



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

A report on
Townhill Community Primary School
Townhill Road
Townhill
SA1 6PT

Date of inspection: February 2019

by

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

About Townhill Community Primary School

Townhill Community Primary School is in Swansea. There are 526 pupils on roll aged from three to eleven. The school has 17 classes, including two nursery classes with 60 part-time pupils in each. There are two specialist teaching facilities (STFs) on site.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is approximately 44%. This is well above the average for Wales of 18%. The school has identified 48% of pupils as having additional learning needs, this is well above the national average of 21%. Around 11% of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Most pupils are of white British ethnicity and come from homes where English is the main language. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher took up his post in January 2019.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of Townhill Community Primary School and all staff work hard to ensure that there is a caring and inclusive environment. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress, their behaviour, and their attitudes to learning. Nearly all pupils feel safe and enjoy school. Many take on roles to help develop the work of the school, for example as playground ambassadors. All teachers and support staff have high expectations of pupils.

Many pupils start school with literacy and numeracy skills that are below those expected of pupils of a similar age. Most pupils, including those in the specialist learning facilities, make good progress during their time at school, especially in their speaking and listening skills.

Teachers provide a wide range of learning experiences to engage and motivate pupils to learn. The school promotes pupils' understanding of their Welsh culture and heritage well through its curriculum and activities. The recently appointed headteacher, along with the school's leadership team, provide strong and purposeful leadership. Together, with a conscientious team of staff, they work successfully to improve pupils' outcomes, and raise their aspirations.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the standards of those children who are more able
- R2 Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their independence
- R3 Develop leadership at all levels to maximise its impact on the school's priorities for improvement

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Many pupils begin school with skills and understanding below the level expected for their age. As they move through the school, most pupils make at least expected progress and a few make very good progress. Most pupils with additional learning needs and those in the special teaching facilities (STF) make good progress in relation to their individual starting points. However, pupils who are more able do not always make the progress that is expected.

Throughout the school, most pupils listen well and engage enthusiastically when talking with their teachers and other pupils. They discuss their work willingly and provide thoughtful responses to questions. In the nursery classes, most pupils are confident when talking to adults. Pupils' in reception classes retell the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff confidently explaining why the troll was sad without any friends. Many older key stage 2 pupils speak with a high degree of confidence and expression and enjoy giving their opinions, for example when speaking about the effects of peer pressure as they grow up.

Across the school, most pupils develop their Welsh language skills well. Younger pupils enjoy singing songs and greet adults and each other confidently. By Year 2, many pupils respond appropriately to basic questions when stating the weather conditions. In key stage 2, many pupils use an appropriate range of sentence patterns to hold simple dialogues about themselves and familiar situations. The contribution of the school's energetic Cwri Cymraeg helps to promote the language and raise standards successfully.

Many pupils in the foundation phase make suitable progress in reading. In reception, pupils enjoy looking through books in the 'reading area', handling them like a reader. By Year 2, many pupils read well. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books, identify the author and illustrator and understand what they do. In key stage 2, many pupils use dictionaries in lesson time effectively and this helps them to extend their vocabulary. Older pupils use their reading skills well. Many pupils show a good understanding of what they are reading and can make inferences from the text. For instance, they find clues to establish that a character is a scoundrel.

Many younger pupils in the foundation phase make sound progress in developing their early writing skills. In reception, most pupils form recognisable letters and use their knowledge of sounds to attempt words independently. By Year 2, most pupils can write extended pieces, for example when writing a diary of a journey to space or about a superhero. Pupils who are more able write extended sentences and use punctuation accurately, such as speech marks and apostrophes. Across key stage 2, pupils write in a suitable range of forms. Many older pupils plan their work appropriately. They structure their writing using appropriate punctuation and paragraphs, for instance when writing a persuasive argument to stop deforestation in the Amazon and when writing reports on the function of organs of the body. However, too often pupils' work is not extended due to the over reliance of worksheets.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop their mathematical skills appropriately. In Year 2, most pupils accurately estimate the capacity of different containers and measure the volume of liquids. In key stage 2, many pupils continue to develop their understanding of place value and the four rules of number at a suitable pace. By Year 6, most pupils show an appropriate understanding of the properties of shape and concepts such as symmetry. However, pupils who are more able are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons and consequently do not always make enough progress.

Most pupils apply their numeracy skills appropriately in other areas of the curriculum. For instance, in Year 4, pupils produce items for the Christmas Fair and calculate costs, profit and loss from a given budget. In Year 6, pupils use co-ordinates on a local map to identify places they could visit to keep fit. Often however, a minority of pupils across key stage 2 do not apply their numeracy skills in other subjects to a high enough standard.

