



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

A report on

**Greenmeadow Primary School
Graig Road
Greenmeadow
Cwmbran
Torfaen
NP44 5YY**

Date of inspection: October 2017

by

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

About Greenmeadow Primary School

Greenmeadow Primary School is on the outskirts of Cwmbran in Torfaen. Most pupils come from the immediate area around the school.

Pupil numbers have gradually decreased over the last two years, although recently figures show a significant increase. Currently there are 179 pupils on roll, aged from four to eleven. There are two single-age and three mixed-age classes.

English is the predominant language for nearly all pupils. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home. The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 13%, which is below the national average of 19%. The school identifies around 19% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is slightly lower than the national average of 21%. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The local authority looks after a very few pupils.

Following a period of change in leadership, the present headteacher took up her post in April 2017. The school's last inspection was in November 2009.

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 happy and caring community where pupils feel valued as individuals. Many pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points. Many pupils behave well and generally have a positive attitude to their work.

All teachers plan stimulating and engaging learning experiences for pupils. However, the quality of teaching is inconsistent and a minority of teachers do not ensure suitable challenge for more able pupils. Staff often over direct activities and this limits pupils' ability to become confident and independent learners. Teachers in the upper early years' class do not promote foundation phase principles well enough.

The new headteacher is working conscientiously and enthusiastically with staff. She is providing effective leadership and a clear sense of purpose, based on creating a caring, inclusive community for all pupils. The governing body manage school finances proactively but recent changes to school organisation mean that class sizes have increased considerably. This limits teachers' capacity to cater fully for the wide range of needs or ensure that learning proceeds at a fast enough pace.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Plan to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills progressively across the curriculum
- R2 Ensure more effective use of resources to address class size issues
- R3 Improve assessment to ensure that leaders track pupil progress more robustly
- R4 Fully implement foundation phase pedagogy
- R5 Provide greater levels of challenge for more able pupils

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

Many pupils enter the school with skills at or above the level expected for their age. As pupils move through the school, most make suitable progress. Many pupils with additional learning needs make sound progress.

Across the school, most pupils have strong oracy skills. In the foundation phase, most pupils discuss their work effectively using a wide range of vocabulary, for example when discussing mathematical concepts in problem solving activities. Many pupils in key stage 2 respond confidently when answering a range of questions. They use 'think, pair, share' talking partners effectively to generate ideas. By the end of the key stage, nearly all pupils talk with enthusiasm, for instance after their recent visit to a chocolate factory as part of their topic work.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop their reading skills appropriately. They recall the main events in texts and discuss their favourite characters well. Most identify letters and sounds confidently and use appropriate strategies to read unfamiliar words. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils read with expression and fluency and take good notice of punctuation. They gather information successfully from a range of sources and present their findings in a variety of interesting ways.

Many pupils in the foundation phase write to a level appropriate to their ability. They succeed in planning short imaginative stories using suitable sentence structures, but generally the content is limited. As they move through key stage 2, many pupils organise and develop their ideas clearly in a variety of styles. They have a sound understanding of punctuation and use appropriate vocabulary in their writing. By Year 6, nearly all pupils use their writing skills successfully in an extensive range of styles, for example when to evaluate representing stories in different forms. A few pupils who are more able use complex sentence patterns successfully to enhance their work, for example when evaluating and describing techniques used by the artist Andy Warhol. However, a minority of pupils in both key stages do not write to a high enough standard or for a wide enough range of purposes across the curriculum.

Across the school, many pupils have a positive attitude to speaking Welsh in lessons.

Many pupils in the foundation phase make appropriate progress in Welsh. They respond confidently to basic instructions and develop a suitable vocabulary linked closely to daily activities. Many write brief descriptions successfully about what they like and dislike using structured phrases, for example 'Dwi'n hoffi. Dw i ddim yn hoffi'. As they progress through key stage 2, many pupils communicate suitably using a limited vocabulary. Many pupils' reading skills are appropriate and they understand and respond to simple texts. Many pupils use a basic sentences and adjectives well, for example when writing a brief description about themselves and their hobbies. However, most pupils' understanding of their Welsh culture and heritage is underdeveloped.

In the foundation phase, many pupils have a sound understanding of shape, time and money and use them effectively in problem solving activities. A majority of pupils use both written and practical methods accurately to calculate the cost of products and change in a practical activity. By the end of Year 6, most use their numeracy and entrepreneurial skills successfully, for example when planning their ideas for an enterprise product for the summer fair. A few pupils who are more able use their problem solving skills to a high standard, for example when re-designing their sushi restaurant to increase profit margin. However, across the school, a minority of pupils do not apply their number skills consistently at an appropriate level in work across the curriculum.

Most pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately. In the foundation phase, pupils use a suitable range of programmes, for example a data handling program to calculate the perimeter of homes in Chembakolli. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use ICT successfully. They use a range of functions confidently when, for example, creating spreadsheets and databases during an investigation about endangered animals.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement

The school is a calm nurturing environment where nearly all pupils feel safe, secure and valued. Nearly all pupils know who to talk to if they have any concern. They are courteous as they move around the school and are respectful towards adults and peers. Most pupils behave well in class and relate well to each other during break times and lunchtimes.

Many concentrate well in class and engage positively in their tasks. They listen attentively to other pupils' ideas and views and work effectively in pairs and in groups, sharing ideas readily. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils discuss the best way to melt chocolate as part of their science activity. However, in a minority of classes a very few pupils lack focus and concentration. As a result, these pupils become disengaged, make only limited progress and have behaviour issues.

Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 make decisions about their learning experiences, for example their decision to visit a local chocolate factory as part of their class topic 'Scrumdiddlyumptious'. Generally, many pupils across the school have an appropriate understanding of how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve their work. However, a minority of pupils rely heavily on adult support and do not develop fully as confident and independent learners.

Rates of pupil attendance for the last four years place the school consistently in the lower 50% and bottom 25% when compared with similar schools. Arrangements to improve attendance do not engage parents and pupils well enough.

Many pupils have positive attitudes to healthy living and eating. They understand the importance of making healthy choices relating to diet. Nearly all pupils drink water from a water fountain and choose healthy choices at lunchtime. They benefit from an appropriate range of physical activities, for example swimming and physical education lessons.

Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of e-safety and know how to keep safe online. The role of the digital leaders supports this well. Through the work of the eco and school council, 'Criw Cymraeg' and digital leaders, pupils take responsibility for leading important areas of school life and decision making. An example of this is the recent introduction of recycling within the school. This promotes sustainability and environmental awareness well.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Overall, the quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. Nearly all teachers plan interesting learning activities that engage most pupils appropriately. Generally, teachers use questioning effectively to develop pupils' understanding and they encourage pupils to explain their thinking well. In a minority of classes where teaching is highly effective, teachers have high expectations and challenge all pupils, including those who are more able, successfully.

The majority of staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively. However, this is not consistent across the school. Teachers in the early years' classes do not apply the principles of the foundation phase consistently. They do not plan continuous learning provision well enough to enable pupils to develop their skills independently and confidently. Most teachers give supportive feedback about how well pupils achieve, by praising their contributions and ideas. In the best examples, in Year 6, feedback is specific and identifies for pupils how to improve their work and develop their understanding further. As a result, this has an immediate positive effect on pupil progress. Only in a minority of classes do teachers review the success of lessons and adapt the next steps in their planning accordingly. This good practice is not consistent throughout the school, especially at the lower end of key stage 2, where staff often over direct activities. This restricts pupils' ability to work independently.

The curriculum provides a stimulating range of learning experiences for most pupils that reinforces and builds purposefully on their prior learning. The school offers a suitable range of relevant activities that enhance the curriculum well, for example drumming workshops and sporting activities. Generally, a minority of teachers plan appropriate opportunities to develop pupils' thinking skills through a range of topics. However, provision to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills progressively in work across the curriculum is inconsistent.

The school promotes the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension purposefully. Staff encourage pupils to use the Welsh language during lessons and around the school. Regular Welsh lessons and the 'Criw Cymraeg' help pupils to develop their skills in a wider context, for example through playground activities and weekly awards. However, the school does not ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to learn about the culture of Wales through the curriculum.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

The ethos of the school is an open, caring environment where pupils are encouraged to discuss any problems with staff. Staff know their pupils well, and respond sensitively to their social and emotional needs. There are appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and regular exercise through the curriculum and a good variety of extra-curricular activities.

There is a strong working relationship with parents. Recently improved communication strategies, such as the use of a mobile phone app, newsletters, 'Feedback Friday' and the family breakfast club, keep parents well informed about the work of the school. This encourages and supports parents' direct involvement in their child's education.

The school has an appropriate tracking system in place. Teachers use a purposeful range of assessments to identify pupils' strengths and areas for development carefully. Leaders make suitable use of this information to identify and provide appropriate support for specific groups of learners but they do not track the success of interventions for individuals and groups of pupils robustly. As a result, leaders do not challenge underachievement well enough.

A recently introduced range of suitable strategies is raising awareness of the importance of good attendance. For example, through weekly newsletters, attendance displays and certificates. There is effective provision to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school has suitable arrangements in place for pupils with additional learning needs. Pupils contribute to their individual education plans and teachers review these regularly with parents. This encourages parents to take a direct role in their child's learning. Teaching assistants support individuals and groups of pupils effectively. As a result, many targeted pupils make sound progress from their starting points.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of values such as honesty, tolerance and co-operation effectively. The curriculum, daily routines, and acts of collective worship contribute well in developing these aspects.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

In the short time since her appointment, the new headteacher has established a clear strategic direction and has shared this with pupils, staff and parents. The senior leadership team support these values well. The headteacher has begun to implement positive changes such as improving the learning environment, working in greater partnership with parents and promoting positive behaviour. Leaders have begun to address underperformance in teaching and learning and there are detailed plans in place to support staff to improve the quality of their work. This is beginning to have a positive impact on individual classes where teachers have collaborated well with local schools and providers of learning to develop their professional practice. However, these positive strategies are at an early stage of development.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use knowledge from book scrutiny and lesson observations to identify purposeful actions that are included in the school development plan. All members of staff contribute to evaluating the schools' work effectively. As a result, they work successfully as a team to plan for improvements. However, school priorities do not have specific enough timescales and responsibilities for actions and funding arrangements are not clear. This limits their potential impact.

Performance management arrangements ensure that all staff receive regular training and support. However, whole school priorities do not yet link closely to professional development.

Members of the governing body are supportive and have a close working relationship with the school. As a result, they develop appropriate understanding of the school's self-evaluation process and performance. However, they rely too heavily on information from the headteacher and lack first-hand knowledge of the school. As a result, they do not challenge standards robustly enough.

Although the governing body manage finances proactively, recent changes to school organisation mean that class sizes have increased considerably. This limits teachers' capacity to cater fully for the wide range of needs in the class or ensure that learning always proceeds at a fast enough pace. As a result, a minority of pupils do not always make as much progress as they could in lessons.

The school uses the pupil development grant appropriately in order to raise pupils' standards and wellbeing. However, the impact of this support is not analysed or monitored effectively enough.

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:

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