



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

A report on

**Johnstown School
Salem Road
Johnstown
Carmarthen
Carmarthenshire
SA31 3HS**

Date of inspection: February 2018

by

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

About Johnstown School

Johnstown Primary School is a large primary school on the western edge of Carmarthen. There are currently 475 pupils on roll taught in 16 classes, including two nursery classes. Pupils are taught by 16 full-time and two part-time teachers and supported by 27 part-time teaching assistants.

Around 14% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average of 19%. The school identifies around 15% of pupils as having additional learning needs, this is also below the national average of 21%.

Most pupils are white British. English is the home language for many pupils. A few pupils speak Welsh at home and a very few pupils are looked after by the local authority.

The headteacher took up the post in September 2015 and the school's previous inspection by Estyn was in May 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

Johnstown Primary School is a vibrant learning community where pupils enjoy their lessons and engage in them fully. From the nursery to Year 6, most pupils make at least good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in interesting contexts across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate and persevere well and develop into confident and articulate learners. Teachers work together effectively to provide a highly consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school. They develop strong working relationships with pupils, set high expectations and create a purposeful working environment. This includes plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills independently through practical tasks. The headteacher and senior leaders provide a strong vision and sense of strategic direction. As a result, pupils develop into well-informed and well-rounded learners.

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

Recommendations

R1 Improve punctuality and attendance

R2 improve pupils' use of spoken Welsh

R3 Ensure that individual development plans include clearly defined targets in order to measure progress effectively

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to developing pupils' ICT skills effectively across the curriculum, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well in their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills by the end of key stage 2. Less able pupils and pupils with additional learning needs respond positively to support and most develop their skills at an appropriate standard. Most pupils who are more able progress well overtime. However, a very few more able pupils do not always make the best progress in lessons.

By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils develop into highly articulate communicators. They develop rich vocabulary and speak clearly and confidently for a range of purposes. For example, pupils in Year 1 project their voices well to explain to their peers what they have learned during the session. By Year 6, many pupils express mature opinions about a variety of topics. From the nursery onwards, nearly all pupils learn to listen effectively. For example, pupils in the reception class follow verbal instructions accurately to find the honey pot in the outdoor area. By Year 6, they listen carefully to one another's viewpoint to discuss the value of learning Welsh.

Nearly all pupils develop their reading skills successfully and use them effectively to do their work. In the nursery, many pupils enjoy looking at books, hold them as readers, and take interest in the pictures. In Year 2, most use their reading skills well in their lessons to find information, read back their work and access tasks. They are enthusiastic about books and talk proudly about their progress. By Year 6, many pupils develop into mature readers. They enjoy a wide range of texts, reading fluently and with understanding. They talk knowledgeably about authors and the characters in books and know how to use texts to access information.

Nursery and reception pupils make good progress with developing their fine motor skills and this supports their early writing well. Most pupils continue to develop their skills well through the foundation phase and write for a useful range of purposes. By Year 6, most pupils draft and re-draft their work skilfully to improve the outcome. They adapt their writing style effectively to suit different purposes, for example, more able pupils make good use of persuasive language to form a well-reasoned argument about banning homework. When writing about different versions of a story, they make good use of adjectives and adverbs to colour their accounts and use interesting phrases such as 'it enriches the picture in my mind's eye' when comparing different accounts. However, across the school, pupils do not write creatively often enough or generally write at length.

Most pupils develop, use and apply their mathematical skills successfully. In the foundation phase, they develop a strong understanding of number. They use a range of mathematical language well and develop an appropriate understanding of standard and non-standard measures, such as when they estimate and measure the length of different pretend dinosaurs using metre lengths and canes outside. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils develop their own strategies for solving problems and check whether the results are sensible. They represent data accurately, for example, they use graphs to show how many different types of fish are in a catch, and correct

their own work effectively. Pupils who are more able apply their skills well to work out how much how much fruit they need each week to keep their tuck shop appropriately stocked.