Across the school pupils' information, communication and technology (ICT) skills are developing well. In nursery, pupils create party invitations for Kipper's birthday party. Most Year 2 pupils create and edit files confidently. Younger key stage 2 pupils email friends and include attachments, such as pictures. Older Year 6 pupils present information accurately using different ICT programs. Examples include when creating and interrogating databases and using multimedia programmes to create news reports, such as Howard Carter's discovery of Tutankhamen.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe and cared for, and have a strong sense of belonging. They are confident that adults and other pupils will help them if they have a problem. Most pupils are very keen to attend school and enjoy the wide variety of learning experiences provided for them. This is a strength of the school. Nearly all pupils are welcoming and polite towards visitors and share their experiences of school enthusiastically. They understand their role in caring for each other. Nearly all pupils start the day feeling understood and cared for due to well-structured circle time and carpet sessions that prepare pupils for their learning successfully.

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils settle quickly and work purposefully. Most pupils behave responsibly, and move around and between rooms safely and sensibly. They 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. Pupils with specific roles, such as 'play pals', take on responsibilities willingly. For example, the work of the restorative ambassadors enhances standards of behaviour at lunchtimes and playtimes.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. When given the opportunity, pupils take part in physical exercise activities enthusiastically. Most understand the dangers that may arise in their everyday lives and know what steps to take to stay safe. Nearly all pupils, in line with their age, understand the importance of staying safe online. For example, Year 3 pupils are able to outline the dangers that may arise as a result of unsuitable use of the internet.

Across the school, most pupils enjoy their learning and are enthusiastic in lessons and when working in groups. Most persevere well and stay on task for appropriate lengths of time. Pupils share their learning experiences eagerly and talk extensively about their work. Many pupils develop good strategies to increase their independence and they recognise the importance of hard work. For example, foundation phase pupils plan to enhance and adapt classroom areas to support topic work effectively. However, in key stage 2, pupils' ability to plan and lead their own learning is limited and too often adults over direct their learning.

Attendance rates over the past three years have improved. However, the school remains in the lower 50% when compared with similar schools. Most pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and arrive at school punctually.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers provide exciting challenges linked to interesting topics. In the foundation phase, teachers take good account of pupils' suggestions when planning engaging indoor and outside learning activities. These foster the development of pupils' thinking skills effectively and help them to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in a fun and active way. Teachers reflect the principles of the foundation phase highly effectively in their teaching and in the way they organise pupils' learning experiences in classes. Their planning ensures a suitable balance between independent pupil activities and adult-led tasks. The regular use of the outdoors for learning activities is a strength of the school.

In key stage 2, most pupils make decisions about what they would like to learn about in 'Freaky Friday', however, the level of independent choice is limited in other lessons. The recent introduction of more engaging learning tasks is at an early stage of development and, as a result, a minority of pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of across the curriculum.

Teachers plan a broad and balanced curriculum throughout the school. In the best lessons, teachers provide good learning opportunities for all pupils. In a few classes where planning is less effective, teachers do not always challenge pupils well enough and tend to over direct many of the learning activities.

Across the school, the quality of teachers' questioning and verbal feedback to pupils is good. The school has a clear marking policy, which staff implement effectively across the school. In many classes, peer and self-assessment is effective and, as a result, pupils have a good understanding of how to improve their learning.

Nearly all teachers and other adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and use positive praise well to encourage pupils to persevere. Learning support assistants work well with teachers and provide valuable support to individuals and small groups of pupils. They have strong working relationships with pupils and know their individual emotional needs well.

Staff offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities to all pupils. Many pupils have the opportunity to engage in and benefit from these additional learning experiences such as coding club, Movie Magic, sports and mindfulness. These have a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and skills.

The school arranges appropriate opportunities for pupils to visit local places of interest, for instance Cardiff Castle and St Fagan's Museum. Older pupils attend the residential centre at Rhosilli. These experiences have a very positive influence on pupils' learning, personal and social skills. The school also nurtures pupils' creative skills well. For example, older pupils work successfully with a specialist artist to create animations for an island project.

The school plans well to develop pupils' skills. Teachers plan together to ensure that pupils have consistent learning experiences across year groups and classes. The focus on developing pupils' oracy and reading skills is having a positive impact and, as a result, many pupils are becoming confident speakers and readers. In the foundation phase, planning to develop pupils' numeracy skills is good. However, in key stage 2, planning for numeracy does not always meet the needs of all learners. The school's ICT provision is developing pupils' skills successfully. For example, Year 5 pupils create life like animations of Queen Victoria. Teachers also ensure that pupils learn about the importance of online safety through purposeful experiences from a range of sources, including pupils who act as 'digital heroes'.

Through regular Welsh sessions and activities, teachers promote pupils' use of the Welsh language skilfully. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about Welsh history and culture. For instance, pupils create eye-catching art in the style of Kyffin Williams and enjoy visits to St Fagan's and Cardiff Castle.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring, inclusive community that supports pupils' social and emotional development effectively and has a positive impact on pupils' standards and wellbeing. Teachers identify pupils' educational, emotional and social needs at an early stage and make very effective use of a consistent approach to promote pupils' good behaviour.

