



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

**A report on**

**Brynnau Primary School  
William Street  
Bryнна  
Llanharan  
Pontyclun  
CF72 9QJ**

**Date of inspection: November 2017**

**by**

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

## About Brynnau Primary School

Brynnau Primary School is in Brynna, near Pontyclun in the Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. There are 223 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11, including 29 nursery children who attend part-time. Pupil numbers fluctuate from year to year. There are two single-age and five mixed-age classes at the school.

The rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is about 15%. This is slightly below the national average (19%). Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity and speak English at home.

The school identifies that around 19% of pupils have additional learning needs. This is slightly below the national average (21%). A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The headteacher took up her post in April 2001. The school's previous inspection was in March 2011.

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

Nearly all pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. The attainment of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is often higher than that of other pupils. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning and engage well with their lessons. Pupils generally have a strong voice within the school and contribute well to decisions about what and how they learn. Teaching is generally good. Teachers plan and deliver interesting lessons that excite pupils' curiosity and motivate them to achieve well. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to apply their literacy skills across the curriculum. The headteacher and senior leaders work effectively to secure strong levels of wellbeing among the pupils and good standards of achievement.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Provide increased opportunities for pupils to apply a wide range of numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R2 Ensure that teachers in parallel classes provide equally rewarding experiences for all pupils

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Most pupils enter the school with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those expected of pupils for their age. During their time at school, nearly all make good progress. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals achieve at least as well as, and often better than, other pupils.

In the foundation phase, a majority of pupils listen well. Others do not always take full note of what their teacher says. The youngest pupils are confident to speak to visitors and they make their meaning clear, often despite a limited vocabulary. Generally, pupils' speaking skills develop well. In key stage 2, most pupils listen attentively to adults and to one another. They respond promptly to instructions in English and in Welsh. Nearly all pupils speak clearly and politely. By Year 6, many have a mature vocabulary and express themselves clearly.

Most pupils in the foundation phase make good progress in developing their reading skills. Many read fluently, with good pace and expression. They read words confidently that they encounter frequently and use their knowledge of letters and sounds suitably to read unfamiliar words. Many enjoy reading, explain why they think that reading is important and talk with interest about their favourite books and authors. In key stage 2, pupils read regularly for enjoyment and to research information from non-fiction books. Most read accurately and with lively expression. Many give concise summaries of their favourite books, describing the setting, characters and plot and make sensible predictions as to how their current book will end. Older pupils are developing higher-order reading skills well. When seeking information for their topic work, a majority of pupils use indexes efficiently to find the appropriate pages and then scan swiftly to locate the appropriate section.

In the foundation phase, many pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. The youngest pupils in the nursery make suitable progress through stages of mark-making. In the lower foundation phase, most understand how letters combine to make words. Most form their letters correctly and write increasingly neatly. Nearly all pupils in the foundation phase write for a broad range of purposes. For example, they recount how they made Diwali sweets and write instructions on how to put out a fire. Most include capital letters and full stops in their sentences and make sensible attempts to spell words that are new to them. Most pupils in key stage 2 write well for different purposes, adapting their style to suit their intended audience. Many use ambitious vocabulary to add interest to their writing. For example, when writing a newspaper-style report about a shipwreck, they use descriptive phrases, such as 'starless night', 'towering waves' and 'razor-sharp rocks'. Many pupils use a good range of punctuation to make their meaning clear and they spell familiar words correctly.

Throughout the school, many pupils apply their literacy skills well across the curriculum. For example, in the foundation phase, pupils recount events on their visit to the local fire station in chronological order. They write a clear list of instructions on how to care for a pet rabbit and plan an information booklet about their village, with a contents page, introduction and index. In key stage 2, they write a persuasive letter to Henry VIII regarding his choice of wives and they write the diary entry of a Roman

soldier. In science, they plan investigations carefully, giving sensible reasons for their choices and writing clear summaries of their results. For example, they explain how varying the amounts of water and fertiliser influences the growth of a plant.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in developing their mathematical skills in number, shape, space and measures. Most pupils in key stage 2 develop their mathematical understanding well. The majority solve problems that use more than one operation systematically and use different types of graphs and charts appropriately. Older pupils have quick and accurate recall of times tables and number facts, using techniques such as rounding up to perform mental calculations successfully.

