Start date of inspection | 23/09/2024 |

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.

Summary

Cwmcarn Primary School is a happy, inclusive learning community where pupils feel safe and secure. The headteacher, governors and staff are very proud of the school and share a vision that focuses on the well-being and progress of all pupils, including those in the Special Resource Bases (SRBs).

Working relationships between staff and pupils are strong and these contribute positively to the way pupils behave in and around the school. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and other adults. They are confident when discussing their work and keen to explain what they are doing and what they have learnt to their peers and staff. Pupils and staff treat each other with respect and fairness. They discuss equality, diversity, identity and LGBTQ+ matters confidently, sensitively and with mature understanding.

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) particularly those in the SRB classes is highly successful. The school's ALN co-ordinator has worked with staff to develop robust procedures to support pupils with ALN. As a result, most pupils including those at risk of underachievement because of the impact of socio-economic disadvantage, make good progress.

Leaders place a high priority on pupil attendance and work with families effectively to ensure that their children attend school regularly. This has had a positive impact on attendance figures.

Overall, the school's curriculum is broad and balanced. However, the provision for Welsh is underdeveloped and staff do not provide enough opportunities for outdoor learning.

Governors are supportive and well informed. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and are beginning to identify areas for development and challenge leaders appropriately.

Recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Strengthen the provision for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills
- R2 Develop the use of the outdoors as a learning environment

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Cwmcarn Primary School is a highly inclusive school that places a clear priority on the well-being of its pupils. Pupils know that all adults in the school care for them and that they can turn to them when they face challenges or have difficulties. This supportive ethos, alongside effective teaching, ensures that most pupils make good progress in their learning and well-being. This includes pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), those in the special resource bases (SRBs) and those at risk of underachieving because of the effects of socio-economic disadvantage.

Constructive working relationships between staff and pupils along with clear guidelines promote positive behaviour across the school. A strong feature is the way pupils behave in lessons and as they move around the school. Nearly all pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Younger pupils settle well into school life and learn the routines of the classroom quickly. A strong focus on developing their independence encourages behaviours that enable these very young children to get the best out of their early school experiences.

The school's recent focus on developing pupils' oracy means that many pupils speak confidently to their peers and adults, often approaching visitors to introduce themselves, share their learning and ask questions. The school's arrangements to develop pupils' reading skills are appropriate and help pupils to become competent readers. Most use their skills confidently to access learning across the curriculum and many older pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. Throughout the school, teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes across a wide range of genres. Planned writing activities encourage pupils to build specific skills over time, culminating in extended pieces of writing with a specific purpose. This progressive approach gives pupils the confidence to use their writing skills effectively in other areas of the curriculum.

The school's consistent approach to teaching mathematics helps most pupils to develop secure skills. They build a good understanding of number over time. This enables them to carry out mental calculations accurately and, when appropriate, to use a range of written methods to approach and solve problems systematically and confidently.

The school has developed its curriculum to align with the principles and purposes of Curriculum for Wales. Teachers deliver learning experiences that enable the successful development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills. They have high expectations of pupils and deliver lessons at an appropriate pace and with

suitable challenge for most pupils. This helps to ensure that nearly all pupils are engaged, actively involved in their learning and collaborate well with others on their tasks. However, pupils do not have opportunities to develop and apply their skills in the school's outdoor areas.

Many pupils develop their leadership skills and take on responsibility in a range of learner voice groups. They contribute usefully to teachers' planning and their suggestions often influence the direction of learning, which helps to secure their interest in their work. However, occasionally, teachers over-direct pupils and do not offer enough opportunities for them to develop their skills as independent learners.

Nearly all pupils enjoy the wide range of learning experiences that the school offers. This includes many interesting extra-curricular activities, including journalism, British Sign Language and yoga. There is particularly strong age-appropriate provision to foster positive attitudes to diversity and develop pupils' awareness of different identities, family relationships, gender and LGBTQ+ lives. In addition, opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters are effective.

Spotlight on: Promoting social cohesion, diversity and the virtues of respect and empathy

Leaders have placed Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) education at the heart of the school's curriculum rationale. They identified relevant professional learning and staff collaborated to consider how to approach conversations and learning activities with pupils of different ages covering diversity, identity and LGBTQ+ matters. The teaching team and most pupils now discuss these matters confidently, sensitively and with understanding. The school's strong ethos of inclusivity underpins this work and prepares pupils to live and work in diverse environments.

Pupils develop a positive attitude towards the Welsh language and culture through displays, assemblies and special events. However, teaching does not ensure that pupils build their skills systematically and progressively as they move through the school, and pupils tend to continue to use the same simple phrases through the year groups. As a result, too many pupils do not develop their Welsh language skills to a high enough standard by the time they leave the school.

Leaders collaborate exceptionally well with staff and external agencies to meet the needs of pupils with ALN, especially those in the SRBs. Provision for pupils with ALN is well co-ordinated and meets the needs of all pupils who need extra support to learn. Staff plan and implement a broad range of targeted support programmes that develop pupils' literacy, mathematical and social skills effectively. Pupils with ALN in the SRBs and mainstream benefit considerably from skilled teaching and a personalised curriculum. Staff monitor pupils' targets and progress carefully. Support staff encourage and challenge pupils with a high level of care and skill. They ask useful questions and give helpful prompts which allow the pupils to move their learning on.

Improving attendance and punctuality has been a high priority at the school recently. The school's processes to promote and maintain good attendance have had a strong impact, particularly on narrowing the gap between specific groups of pupils and in tackling persistent absenteeism.

The school uses a range of communication tools effectively to keep families up to date with school activities and their children's progress. Leaders and staff develop good links with families and offer opportunities for parents and carers to be purposefully involved in the life of the school. For example, the parents and carers of pupils in the SRBs attend coffee afternoons to spend time learning alongside their children and discuss their progress with staff.

Leadership across the school is effective. The headteacher has developed a successful team who know their school well. Leaders employ a robust cycle of monitoring and school improvement that, overall, accurately identifies and addresses key areas for development. They support the development of all staff through beneficial professional learning opportunities that align well with school's development priorities.

Governors are supportive of the work of the school and kept well informed by the headteacher and other senior leaders, which helps them develop a deeper understanding of the school's work. They engage in the first-hand gathering of evidence through, for example, taking part in link visits and learning walks. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and are beginning to identify areas for development and challenge leaders appropriately.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for site security do not give any cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| nearly all = | with very few exceptions |
| most = | 90% or more |
| many = | 70% or more |
| a majority = | over 60% |
| half = | 50% |
| around half = | close to 50% |
| a minority = | below 40% |
| few = | below 20% |
| very few = | less than 10% |

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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