



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

**A report on**

**Hawthorn Primary School  
Hawthorn Road East  
Llandaff North  
CF14 2LR**

**Date of inspection: January 2018**

**by**

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

## About Hawthorn Primary School

Hawthorn Primary School is in Llandaff North in Cardiff. There are currently 270 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11, including 61 children who attend the nursery part-time. There are seven single-age classes from reception to Year 6.

The rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 24%. This is above the national average of 19%. The school identifies 25% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is slightly above the national average of 21%. Most pupils speak English as a first language and very few speak Welsh at home. A few pupils come from a minority ethnic background. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language.

The headteacher took up his post in September 2013. The last inspection was in March 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 provides a warm, nurturing environment for pupils. It gives high levels of care so that nearly all pupils feel safe and happy. Pupils make varying degrees of progress as they move through the school, although many achieve good standards in Years 2 and 6. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress from their starting points, but pupils of higher ability do not achieve as much as they could.

Although there is some good teaching, the overall quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. Throughout the school, there are inconsistencies in teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve. In the foundation phase, approaches to teaching and learning vary too much in their effectiveness. Across the school, staff provide many interesting learning experiences that pupils enjoy, particularly the wide range of topics that they study, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn independently.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that staff and governors share. The senior leadership team identifies relevant areas for improvement accurately and there have been recent improvements in important aspects of the school's provision. However, leaders do not challenge shortcomings in the quality of teaching and learning robustly enough.

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

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Improve the progress and standards achieved by more able pupils throughout the school
- R2 Increase all pupils' capacity for independent learning across the curriculum
- R3 Develop the confidence and skills of leaders at all levels to challenge shortcomings in the quality of teaching and learning
- R4 Ensure consistency in the application of the principles and practices of the foundation phase

## **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**

Most pupils begin school with skills around the level expected for their age. Pupils make varying degrees of progress as they move through the school, but many achieve good standards in Years 2 and 6. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress from their starting points, but pupils of higher ability do not achieve as much as they could.

Most pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well. They have positive attitudes towards Welsh and speak it with growing confidence. Most pupils of all ages listen attentively in class and in assemblies. However, the youngest pupils' attention begins to flag when whole-class discussions go on too long. Most pupils express their ideas and opinions and listen to one another increasingly well. For example, pupils in Year 3 discuss one of Aesop's fables in pairs and come to an agreement about the moral of the story. By Year 6, many pupils are articulate speakers and engage enthusiastically in debates about controversial issues.

Most pupils make good progress in reading in English and Welsh. In the foundation phase, most pupils enjoy listening to stories. The youngest pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds effectively to help them to read simple texts. In Year 2, pupils complete interesting reading diaries where they review books they have read. In key stage 2, most pupils read a good range of fiction and use their reading skills well to conduct research on the internet. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoy finding answers to questions about Patagonia. By Year 6, most pupils select information from their reading and make relevant notes about it. One pupil remarked that 'You don't really learn anything if you just copy it down', demonstrating her good understanding of the purpose of taking notes.

Younger pupils in the foundation phase make slow progress in their independent writing skills, but, by the end of Year 2, most pupils write independently for a variety of purposes. They use adjectives and similes successfully to enliven their writing. For example, one pupil wrote about a 'blue sky as shiny as a running river' when describing a winter landscape. In Year 2, pupils of all abilities make good attempts at spelling irregular words and their handwriting is clear. During key stage 2, pupils write in a good range of forms, including play scripts and newspaper reports. Most pupils understand and demonstrate the features of different genres, such as myths and persuasive writing, for example when they create brochures for tourists visiting Bulgaria. However, throughout the key stage, pupils do not write independently across the curriculum as much as they could. Many pupils make good progress writing in Welsh. By Year 6, they use present, past and future tenses appropriately, for example when writing reports on the weather.

Younger pupils in the foundation phase make slow progress in recalling number facts, applying their problem-solving skills and recording their findings independently. They do not apply their numeracy skills regularly in practical contexts. By the end of Year 2, most pupils' numeracy skills are good and they apply them well in topic work. For example, they record where they live in tally charts and sort Victorian and modern artefacts using Venn diagrams. In key stage 2, standards in number, data

handling and shape are good. Pupils apply their numeracy skills well in work across the curriculum. For example, they use their knowledge of percentages and their measuring skills accurately to calculate the waste produced by various European countries. Most pupils use mathematical language, such as internal angles, hypothesis and degrees, correctly.

Across the school, pupils use a good range of information and communication technology (ICT) applications. They are beginning to apply their skills well as an integral part of their learning throughout the day. For example, pupils in the reception class control a mouse well to create an image of a garden on screen. Pupils in Year 2 evaluate their performance after filming a dance lesson. By Year 6, pupils use a wide range of applications confidently. These include word processing, creating news reports on a green screen, exploring databases and using tablets and a variety of 'apps' to support their work.