Pupils in the foundation phase apply their numeracy skills relatively infrequently in other areas of learning. They measure carefully to compare their own heights and make pictograms to show the results of their class survey of the colours of their eyes. In key stage 2, pupils use graphing skills to show how an astronaut's heart rate alters during lift off and to show how water temperature affects how quickly sugar dissolves. However, they tend to apply only a narrow range of numeracy skills in their work across the curriculum. Many pupils develop their thinking and problem-solving skills well through their project work.

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils make good progress in developing their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. In the foundation phase, pupils use various programs competently to present information and to create images. For example, they show the results of their investigation into which materials are most waterproof, and use green screen technology to present their version of 'The Gruffalo'. In key stage 2, pupils use a range of educational and commercial software confidently to communicate their work and to present data. For example, they make a multi-media presentation about the Tudors and use formulae in a spreadsheet to calculate the number of boys and girls in the school. They use coding skills competently to create maze games.

Through the school, many pupils make good progress in learning the Welsh language. In the foundation phase, they practise sentence patterns in purposeful situations, asking one another how they feel, then presenting their findings in a pictogram. When playing bingo games, they learn the names of colours, clothes and foods. However, pupils in the foundation phase rarely read or write in Welsh. In key stage 2, most pupils make good progress in Welsh. They use an expanding vocabulary to write entertaining dialogues about their favourite television programmes. A majority of pupils write at length when describing their leisure activities, using the past tense appropriately. Overall, standards of writing in Welsh are high. Most pupils speak clearly in Welsh and engage in simple conversations.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Nearly all pupils know the importance of making healthy choices when eating and drinking. They take part in a wide range of physical activities throughout the day and in after-school clubs, such as football. Nearly all pupils behave responsibly in lessons and around the school. They have a very good understanding of the need to show respect and consideration for others and are very well-mannered. Most pupils understand well how to keep themselves safe, including when online, and where to go should they have any concerns.

Most pupils readily take on leadership responsibilities, such as when older pupils become playground leaders and care very well for younger pupils at break times. Nearly all pupils show a high level of respect and tolerance towards each other. For example, they wait their turn patiently when using the outdoor play equipment and encourage less confident pupils to join their games. Most pupils have a good understanding of themselves as ethically informed citizens. For example, they embrace the school's values to develop their awareness of their rights and the importance of being fair and treating others equally. Pupils' active involvement in environmental sustainability is a particular strength of the school. For example, many of their ideas of how to recycle kitchen waste have led to improvements in local authority's procedures. Older pupils show a good understanding of how to be assertive in order to stay safe through the anti-bullying posters they make using ICT.

Many pupils benefit from the school's regular mindfulness sessions. Pupils learn relaxation techniques that help them manage stressful situations more easily. Nearly all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours towards their learning. They are eager to come to school, enjoy learning, and many participate in valuable extra-curricular clubs, such as the popular Welsh club. Nearly all engage confidently with new and unfamiliar experiences. For example, the youngest pupils explore the woodland area to hunt for the Gruffalo and older pupils learn how to administer first aid. Most pupils have a highly enthusiastic approach to their work, settling quickly and concentrating well for increasingly longer periods of time to complete tasks as they progress through the school. Nearly all pupils work confidently, individually and in groups, and respect the contributions of others. For example, older pupils adopt the roles of chair, researcher or scribe when sorting criteria for selecting astronauts for their space project.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and punctually. Over the past three years, the attendance percentage has increased gradually and the number of persistent absences has steadily decreased.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

The overall quality of teaching is good. All teachers have up-to-date knowledge of the subjects they teach and of emerging trends in curriculum development. For example, teachers are anticipating forthcoming curriculum reforms in their planning, including the digital competence framework. They provide interesting lessons that motivate pupils to engage well with their learning.

All members of staff have high expectations of pupils and they challenge all pupils to achieve as well as they are able. They ensure that all pupils know what the learning objective for each lesson is and explain clearly the steps that they need to take to be successful. Most teachers use open-ended questioning well. This ensures that pupils receive strong encouragement to use their thinking skills before giving considered answers.

