



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

**A report on**

**Fairfield Primary School  
Dryden Road  
Penarth  
CF64 2RT**

**Date of inspection: February 2018**

**by**

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

## About Fairfield Primary School

Fairfield Community Primary School is in Penarth in the Vale of Glamorgan local authority. There are 321 pupils on roll between the ages of three and eleven, including nine who attend the newly-opened nursery on a part-time basis.

Pupils are taught in 11 classes, several of which are for pupils from different year groups. The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is 12%, which is below the national average (19%). The school identifies that around 13% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is below the national average (22%).

Pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The majority are of white British ethnicity and most come from homes where English is the main language. A few pupils speak English as an additional language and a very few pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2008. The school was last inspected in November 2010.

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 strong and cohesive community where pupils feel safe and valued. All staff work effectively together and support pupils' wellbeing and personal development well. The school's clear focus on providing a purposeful learning experience through its values-based curriculum is effective in ensuring that nearly all pupils develop positive attitudes, behave well and show respect for other members of the school community.

All staff show a good understanding of the individual needs of pupils and provide learning activities that challenge pupils well. Teachers make good use of visits and extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum and motivate pupils. As a result, most pupils engage enthusiastically in their learning and make good progress as they move through the school. Leaders show a clear determination to securing pupils' progress and improving provision. The school has a good track record of making improvements, for example, in raising the standard of pupils' writing and providing stimulating opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors. Leaders make good use of professional development to strengthen the skills of all staff, particularly in meeting the needs of individual pupils. As a result, the care and guidance provided by staff to all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, support them well.

<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>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Ensure that self-evaluation processes clearly identify the specific aspects that require improvement
- R2 Ensure that teachers use questioning effectively to encourage all pupils to develop their thinking fully
- R3 Provide clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their written work and sufficient opportunity to make the required changes
- R4 Improve overall rates of attendance

## **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 skills and understanding at about the level expected for their age. Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well by the end of key stage 2.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. In the foundation phase, most speak clearly and confidently using a suitable range of vocabulary. For example, pupils in the reception class volunteer their ideas for describing a dragon enthusiastically and suggest imaginative word choices that match the picture well. By Year 2, most pupils listen with sustained concentration and take turns when discussing their ideas with partners. In key stage 2, most pupils listen attentively and respond thoughtfully to the views of others. For example, Year 4 pupils express reasoned opinions about how best to respond to online comments during a discussion about e-safety. By Year 6, most pupils adapt their speech for different purposes successfully, such as to present to an audience during a whole-school assembly.

Many pupils across the school use Welsh greetings readily and enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes in Welsh. In key stage 2, pupils develop their skill in using spoken Welsh effectively. They respond confidently to questions about their personal experience, giving extended answers that include relevant details. By Year 6, more able pupils make good use of familiar patterns and phrases to sustain an improvised conversation successfully.

Overall, most pupils make good progress in reading. In the foundation phase, pupils develop their knowledge of letter sounds quickly. Most pupils in the reception class use this well to sound out simple words independently. By Year 2, most pupils read with increasing fluency, using punctuation correctly to add emphasis and expression. In key stage 2, most pupils read a range of fiction and non-fiction texts confidently. They show effective comprehension skills and retrieve specific information efficiently, for instance when researching facts about Queen Victoria. They show a good understanding of the plot of a story and use familiar strategies to tackle words they do not know. By Year 6, many pupils read with enjoyment. They talk enthusiastically about their choice of book and can explain the appeal of particular authors and stories clearly.

By Year 2, most pupils enjoy sharing Welsh texts in class and choose simple stories to read in the cornel cymraeg. Most pupils in key stage 2 read age-appropriate texts in Welsh accurately. For example, pupils in Year 4 read a poem together about a robot that tidies up a child's bedroom. They use rhythm and expression well to enliven their reading and show a good understanding of vocabulary. By Year 6, many pupils read a longer text with familiar patterns successfully. They show good pronunciation of Welsh letter sounds and answer questions confidently by referring to the story, for example to work out when Draciwla eats his lunch.