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

Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy in school and are sensitive to the needs of others. They are respectful and polite to adults and other pupils. Nearly all pupils, including those in the foundation phase, have a good awareness of how to stay safe online. They give sound advice, for example on the importance of not sharing personal data or passwords. Most pupils behave well in class and around the school.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of making healthy choices in life and give sensible examples of these, such as the importance of healthy eating and keeping active. Many pupils eat healthy snacks, such as fruit or vegetables, at break times. They enjoy participating in physical activities in school and during extra-curricular activities, such as sporting tournaments with other schools.

Most pupils are active participants in the school community. Many have responsibilities outside the classroom that impact well on others. For example, peer mediators help to resolve minor issues and the school council, or 'llais ysgol', encourages pupils to share ideas for improving aspects of the school. Recent successful initiatives from these groups include improving recycling arrangements in the foundation phase and making bird feeders for the school grounds to help birds in winter.

Most pupils demonstrate a strong sense of fairness and tolerance towards others and are becoming ethical, informed citizens. For example, following a talk about the experiences of refugees by a visitor from the British Red Cross, pupils in Year 6 discuss complex issues, such as persecution, civil wars and asylum seekers, with insight and sensitivity.

Most pupils engage confidently in whole-class discussions, although a minority of the youngest pupils are quite passive and reluctant to contribute. Throughout the school, most pupils engage enthusiastically in their learning and generally settle well to their tasks. They sustain concentration in class and assemblies and remain focused when working individually or with others. Pupils appreciate increasing opportunities to suggest ideas and questions about topics that they would like to study in greater depth.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly. This has resulted in significant and sustained improvement in overall attendance in recent years. Nearly all pupils arrive at school promptly at the beginning of the school day, and are ready to learn.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement**

The school provides many interesting learning experiences for pupils. Teachers in consecutive year groups collaborate effectively to plan topics that appeal to nearly all pupils. They provide increasing opportunities for pupils to follow up aspects of topics that particularly interest them. As a result, most show commitment to their learning.

Grouping arrangements, such as occasional joint working between Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6, are successful. The provision of fortnightly extension sessions for more able learners in upper key stage 2 is a positive development that is helping to broaden their literacy skills.

Memorable visits to such places as Cardiff Castle and a science museum capture pupils' imagination and support their learning well. Enrichment afternoons on Fridays offer many worthwhile and enjoyable activities, such as drama, music, sport and gardening, that extend pupils' learning experiences successfully.

Teachers plan effectively for progression in the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in their work across all areas of learning. Daily 'carousel' activities provide good opportunities for pupils to practise skills, such as spelling, reading and numeracy. However, throughout the school, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their skills independently in their work across the curriculum. For example, most teachers use worksheets that often restrict pupils' capacity to write at length or to record their learning experiences in different ways.

There is usually a good balance between time spent on adult input and time for pupils to do their work in the majority of classes throughout the school. However, there are inconsistencies in the way staff implement the principles and practices of the foundation phase. The youngest pupils have insufficient opportunities to learn and to develop their skills independently through play in 'real life' contexts. Whole class discussions are often too lengthy, with the result that young pupils find it difficult to pay attention and to concentrate when they need to learn actively.

Although there is some good teaching, the overall quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. There are inconsistencies in teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve. In a few classes, pupils experience a good degree of challenge and worthwhile opportunities for independent learning and problem solving. There is a positive 'have a go' approach in many classes, for example with regard to spelling, so that pupils are not afraid to make mistakes and can learn from them. However, occasionally, teachers pitch lessons at too high a level for pupils' stage of development, particularly in classes for younger pupils. More often, teachers do not challenge pupils of higher ability or extend their learning enough.

Working relationships between pupils, teachers and support staff are consistently strong. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. They use an effective range of approaches so that there is a positive working atmosphere in most lessons. Most

teachers provide good role models in their use of language, for example in their use of Welsh. Many are skilled at observing pupils as they work. They identify any misconceptions or areas of confusion and address them well. They give helpful oral and written feedback to pupils about the quality of their work and this helps them to improve.

The school has valuable international links with schools in other countries, such as Hungary and Ukraine. Teachers use these links productively to design opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and ICT skills purposefully, such as writing letters to pupils as 'pen pals' or using electronic visual communication to engage in conversations with them. Teachers in upper key stage 2 give pupils opportunities to discuss controversial issues, such as 'Brexit' or the plight of refugees from war torn countries, and this helps to prepare them for the responsibilities of adult life.

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

The school provides a warm, nurturing and safe environment. Staff treat pupils equally and support their personal and emotional needs well. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Staff promote key messages effectively, such as how pupils can stay safe online.

There are appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. The school provides pupils with a range of opportunities to consider their health and wellbeing through regular physical activities. A good range of equipment in the playgrounds, such as trim trails, climbing walls and the multi-use games area, encourages pupils to enjoy active play.