All staff have positive working relationships with their pupils and manage their behaviour well. They give helpful feedback to pupils during lessons. This enables pupils to know what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers set individual targets for pupils effectively. In the best examples of written feedback, teachers' comments refer to pupils' success in meeting the lesson's learning objective and their

progress towards meeting their targets. Nearly all teachers involve pupils in evaluating their own work as well as that of other pupils. Staff measure pupils' progress with a suitably balanced range of tests and assessments and use an electronic tracking system to check that pupils are making suitable progress.

The curriculum in the foundation phase and key stage 2 is well organised to meet the needs and interests of most pupils. For example, in the foundation phase, teachers make imaginative use of a range of texts to motivate and engage pupils enthusiastically in their learning. A good example of this is the Gruffalo hunt that takes place in the foundation phase and which culminates in taking the Gruffalo on a trip to a mountain ranch in Caerphilly. Nearly all pupils have a clear role in planning the direction of the topics to match their interests. As a result, learning is purposeful and engaging for the pupils. For example, during their topic on heroes in Year 1 and Year 2, pupils visited the Pencoed fire station because they had an interest in the fire service as part of the connection with heroism. All teachers plan well to meet the differing needs of the pupils, particularly in reading.

The school adheres to the principles of the foundation phase effectively. Access to the outdoor areas, including regular visits to Brynna Woods, ensures that many pupils benefit from interesting and stimulating activities. Many teachers and teaching assistants provide effective directed, enhanced and continuous activities. These activities include beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop independence in role play, and to build and practise their physical skills. This helps to develop pupils who have positive attitudes towards learning and who persevere for extended periods.

Many teachers plan collaboratively in parallel classes enabling them to share expertise and ensure that pupils' experiences are consistently rewarding. In the best examples, the planned activities are consistent across classes and provide the pupils with exciting, purposeful lessons. However, this is not consistent practice in all classes and, as a result, a minority of pupils do not benefit from the same consistently high level of provision as in other classes.

The school is proactive in making links with other schools to broaden pupils' knowledge and experiences from around the world. Good examples of this are when staff from the school visited schools in Romania and Nepal. The links with the school in Nepal resulted in a member of that community visiting Brynnau. Following this visit, the pupils raised money to help rebuild the school in Nepal after an earthquake.

Nearly all teachers plan interesting activities that allow for the highly successful application of literacy skills. In nearly all lessons, pupils have regular opportunities to develop their literacy skills, most notably in speaking and reading. Staff work conscientiously to develop pupils' writing skills. Teachers plan mathematics lessons well. However, opportunities for pupils to use mathematical skills across the curriculum are less well developed.

Provision for teaching the Welsh language is good. Pupils have regular opportunities to read, write, talk and sing in Welsh. Teachers develop pupils' knowledge of Wales well through local and national history topics and through studying Welsh events and sporting personalities. The school participates in a wide range of events, including the local carnival, that promote the history of the local area and the wider history of Wales effectively.

Staff teach ICT skills well in discrete lessons. Once taught, pupils apply these skills successfully across the curriculum in a range of activities. This allows the pupils to develop their topic work to a greater depth. Many pupils are familiar with and use confidently a wide range of software on both tablet and desktop computers. The school is making good progress towards meeting the requirements of the digital competency framework.

### **Care, support and guidance: Excellent**

All staff track the progress and wellbeing of individual pupils rigorously and, as a result, nearly all pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Sound assessment systems include detailed tracking procedures and regular pupil progress meetings. Senior leaders analyse teachers' assessments and the outcomes of all tests carefully to measure pupils' progress and ensure they receive appropriate challenge and support. The school has a good track record of tackling robustly the underachievement of specific groups of learners, such as vulnerable and more able pupils. For example, recent identification of boys' relative underperformance in literacy has led to positive changes in teaching and provision in order to address the issue successfully. These effective whole-school assessment processes have a very positive impact on the standards pupils achieve.