Pupils' standards in ICT are a strength of the school. Most pupils from the nursery onwards apply their skills highly effectively to support their learning. For example, in Year 2, pupils access their online accounts confidently and develop codes to manoeuvre an avatar around a castle. They create records in a database linked with their topics, and change fonts skilfully on word processing programs to write acrostic poems. They know how to store and retrieve their work successfully. In key stage 2, pupils search the internet confidently for information and images to support their work and make good use of data recording programs such as databases and spreadsheets. For example, Year 4 pupils use a spreadsheet to record temperature and use the information to produce line graphs showing variation. Pupils' skills in programming are particularly strong. For example, in Year 6, pupils use complex code to produce multi-media animations. More able pupils use spreadsheets effectively to monitor the cost of fruit in the school's tuck shop. Nearly all pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe online.

In general, most pupils develop appropriate Welsh language skills by the end of key stage 2. Nearly all pupils are enthusiastic about learning Welsh and understand the value of speaking more than one language. Beginning in the nursery, nearly all pupils become familiar with the sound of the language, join in simple songs and rhymes and develop an effective understanding of simple phrases and instructions. As part of the regular classroom routine, many pupils repeat simple phrases confidently and use good pronunciation to exchange simple greetings, and questions about the weather and where they live. However, in general, they do not use the language naturally within the school day or demonstrate enough progression in their learning of Welsh as they move through the school.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop particularly strong attitudes to learning. They contribute their ideas for what and how they will learn purposefully and teachers act well on this, particularly to arrange trips and visitors to the school to support topics. This leads to nearly all pupils showing an especially high level of interest and engagement in their work. From early on in their school life, nearly all pupils learn to work independently very effectively. For example, nursery pupils focus very well on forming letters and shapes to 'write' about love on Valentine's Day with little adult support, while pupils in key stage 2 regularly settle quickly to work highly successfully in pairs and small groups to complete tasks. Nearly all pupils persevere well to overcome difficulties and improve their work. They understand that they learn through making mistakes and are confident to try new things. They participate purposefully in improving their own work through checking what they have done and responding maturely to comments from their peers and teachers.

Nearly all pupils accept responsibility readily and talk enthusiastically about their roles. A particularly strong feature is the role of the school's digital leaders, Criw Craf. They share their skills confidently with other pupils and lead assemblies promoting online safety. Groups of pupils in Year 6 work productively with pupils in other year groups to produce the Johnstown Journal, an electronic newsletter that

celebrates what they learn in school with the wider community. Nearly all pupils believe their opinions are valued and describe many ways in which their ideas have influenced whole school decisions. For example, members of the school council are proud of their role in helping to secure a healthy salad cart for lunchtimes from the local authority.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and know whom to speak to if they have a concern. They use an electronic system to share their feelings with teachers who act on findings quickly. This has a very positive effect on pupils' wellbeing. For example, pupils in Year 6 reflect maturely on what it means to belong to a community, such as a school class. Nearly all have a clear understanding of how to stay safe online.

Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons and around school. They move around school calmly and maintain concentration purposefully in lessons. Nearly all pupils engage readily in conversation with adults and each other. They show respect for adults and one another, listening carefully to what their friends say and respond appropriately to their ideas. Nearly all pupils are developing a meaningful understanding of issues facing the wider community, including developing an awareness of fairness and tolerance for other viewpoints as well as environmental concerns. At a level appropriate to their age and stage, pupils from the nursery class onwards reflect seriously on how they can help look after their world, such as when they study the effect of discarded plastic on the world's oceans.

Most pupils understand the need to eat and drink healthily, and take regular exercise. They enjoy attending a wide range of extra-curricular clubs that enhance their understanding of healthy living. For example, the newly installed running track contributes well to improving pupils' fitness with many pupils challenging themselves to run a mile during their break-time.

