



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

A report on

**Creunant Primary School
School Road
Crynant
Neath
SA10 8NS**

Date of inspection: October 2017

by

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

About Creunant Primary School

Creunant Primary School is in the village of Crynant in the Dulais Valley in Neath Port Talbot. There are 125 pupils on roll, including 18 part-time nursery pupils. There are two single-age and four mixed-age classes. Nearly all pupils come from the local area.

The rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is 13%. This is lower than the Wales average of 19%. The school states that around 16% of pupils are on the additional learning needs register. This is lower than the Wales average of 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special education needs. Nearly all pupils are white British. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language and no pupils speak Welsh at home. The local authority cares for a very few pupils.

The school was last inspected in October 2010. The headteacher, who was previously the deputy headteacher, took up her post in January 2017. She was the acting headteacher from January 2016.

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

The school is a nurturing community where staff value and care for pupils very well. Strong working relationships help pupils to build their confidence and to learn well. Nearly all pupils are proud of their school and the work they complete. The school has recently experienced a high level of teacher turnover and this has contributed to uneven pupil progress. The new staff team is working well together to address inconsistencies in provision and the new monitoring arrangements have helped to improve aspects of teaching, for example the quality of feedback to pupils. However, these arrangements are in the early stages of implementation and do not currently ensure that all pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement or develop their skills systematically as they move through the school.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' ability to write at length
- R2 Improve pupils' ability to use their numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- R3 Ensure that meetings and evaluation activities focus on first-hand evidence and lead to clear action points that staff implement consistently
- R4 Improve the quality of teaching by sharing the best practice in teaching more effectively
- R5 Ensure that all staff implement agreed plans so that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum and opportunities to develop and apply their skills systematically as they move through the school

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

A majority of pupils start school with language and number skills below those expected for their age. Many pupils achieve the expected levels by the time they leave Year 6. However, pupils' progress and standards of achievement as they move through the school are too variable and this means that pupils do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable. Most pupils identified as having additional learning needs make effective progress towards meeting the targets identified in their individual education plans.

Most pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well. In the foundation phase, pupils develop their vocabulary and begin to talk to adults and each other using longer phrases and sentences. They enjoy experimenting with language, particularly when involved in imaginative play. For example, pupils in reception and Year 1 play collaboratively when role-playing as the vet and receptionist in their veterinary surgery. Year 2 pupils enjoy being pirates in their role-play area and talk to each other using in-character language. In these situations, pupils begin to build appropriately on the contributions of other pupils. Pupils' confidence in speaking to a range of audiences grows as they mature and many pupils offer their opinions and well-reasoned arguments by the end of key stage 2. Pupils in Year 6 take part confidently in dramatisations in front of the whole school to explain initiatives, such as the buddy system.

Pupils make steady progress in developing their reading skills. In Year 2, pupils that are more able begin to read with fluency and start to use expression. These pupils use a range of strategies to work out new words and can discuss the characters in the story. Readers that are more hesitant build up their sight vocabulary and their knowledge of sounds and words appropriately. The programme to develop foundation phase and lower key stage 2 pupils' knowledge of reading strategies is helping to improve pupils' standards. However, the weaknesses in provision in a very few classes in key stage 2 mean that a minority of pupils do not develop their ability to read for meaning well enough. Pupils in the oldest class develop a useful range of higher-order reading skills. For example, more able Year 6 pupils justify their opinions by using extracts from a text appropriately and talk about how authors have combined fiction and real-life events.

Pupils' progress in developing their writing skills in English lessons and across the curriculum is uneven. In the foundation phase, pupils begin to write for a small range of purposes and they develop their knowledge of sentence structures. Across the school, most pupils make solid progress in developing their spelling skills. However, in the foundation phase and in many key stage 2 classes, pupils do not write well enough at length and this limits the development of their ideas in writing and the range of their word choices. In the oldest class, pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. They make effective use of redrafting and editing techniques to improve their pieces of work. For example, they add interesting vocabulary to describe situations and characters better. Pupils in this class improve the presentation of their work effectively.

In mathematics lessons, many pupils make worthwhile progress in developing their number skills. In Year 2, many begin to understand place value in two-digit numbers and can order numbers confidently to 100. More able pupils begin to understand the importance of measuring accurately and checking their work. Pupils take part enthusiastically in problem-solving activities, for example when using a range of measuring equipment to find the length of the gold chain in the pirate's treasure chest. Pupils in Year 6 use their mathematical skills well to make reasonable estimates and to analyse data, for example when they calculate which material makes the best insulator for animal homes. However, in many classes, pupils do not apply their numeracy skills suitably or at an appropriate level across the curriculum.

In ICT lessons, pupils develop a sound range of skills across many areas of ICT. Pupils in the foundation phase know how to add a picture to text and they log on to HWB independently to access programmes. In key stage 2, pupils search the internet for information and know how to import text and illustrations into their electronic presentations. They are beginning to use simple databases and coding techniques. Pupils do not yet apply their ICT skills comprehensively across the curriculum.