Most pupils develop as capable writers in English and Welsh as they move through the school. Most pupils in the reception class show good pencil control and begin to develop correct letter formation at an early stage. They use finger spaces, capital letters and full stops correctly, for example, to write sentences independently about a dragon who visited the school. By Year 2, pupils sustain their writing well and most produce extended pieces in a suitable variety of styles, for example, to recount the events of the Gunpowder Plot and to describe characters and settings for a creative story retelling. In key stage 2, most pupils write well independently for a wide range of interesting purposes across the curriculum, for example to produce biographies of important historical figures and persuasive letters in the role of a ghost seeking employment in Cardiff Castle. They organise their writing coherently, using paragraphs where appropriate, and they show a sound understanding of grammar and punctuation. Many pupils present their work neatly and use a fluent cursive handwriting style.

Most pupils make good progress in writing Welsh. In Year 2, pupils write short sentences using patterns and vocabulary linked to their topic work, for instance, to describe the clothes worn by a fire fighter as part of their project on the Fire of London. By Year 6, most pupils write longer descriptions in the first person to recount personal information, including details of their family and life outside school. Their writing is generally grammatically correct and spelling is accurate. They use a suitable range of vocabulary and patterns which reflect the spoken Welsh they learn in lessons.

Most pupils develop good numeracy skills. Many younger pupils in the foundation phase count reliably to 10 or beyond and write simple number sentences using addition when playing outdoors with playground dice. By Year 2, most pupils use their measuring skills well to weigh ingredients and they tell the time accurately. Most enjoy tackling tasks and select more challenging word problems when using their times tables to divide quantities. Most pupils in key stage 2 develop a strong understanding of number value and use a wide range of strategies to solve mathematical problems efficiently. By Year 6, most pupils calculate confidently and show a high level of mental agility in using numbers. They use their numeracy skills in purposeful contexts successfully. For example, they measure the height and lung capacity of other pupils accurately and plot this information on a graph to determine if these factors are linked. They use their analysis to draw appropriate conclusions.

Most pupils develop their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) well. In Year 1, most pupils use the internet independently to research topics, such as the Fire of London, and produce pictograms to present the results of a class survey about their favourite fairy tale character. By Year 2, nearly all pupils use a simple coding application confidently and cut and paste photos to combine with text. Most pupils build on these skills successfully in key stage 2. For example, many pupils in Year 5 apply their knowledge of coding to design a treasure hunt game for pirates. By Year 6, most pupils use their ICT skills independently for a wide range of purposes across the curriculum, including to create graphs, send emails and write blogs for others to read. For example, they create entertaining videos to promote a food product as part of a class topic on potions.

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

Nearly all pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning. Most are enthusiastic about the topics they study and are keen to engage with activities during lessons. Nearly all pupils show a high degree of respect for each other and for adults. They co-operate effectively and demonstrate courtesy when working in groups by taking turns and sharing resources fairly.

All pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They move readily between different activities and settle quickly to focus on tasks. Most pupils sustain their concentration well. They show persistence in their learning and use strategies independently to deal successfully with most difficulties they encounter.

All pupils feel safe in school. They feel strongly that all staff treat them with respect and show a high degree of concern for their wellbeing. As a result, they have confidence that adults deal well with any concerns they express. For example, pupils use their class worry boxes readily to share any difficulties or worries they are facing. Nearly all pupils have a suitable understanding of how to keep safe online. The work of pupils acting as the school's digital leaders supports this well.

Nearly all pupils show a strong understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. For example, most pupils identify a wide range of healthy foods and know which foods and drinks to have only occasionally as a treat. Nearly all pupils enjoy the many opportunities the school provides to take part in physical activity. They understand the benefit of exercise in helping them to stay fit. Many pupils make use of the wide variety of playground games and the school's extensive grounds to take part in physical activity with friends at break times. For instance, many pupils across the school participate enthusiastically in skipping and in the daily zumba sessions run by adults and Year 6 pupils during the lunch time break. Many pupils attend the popular after-school clubs and develop their skills in a suitable range of sporting activities.