Overall, rates of pupil attendance are low when compared with those of similar schools and too many pupils arrive late at the beginning of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The School provides a stimulating range of well-planned, highly relevant learning experiences. These include regular high-quality off-site visits to places suggested by pupils, ranging from soap factories to heritage centres and the local library. Teachers weave the visits into their topic work extremely effectively to engage pupils' interests and provide highly meaningful contexts for their learning. For example, Year 3 pupils studying different foods chose to visit a local chocolate factory to gain a first-hand understanding of food production. They made chocolate lollipops and brought these back to school to sell. As a result, pupils use real-life contexts particularly well to develop their skills across the curriculum.

There is a strong and consistent emphasis on listening to learners in the school. All teachers from the nursery to Year 6 provide regular good-quality opportunities for pupils to share ideas about what and how they want to learn. This involves pupils highly purposefully in their learning so that they develop particularly strong attitudes that help them grow into confident and capable learners.

The school makes very good use of partnerships with the local community and visitors into the school to enrich the curriculum further. For example, pupils collaborated with the local historical society to produce an electronic book helping to develop their ICT skills as well as learning about their local area.

Teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills systematically and teach them to apply these across the curriculum. They analyse information from tests carefully to improve provision and inform future planning. This has been particularly successful recently in improving pupils' reasoning skills. They ensure that pupils have good opportunities to develop the full range of literacy and numeracy skills in most cases. However, opportunities for pupils to write creatively and at length are less well developed.

Provision to develop pupils' ICT skills is particularly strong. Teachers plan carefully to develop a full range of ICT skills progressively as pupils move through the school. They embed these skills highly effectively into the wider curriculum in all classes, including the nursery. As a result, nearly all pupils use ICT resources confidently and competently for a full range of purposes and have a sound understanding of how to stay safe online.

The quality of teaching in Johnstown County Primary School is good. Nearly all teachers know the pupils well and have high expectations of them. Teachers work together successfully and use well-established strategies to support pupils' learning effectively. They treat pupils with respect and apply a positive and calm approach to behaviour management. This supports pupils' learning well, and particularly their ability to work independently.

There is an extremely well-developed and consistent approach to assessment across the school. Teachers introduce strategies in the nursery and build on these progressively. They involve pupils highly effectively, so that they develop a thorough understanding of the process of improving their work. As a result, by Year 6, pupils develop very mature attitudes to assessing their own performance and that of their peers and this helps them progress effectively and learn from mistakes.

Teachers take good account of the needs of different groups of learners in their planning. They share clear learning objectives consistently and reflect on these at the end each lesson. They use this reflection time highly effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to check and consolidate what they have learned while developing their self-confidence and their communication skills successfully. Following recent whole school training, teachers and support staff make increasingly good use of carefully thought out questioning techniques. This develops pupils' thinking and reasoning skills successfully. Very occasionally, staff do not succeed in extending the learning of more able pupils well enough in lessons.

Recently, the school has focused well on developing its foundation phase provision and extending opportunities for pupils to learn independently and through active involvement. In the foundation phase and increasingly in key stage 2, teachers make their classrooms stimulating places for pupils to learn. In addition to their direct teaching, they plan interesting opportunities for pupils to practise and embed their skills independently in well thought out learning environments. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors in activities led by adults in the foundation phase. However, opportunities for pupils to lead their own learning in the outdoors are not a regular part of the school's work yet.

The school has a strong Welsh ethos and provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about Wales and Welsh heritage. For example, during their study of World War Two, pupils learned about the effects of bombing on Swansea from a local resident. Teachers across the school use Welsh consistently as part of the daily routine. This means that pupils are very familiar with the language and understand instructions and questions well. However, they are less successful at supporting pupils to develop their speaking skills progressively.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The School is a happy, caring and inclusive community that places a strong emphasis on pupils' wellbeing. Staff know their pupils well and respond to their emotional needs appropriately. Pupils benefit considerably from caring and encouraging working relationships with staff. This helps to ensure high levels of mutual respect and good pupil behaviour. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social education. Teachers implement a range of programmes sensitively and consistently that help pupils develop positive attitudes towards each other and their learning. For example, pupils develop a mature approach to solving disputes as they progress through the school. Developing these positive attitudes is a strong aspect of the school's work.