Many foundation phase pupils make good progress in developing their Welsh speaking skills. Many pupils in nursery and reception can count to 10 in Welsh and move easily between stating an object's colour in both Welsh and English. Many respond appropriately to simple instructions and questions. Year 2 pupils take part enthusiastically in dialogues about themselves and the weather. A few older pupils engage confidently in Welsh conversations using a range of learnt sentence patterns in both the past and present tense. These pupils can discuss the content of the Welsh texts they read well. They produce written dialogues of a good standard, for example when pretending to be passengers on The Titanic and meeting fellow voyagers for the first time. However, across key stage 2, pupils' standards in Welsh do not progress evenly enough across all classes.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils are proud of their school and the work they complete. Many concentrate well in classes in line with their age and stage of development. Pupils enjoy the topics they study and they work successfully in groups and pairs. Many demonstrate strong co-operative and collaborative skills. They listen well to the contributions of others and share their ideas willingly, for example when deciding how to carry out an investigation into how quickly jelly will dissolve in different temperatures of water.

The working relationships between adults and pupils are strong. This makes pupils feel valued and encourages them to take part in all school activities. Year 6 pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities and this helps them to become more responsible and to contribute effectively to the wider work of the school. For example, the fundraiser group organises events such as coffee mornings and fetes to raise money for charities and the school.

Nearly all pupils know how to keep themselves safe both in school and online. Pupils show high levels of care and respect for each other. Nearly all pupils behave well and are polite and courteous. Most pupils know staff they can approach if they have

worries or are upset. Playground buddies support other pupils effectively at lunch and break times and this helps pupils to settle any minor disagreements among themselves.

Nearly all pupils take part enthusiastically in physical activities. They enjoy their physical education lessons and appreciate the opportunity they have to take part in the after-school sports club. Pupils understand the importance of taking regular exercise, keeping themselves healthy and eating a balanced diet. For example, Year 6 prefects monitor break time snacks and encourage other pupils to make healthy choices.

Pupils that are vulnerable and in need of additional support benefit greatly from the school's nurture provision. This provision helps them to manage their feelings and behaviour and raises their levels of confidence and self-esteem significantly.

Most pupils are aware of the importance of attending school regularly and punctually. Pupils respond well to the reward system that encourages them to attend regularly. Older pupils recently wrote to local companies to ask for prizes so they could continue to reward good attendance. Over the last few years, there has been a general trend of improvement in pupils' attendance. However, a few pupils are regularly late for school.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

A minority of teaching in the school is exceptionally strong. These teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve and engage all pupils effectively in improving their learning. This is reflected in the standards that pupils achieve in these classes. However, the quality of teaching varies too much from class to class. As a result, the overall quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement.

Teachers have effective working relationships with pupils and employ positive behaviour management strategies that help them to settle quickly to their tasks. Most engage pupils' interest well by providing worthwhile opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively on tasks. Most teachers encourage pupils to recall previous knowledge and build appropriately on this prior learning. A few teachers ask questions that promote pupils' thinking skills effectively and encourage their independent learning. However, in a minority of classes, the pace of learning is too slow and adults dominate the talk in the classroom. This means that pupils have too few opportunities to complete tasks and to contribute to lessons.

Feedback to pupils is developing well. Teachers now use the school's feedback policy consistently and give pupils 'action time' so they can respond to comments on how to improve their work. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about how they use the lesson's success criteria to judge what they and other pupils have achieved and to provide suggestions on how to make further improvements.

In the foundation phase, teachers have developed areas in their classrooms that provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to develop their skills across all areas of learning. Pupils enjoy completing the independent challenges in these areas. For example, pupils in Year 2 draw and add detail to their pirate pictures and attempt to create a boat that floats. Teachers are beginning to make more use of outdoor

areas. Key stage 2 pupils have appropriate opportunities to contribute their ideas at the start of topics. The topics chosen capture pupils' interests well and motivate them to learn in school and through their fortnightly homework projects. Many teachers make good use of visitors and visits to enhance pupils' understanding and enjoyment. For example, the local vet has come to school to talk to pupils in reception and Year 1 about her job, and upper key stage 2 pupils have visited the Egypt Centre in Swansea University as part of their project on pharaohs.

The school has appropriate plans in place to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that helps pupils to develop their subject specific skills and their literacy and numeracy skills. However, not all teachers follow these plans well enough to ensure that all pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise and consolidate their reading, writing and number skills in all curriculum areas. The way the school organises its day means that pupils do not always receive the recommended amount of teaching time. These factors contribute to the inconsistent progress that pupils make.

The recently introduced lesson carousel in key stage 2 uses teachers' skills and expertise well. These sessions have improved pupils' opportunities to develop their physical, musical and ICT skills. As a result, pupils now benefit from learning an appropriate range of ICT skills. However, planning for pupils to use their ICT skills outside of these designated lessons is at an early stage of development.