Pupils have a clear voice in the school through the many leadership groups they undertake. These are influential in shaping the school's provision and contribute purposefully to improving the learning experiences enjoyed by pupils. For example, the Sgwad Cymraeg has successfully raised the Welsh profile of the school by introducing incentives to promote the use of spoken Welsh by pupils. Through their participation in these leadership groups, pupils support one another to develop as well-informed members of a cohesive school community. For example, pupils have contributed to improving pupils' wellbeing by planning and delivering events such as the 'Healthy Heroes' week and taking forward the school's anti-bullying initiative.

Most pupils are aware of the importance of attending school regularly and punctually. As a result of the school's actions, the attendance rates of specific groups of pupils have begun to improve recently. However, this has not had time to impact on improving overall rates of attendance when compared to similar schools.

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

Overall, teaching in the school is good. Nearly all teachers have very good working relationships with pupils. They create a supportive and purposeful classroom atmosphere that ensures pupils are attentive and keen to learn. In lessons, nearly all teachers use well-defined learning objectives and success criteria so that pupils know clearly what teachers expect of them.

Nearly all teachers match activities to the needs of all pupils successfully, including those with additional learning needs. They use a broad range of teaching strategies to engage pupils well. For example, in Year 6, teachers use an online visual resource effectively to stimulate pupils' imaginative story writing. Nearly all teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Support staff lead small groups effectively and contribute purposefully to the progress made by pupils in lessons. For example, they stimulate younger pupils to act out verbs in the outdoor environment.

Across the school, all teachers plan effectively for the development of pupils' literacy and ICT skills within subject lessons and across the curriculum. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils build their skills progressively as they move through the school. Planning for the application of numeracy skills outside of mathematics lessons is less well developed. In the foundation phase, staff plan a suitable range of activities that provide valuable opportunities for pupils to investigate, role-play and practise their physical skills.

Most teachers mark and assess pupils' work effectively. Many are beginning to use prompts to identify next steps for pupils' learning, in line with the recently introduced marking policy. However, teachers do not always identify clearly enough what pupils need to do to improve their written work or provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to respond appropriately. As a result, they do not always challenge pupils enough to improve the quality of their written work fully.

Most teachers use questioning appropriately to assess pupils' recall of previous learning. However, teachers do not always exploit opportunities to ask more open questions that stimulate discussion and encourage pupils to make more thoughtful responses.

The school structures its curriculum effectively around a broad range of topics that interest and engage pupils well. As a result, most pupils respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment to the learning experiences on offer. For example, older pupils enjoy taking part in an annual Shakespeare festival and recently performed 'The Winter's Tale' in a local theatre. Teachers enhance the curriculum with a broad variety of themed weeks that enrich pupils' learning successfully. For example, a healthy living week provides purposeful opportunities for pupils and the wider school community to explore how lifestyle choices affect individual wellbeing.

Teachers provide stimulating opportunities for pupils to visit areas of interest in the locality and invite engaging visitors into school to support pupils' learning, for example through a visit by the Welsh Hawking Centre to extend pupils' understanding of flight. The curriculum promotes Welsh culture successfully and provides a clear focus on Welsh traditions and places of historic interest. Teachers use these very effectively as a stimulus for pupils' writing, for example, to inspire Year 2 pupils who produce lively recounts of their visit to the National Museum of History at St Fagans. The quality of the provision and planning to develop pupils' Welsh language skills is effective.

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

The school is a caring community, where staff know pupils' personal strengths and areas for development well. Pupils have many worthwhile opportunities to develop their personal and social skills. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well in lessons and

around the school, and pupils are keen to earn recognition for their good behaviour through the recently-implemented behaviour reward scheme.

Teachers make effective use of assemblies and acts of collective worship that enable pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and values. They provide suitable opportunities in lessons for pupils to learn about different faiths and to develop their understanding of spiritual and ethical issues. All staff support pupils in developing positive attitudes to difference and diversity very effectively. The values-based curriculum ensures that all pupils have a strong awareness of the need to demonstrate fairness, tolerance and respect towards others. As a result, nearly all pupils have a well-developed understanding of equality and their responsibilities as local and global citizens. The school provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to engage in fund-raising events. For example, pupils collect clothes to help others less fortunate than themselves and support local charities, such as the RNLI.

The school tracks and monitors pupils' progress carefully and frequently. Staff use the information effectively to identify those pupils who are falling behind and would benefit from small-group or individual support, for example to improve their skills in literacy.