There are positive relationships with parents, and staff welcome their involvement in school life. The school informs parents clearly about priorities, such as the importance of punctuality and regular attendance. There are worthwhile opportunities through 'meet and greet' sessions at the beginning of the year for parents to become familiar with the school's work, but there are few further opportunities for them to find out how they can support their child's learning. Annual reports to parents give a clear picture of their child's progress and achievements.

The school is developing good systems for tracking all pupils' progress through regular 'learner reviews' as they move through the school. These include careful tracking of pupils' attendance and punctuality. The school's actions have had a positive and sustained impact on attendance rates.

Staff use information from tracking systems to provide good support for pupils with additional learning needs through a range of relevant intervention activities. However, tracking of pupils' progress towards targets in their individual education plans is not so systematic. Staff liaise well with a range of professional specialists, such as speech and language therapists and the educational psychologist, to help them address pupils' specific needs. An area called 'the zone' provides a calm and nurturing space for pupils who need it.

The school maintains effective partnerships that support pupils in their personal, social and emotional development. For example, pupils in Year 6 visit the local secondary school regularly to support their transition. Beneficial links with charities, such as the British Red Cross, encourage consideration, respect and understanding of others.

There are a number of well-attended extra-curricular activities, such as a coding club, chess club and sport. Whole school celebrations, including Christmas concerts, the Eisteddfod and sports days, provide valuable opportunities to promote pupils' cultural development and the school's strong community ethos. The school promotes music well and provides many opportunities for all pupils to play an instrument, such as the piano, ukulele, trumpet or flute. A few of these pupils also enjoy participating in the school's rock band and performing in school concerts.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development well through the curriculum and acts of collective worship. For example, an assembly led by the chair of governors, using large animal puppets, communicated a clear message about the importance of sharing and being kind to others.

A range of opportunities for all pupils to take on various responsibilities helps them to become active citizens within the school. The 'pupil voice' is having an increasing impact on aspects of the school's provision. For example, effective peer mediation arrangements help pupils to resolve minor conflicts independently.

The school promotes pupils' awareness of their role as global citizens well. Links with other European countries provide valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the world around them. For example, pupils in the foundation phase compare Christmas in Wales with Christmas in other parts of Europe. They enjoy making and exchanging Christmas decorations with pupils in countries, such as Croatia, Estonia, Germany and Spain.

### **Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement**

The headteacher has a clear vision of the school as a community where the care and nurture of pupils is central. These values are at the core of school life, and staff and governors support them well. The long established staff work closely as a team and the headteacher deploys teachers effectively according to their strengths. This has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, particularly for older pupils in the foundation phase and in upper key stage 2.

The governing body provides strong support, and individual governors share their expertise with the school regularly. For example, the chair of governors supports the school's European project and another governor shares his ICT skills in the weekly coding club. Governors have a good view of the school's daily work from these regular visits. They keep up to date with developments through the headteacher's informative termly reports and through presentations from senior teachers, such as the literacy and numeracy leaders. However, governors do not challenge the school enough about shortcomings in its performance.

Senior leaders carry out a range of monitoring activities that help them to evaluate the work of the school. These include lesson observations, reviews of pupil performance information and scrutiny of pupils' work. The school improvement plan outlines clear, relevant priorities for development accurately. However, action plans to meet targets for improvement are too complex to provide clear guidance to staff involved in their implementation.

The headteacher works diligently to drive improvements. For example, pupils' attendance has increased significantly and numeracy skills are developing well in a few classes. Improvements to the outdoor areas have created a stimulating environment that supports pupils' learning and the development of their physical and social skills. The increased stock of books in the library has increased pupils' enjoyment of reading. Overall, senior leaders support staff well, but they do not always challenge shortcomings in teachers' performance or pupils' standards robustly enough to secure desired improvements.

All teachers and support staff have relevant opportunities to attend training courses related to the school's priorities for improvement. For example, teaching assistants have participated in training in mathematics, phonics and first aid to increase their knowledge and skills. They use their expertise effectively to support pupils, particularly those with additional learning needs. However, teachers in the foundation phase do not always make best use of the skills of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning through play.

The school uses the pupil development grant suitably to ensure that pupils eligible for free school meals have appropriate support. This has had a positive impact on the performance of this group of pupils at the expected outcome and level. However, it has not yet helped to improve the performance of these pupils at the higher outcomes and levels. The school's use of the pupil development grant widens the targeted pupils' access to opportunities to play musical instruments and to participate in residential visits effectively.

The headteacher and governors monitor the school's budget regularly and spend available funds wisely to support its priorities. The school is in an extensively modernised Victorian building that is attractive and in a good state of repair. There is a good range of resources to support pupils' learning indoors and outside. For example, the recent installation of new ICT infrastructure and the purchase of mobile devices have improved provision for the development of pupils' ICT skills significantly.

## 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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