Most staff promote the use of the Welsh language well throughout the school day and provide good role models for pupils in their regular use of the language for instructions and everyday matters. The implementation of the recently purchased scheme is improving pupils' confidence in using the Welsh language. Pupils have beneficial opportunities to learn about the culture of Wales through whole-school activities and celebrations. The school provides a few opportunities for pupils to explore the Welsh dimension as part of their curriculum studies.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has appropriate systems for identifying and tracking pupil progress. These include a broad range of standardised assessments. Leaders analyse assessment outcomes well to inform the composition of catch-up groups and to identify pupils in need of additional support. Well-trained staff deliver the range of intervention programmes effectively and this helps targeted pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills successfully. Pupils with individual education plans have suitable targets that the school reviews and updates regularly.

There are beneficial programmes to support vulnerable pupils, including those with emotional and behavioural needs. The school runs a nurture provision for selected pupils. This provision raises pupils' self-esteem and confidence significantly and helps the targeted pupils to engage better in school life.

The school provides useful opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of eating healthily and exercising frequently. Regular opportunities for physical education lessons and a broad range of after-school sports clubs, for example football and netball, help improve pupils' fitness levels.

The school teaches pupils how to stay safe online. Sessions with the police liaison officer that cover areas such as dealing with peer pressure and road safety make pupils aware of how to keep themselves safe. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school encourages pupils to voice their opinion about areas of school life effectively. For example, at least every term, Year 6 pupils lead school council events where the whole school has the opportunity to discuss what they think about school and explore topics such as children's rights. Pupils benefit from taking part in a good range of groups and committees that encourage them to take responsibility, for example as eco warriors and digital leaders.

Pupils have worthwhile opportunities to learn about spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. For example, older pupils have visited the local food bank, which has taught them about social responsibility and the importance of caring for other people. Visitors from local chapels and churches contribute effectively to collective worship and help pupils to reflect on moral and spiritual ideas. Whole-school singing and pupil involvement in the act of collective worship is a particular strength of the school.

The school has useful links with the local community. Pupils visit shops, theatres and museums in the area, which enhances their knowledge and experience. For example, pupils have taken part in a Roald Dahl project and exhibited their work in a local theatre.

The school provides a suitable range of learning experiences to help pupils engage with the creative arts and cultural activities, for example through participating in the school choir, weekly music lessons and in whole-school and class productions.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The headteacher places inclusivity at the centre of her vision for the school. She shares this vision effectively with all staff and governors. After a period of instability where there were significant changes in staffing and a high teacher turnover, the school is now more settled and has a full complement of permanent staff. The headteacher receives purposeful support from her staff who work well together to ensure that the school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Senior leaders work well together and meet regularly. However, their meetings do not always lead to clear action points that ensure consistent improvement across the school.

Governors are supportive of the school's work and members bring a wide range of skills and experience to their role. They know their responsibilities well and are beginning to act as critical friends to challenge the school's performance. By considering relevant performance data, discussions with the headteacher and visits to the school, they have a sound understanding of how the school is performing, for example in comparison with similar schools.

The school provides a purposeful range of relevant and beneficial professional development opportunities for staff. Performance management procedures are effective in producing suitable targets for teachers that link well to the school development priorities. Teachers appreciate the opportunities they have to develop their skills. For example one teacher has recently completed a sabbatical to develop

her Welsh language skills. Staff regularly share their professional learning with colleagues during staff meetings, for example on how to use Hwb resources to develop pupils' ICT skills. However, teachers have few opportunities to visit each other's classes or to monitor the impact of agreed initiatives on pupils' learning and their own practice. This has contributed to a lack of consistency in teaching and learning across the school.

The school's self-evaluation processes identify suitable strengths and most areas for improvement, such as developing pupils' writing skills. However, until recently, the school's monitoring activities were not systematic enough and did not gather enough first-hand evidence to measure progress accurately over time. A detailed programme for monitoring is now in place and is beginning to have a positive impact. For example, the recent monitoring of the implementation of the school's feedback policy has led to the consistent use of 'action time' at the beginning of lessons.

The current school improvement plan identifies a manageable number of areas for improvement that focus well on raising standards and improving provision for pupils. Priorities in the plan contain measurable targets linked to purposeful actions and generally suitable timescales.

The school manages its resources well. It has a suitable number of staff to meet the needs of pupils and to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum. Leaders deploy teachers and support staff effectively, making good use of their individual skills and expertise. The school uses its budget well to address key priorities for improvement. For example, the recent investment in a new phonics programme is improving many pupils' reading skills. Governors monitor spending regularly to ensure that the school uses its finances effectively to raise standards. The school uses the pupil development grant effectively to support pupils eligible for free school meals, for example by supporting pupils to receive music tuition and attend residential trips.

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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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