All adults work effectively to establish positive and supportive relationship for parents and pupils. For example, early morning sessions provide the pupils with good opportunities to express and manage their feelings and emotions. As a result, nearly all of the pupils are enthusiastic and eager to participate in school activities. The school makes effective use of a range of strategies, incentives and rewards to improve attendance, for example through the weekly celebration of good rates of class attendance. Most pupils speak enthusiastically about enjoying school and of not wanting to miss fun learning experiences.

Through co-operating with specialist agencies, such as social services and speech therapists, as well as utilising the skills of its' own pastoral manager, the school ensures high quality support and guidance for pupils and their parents. This contributes well to the continued progress made by all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, and the pupils in the specialist teaching facility.

There are effective procedures to track and monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing. These enable staff to plan and provide suitable support and to identify the progress of individuals and specific groups of pupils very successfully.

The school makes effective provision to address the needs of those pupils who have additional learning needs including those in the specialist teaching facility. The co-ordinator for additional learning needs provides constructive feedback to staff and carefully monitors how well staff meet pupils' needs. Teaching assistants provide carefully structured and sensible support to the pupils. All pupils with additional learning needs have an individual education plan that includes specific targets, strategies and ways of supporting them. However, targets for the pupils within mainstream classes do not focus enough on what the pupils need to do to improve

Pupils from the specialist teaching facility receive valuable opportunities to follow specific activities with mainstream classes such as a visit to Cardiff Castle. This helps them to develop their social and communication skills effectively outside the school and enhances their subsequent learning experiences in the classes.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development successfully through reflective collective worship and thoughtful class-based discussions during registration periods. The provision for personal and social education is of a high quality and contributes effectively towards developing pupils' sound understanding of values such as honesty and respect towards others.

The school has effective arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and to ensure that pupils understand how to stay safe. The school's commitment to promoting extra-curricular activities, such as participating in local football training sessions and running a mile, ensures valuable opportunities to develop pupils' fitness. Provision for pupils to develop their creative skills is good. For example, pupils across key stage 2 worked with a specialist artist and, in Year 3, pupils took part in the Swansea Primaries Enterprise Challenge where they received an award for best curriculum links.

Year 3 pupils recycled, made and sold toys to fund a visitor who brought in exotic animals for the pupils to study. These opportunities help to develop self-confidence, and have a positive impact on the development of pupils' creative skills and their ability to work in a team.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the school and high expectations for the wellbeing and achievement of pupils. Leaders throughout the school contribute to a powerful, caring culture that is centred around putting children first.

The headteacher has a clear long-term strategy for school improvement and has already begun to introduce useful structures to enable the school to function more effectively. He is ably supported by a very committed senior leadership team who drive the highly inclusive ethos that is such a strong feature of the school. Senior leaders work very well as a team and have a good record of leading improvement in the school, particularly with respect to pupil wellbeing. For example, the very good provision for pastoral care ensures that vulnerable pupils attend school regularly and that the school meets their emotional needs very effectively. Close working partnerships with many agencies such as the police and social services are very productive.

The leader of the specialist teaching facility ensures that those pupils attending integrate very well into the life of the school. She has high expectations of what these pupils can achieve and, with the capable support of the rest of the staff in the facility, provides purposeful and challenging learning activities for pupils.

Leaders at many levels drive important improvements to the learning environment. For example, the foundation phase leader has led the development of vibrant outdoor learning areas very effectively. However, the lack of a structured timetable to allow leaders and managers to fulfil important aspects of their roles hampers their effectiveness, and opportunities to share leadership responsibilities more broadly are at an early stage of development. Staff work very well together and show a high degree of commitment, contributing well to new initiatives. For instance, they provide imaginative resources to stimulate pupils' thinking during sessions for pupils to choose what and how they would like to learn.

Governors offer good support to the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and keep careful track of the finances. However, they do not receive regular training to enable them to challenge the school effectively concerning the standards and achievement of pupils.

Leaders engage in effective processes to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school. For example, they engage in detailed, regular reviews of individual pupil performance that result in focused interventions for vulnerable pupils. Through careful monitoring, leaders identify gaps in provision and have successfully embedded restorative approaches to behaviour issues and the introduction of positive incentives as part of behaviour management.

Leaders create a strong culture and ethos to support the professional learning of all staff. Staff share knowledge with one another freely and effectively, training each other 'on the job' as well as in formal training sessions. For example, teaching assistants were trained very well in how to make best use of the outdoor areas when taking a small group of pupils, and staff in the specialist teaching facility received purposeful training that enabled them to meet the particular needs of pupils effectively.

Performance management procedures make a good contribution to improving the provision for the wellbeing of pupils. Staff focus on important training that impacts on the quality of learning positively.

The school uses the pupil development grant effectively to ensure that targeted pupils make at least as good progress as other pupils. Teachers track individuals and groups carefully to ensure that interventions, funded by the grant, help pupils to make strong progress.

There is an appropriate level of staffing and learning resources to deliver the planned curriculum effectively. The school uses its indoor spaces very well to create a vibrant learning environment, including well-designed provision for pupils in the specialist teaching facility.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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