Arrangements for identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with additional learning needs are highly effective. Led by an experienced additional learning needs co-ordinator, skilled support assistants work very well with teachers to track the progress of these pupils and implement effective support when necessary. Effective co-operation with specialist agencies ensures that all pupils receive very successful support. As a result, nearly all pupils with additional learning needs make good progress towards their agreed targets.

A well-planned personal and social education curriculum supports the emotional and social development of nearly all pupils and their families successfully. Many pupils benefit from the school's approach to mindfulness, which helps them to cope more easily with stressful situations in and outside school. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to develop a thorough understanding of how to eat and drink healthily, and the importance of being active. For example, all pupils learn about the benefits of being outdoors in the school's allotments and woodlands, and through forest school activities. As a result, most pupils can talk confidently about how to be healthy and they feel happy, safe and eager to come to school.

Nearly all pupils have opportunities to contribute purposefully to the local and wider community, for example by participating in the annual village carnival and playing a trumpet fanfare in the eisteddfod.

There are a number of valuable pupil groups, such as the digital leaders, who provide good opportunities for all pupils to take on responsibilities and become active citizens. A noteworthy feature is the school council's work, which effectively develops pupils' leadership skills and influences decisions about school life, such as changes to the school merit system. All pupils have worthwhile opportunities to influence what and how they learn.

All staff are positive role models and the productive relationships between all staff and pupils are a strength of the school. Partnerships with parents have a positive impact on nearly all pupils' learning and wellbeing. For example, many parents attend school to enjoy a good range of interesting and purposeful activities with their children, such as cookery and exercise classes.

The school helps all pupils to understand about equality and diversity, and the need to develop tolerance and an awareness of their human rights effectively. Sound processes are in place to address any incidents of bullying and a culture of care is clearly evident around the school.

There are many opportunities to enable all pupils to develop secure values and to develop their own spiritual and ethical beliefs. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about the different morals, beliefs and religions of others, such as well-planned daily acts of collective worship. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to engage with the creative arts, through the curriculum and in after-school clubs. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher is a dynamic, positive role model and shares her clear vision for the future of the school among all staff and governors successfully. There is a high level of mutual trust and respect among staff and all stakeholders work together as a close team in striving to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils. Managers and leaders at all levels carry out their roles purposefully and effectively. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. All members of the school community have opportunities to contribute to the self-evaluation process. They gather information from rigorous and extensive self-evaluation processes, such as the scrutiny of books, lesson observations and the analysis of performance data, to identify relevant priorities. These inform the school improvement plan which sets out a clear strategic direction for the school and contains clearly measurable success criteria, timescales and costings.

All staff and governor meetings are organised efficiently and focus appropriately on school improvement priorities. Governors have a strong and effective partnership with the leadership team. They use their broad range of experience effectively to challenge and support the school. The recently improved links between governors and staff enable them to learn more about the standards that pupils achieve and the school's curricular provision. As a result, their capacity to support and challenge the school to improve is more secure.

Leaders have created a strong culture and ethos that supports the professional learning of all staff. The school has effective procedures for managing the performance of all staff, which lead to the setting of relevant personal targets that relate directly to the school and national priorities. When the procedures identify further training needs, the school makes appropriate arrangements. The school is successfully establishing itself as a professional learning community and reaches out well to other schools in Wales to assist them in improving their provision.

Members of staff in the foundation phase lead training within the local consortium on many aspects of good practice in an alliance with other schools. This has been very effective in developing teachers' expertise and enhancing their practice. For example, teachers have improved the provision for the application of literacy skills across the curriculum and, as a result, the standard of pupils' literacy skills has improved. The school also has specific, mutually beneficial links with four other primary schools in the regional consortium, which have extended the leadership capacity of staff other than senior leaders.

Governors and senior leaders manage the school's finances effectively and ensure that the school's priorities receive appropriate funding, while keeping reserves within recommended limits. They maintain the accommodation to a high standard, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning and wellbeing. The school makes very good use of the outdoor environment. For example, pupils supply the kitchen with vegetables from the allotment. They benefit from using the woodland and forest school where they engage in activities that encourage curiosity, creativity and imagination. The school uses funds from the pupil development grant to provide additional support for pupils who are eligible for free school meals. This has improved the literacy and numeracy skills of those pupils.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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

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

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

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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

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