The school has established productive links with a wide range of outside agencies and uses expert advice effectively to set relevant and specific targets for pupils with special educational needs. The personal profiles linked to pupils who receive support reflect how well the school knows individual pupils and the importance it places on celebrating pupils' successes and improving their wellbeing.

The school communicates effectively with parents, who feel that staff keep them well informed about their child's progress as well as school events and priorities. Parents receive useful information about classroom topics and this helps them to support their child's learning at home appropriately.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of healthy eating and the importance of taking exercise well. It provides many valuable opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities. For example, pupils acting as digital leaders promote online safety effectively and the sports council has improved opportunities for pupils to exercise during break times, using music and dance to promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. The school provides a broad range of extra-curricular activities that pupils attend enthusiastically. For example, staff and external providers run popular clubs for pupils to learn to speak French and Spanish or to develop skills in fencing and singing. These support pupils to develop their interest in other cultures and to improve their physical and creative skills effectively. Teachers plan worthwhile opportunities for the development of pupils' creative skills in lessons, through activities such as role-play and robot building.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding are thorough and give no cause for concern.

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

The headteacher and senior leaders provide strong leadership and display high levels of professional commitment in their roles. Across the senior leadership team there is a good balance of knowledge and skills, which complement each other well. All staff play a significant part in improving the school as members of effective teams.

The headteacher and senior leaders communicate the vision of the school well and there is a high degree of consensus among all staff in delivering the school's values and supporting its caring ethos.

Leaders set out a clear, strategic rationale for the curriculum. For example, the school started to use the digital competency framework before it became statutory in order to ensure its effective implementation.

The senior leadership team has a good track record in making improvements to the school which benefit pupils and improve the standards they achieve. For example, the development of the outdoor area has improved pupils' learning experiences. Leaders also moved quickly and decisively to convert a building that became available into a nursery. The quality of pupils' writing has also improved after changes to provision gave pupils more responsibility in planning their writing, and the focus on improving the attitude of boys to writing has also led to improved written responses by boys.

The governing body is effective and discharges its duties well. Governors understand the school's context, its strengths and priorities for improvement. They are well informed about the standards pupils achieve and support the school well. Individual governors make purposeful visits to school, but this is not part of planned timetable of governor oversight. Governors monitor the finances of the school appropriately to ensure the efficient use of resources.

The school collaborates well with other schools on joint projects to improve provision. For example, staff have worked with local primary schools to improve pupils' perseverance and concentration when facing challenging tasks.

The school's self-evaluation processes take full account of the performance of different groups of pupils and leaders analyse information on pupil performance thoroughly and effectively. Leaders use a wide range of well-planned strategies to monitor how well pupils are progressing. For example, they carry out regular book reviews, lesson observations and learning walks. Leaders identify the school's main strengths and areas for development well. However, self-evaluation does not always pinpoint precisely enough the specific causes of any shortcomings and the most effective ways to drive forward improvement.

Leaders produce comprehensive plans for improvement that link clearly to the broad areas identified in the school's self-evaluation. They plan actions that address national priorities, such as numeracy, literacy and the digital competency framework, suitably. Plans have clear success criteria and identify tasks, personnel and timescales appropriately. However, because self-evaluation processes do not always identify the most valuable actions for improvement, plans do not impact fully on improving key aspects of teaching, such as the quality of questioning and feedback to pupils.

Leaders create a positive, inclusive ethos where all staff develop their skills and expertise appropriately in relation to identified school priorities. The school's performance management procedures ensure that the professional development of staff supports improvements in provision effectively. For example, staff training about autistic spectrum disorders has led to the development of a consistent whole-school approach that meets the needs of identified pupils beneficially.

The headteacher and governing body manage the school's budget effectively. They ensure that spending decisions and broad financial planning link well to the school's strategic priorities. Leaders monitor the use of funds carefully to ensure that the school's budget is used prudently to secure good value for money. The school makes appropriate use of the pupil development grant to support the most vulnerable pupils, for example by providing additional small group teaching to enable these pupils to make good progress in developing their numeracy skills.

## 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.

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](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

© Crown Copyright 2018: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 11/04/2018