In general, the school's procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress and wellbeing are thorough and effective. They enable teachers to identify the needs of individuals and groups of pupils at a very early stage and to put appropriate provision in place. This includes providing purposeful support within the classroom as well as more directly targeted support for individual pupils with additional learning needs. Overall, the school's approach helps pupils to make good progress in their learning and personal development. In particular, the additional support improves pupils' attitudes to learning successfully, enabling them to engage more confidently in their work. The provision for pupils identified as having additional learning needs is generally effective in helping pupils to make good progress. However, pupils' individual education plans do not always include clear and measurable targets that support them to make the best progress. Procedures for monitoring and reviewing how well individual pupils with additional learning needs move forward are not developed sufficiently for leaders to know whether the support provided is fully effective.

The school shares helpful information with parents about policies, procedures and activities that their children are involved in through its well-presented website, occasional newsletters, and a useful online program. It actively helps parents to support their own children through providing helpful workshops, for example showing parents how to improve their child's reading skills at home. However, the school has been less successful in engaging with parents to improve levels of attendance and to ensure that all pupils arrive at school in good time.

The school seeks out interesting and challenging opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and resilience through being involved in initiatives where they learn to apply a variety of skills in meaningful contexts. For example, teachers provide opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to organise a mini enterprise project, making and selling biscuits at the Christmas Fair. This teaches pupils to work co-operatively in a team as well as using their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively. The

school provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about their role as citizens through making decisions at a school level, for example when they vote for their choice of improvement in the outdoor area.

The school has suitable arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.. For example, as part of an enterprise project, teachers have encouraged Year 6 pupils to stock and run a healthy tuck shop three times a week, where they sell fruit to fellow pupils.

There are well-developed opportunities for pupils throughout the school to learn about the importance of taking care of their world. For example, each class, including the nursery class, has a global learning goal. This helps pupils to reflect on environmental issues sensitively and constructively.

The school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. For example, meetings with the police liaison officer make pupils aware of how to look after themselves, including dealing with anti-social behaviour and peer pressure. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher and senior leadership team provide clear strategic direction for the school. They have high expectations of staff and pupils. This translates into a strong vision for developing pupils so that they maximise their potential, and develop well as confident members of their community and lifelong learners. The headteacher shares this well with stakeholders, leading to high standards of pupil wellbeing and achievement and a warm and welcoming environment where staff and pupils are valued.

In general, leaders define the roles and responsibilities of staff clearly. Staff work together well, and collaborate effectively through regular whole staff and phase meetings. These focus clearly on pupils' progress and on addressing the school's improvement priorities. As a result, there is a consistent approach to teaching and learning throughout school. The leadership structure is relatively new. It supports the school's work in the different phases purposefully and is helping to address important issues including staff wellbeing. For example, the deputy headteacher recently reviewed the planning format to make it more efficient and less time-consuming for teachers. However, a few leadership roles are at an earlier stage of development, which means that monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work, including provision for pupils with additional learning needs, are not yet fully developed. There is a strong focus on meeting national priorities, including developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital competency skills to a high standard, which contributes well to the schools' strategic vision.

Through regular learning walks, analysis of performance data and link governor meetings with subject leaders, governors have a strong understanding of how well pupils are achieving. They use their varied expertise well to support different aspects of the school's work and challenge the school constructively to help it move forward.

Leaders carry out a wide range of self-evaluation activities that identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement accurately. The school gathers a full range of first-hand evidence to evaluate its work and involves staff and pupils effectively

through a range of useful activities. However, at present, the school does not include parents' views well enough.

The school improvement plan provides clear strategies for addressing its priorities effectively. Improvement targets are clear, realistic and challenging and include success criteria with specific time scales. Staff understand expectations and there are clear lines of accountability. As a result, the school can point to regular improvements that impact positively on pupils' learning and wellbeing. These include a stronger focus on independent learning in the foundation phase and useful strategies to support positive attitudes to learning across the school.

Performance management procedures for teachers and support staff are thorough. Targets for development meet staff's own professional development needs as well as addressing school priorities. School leaders seek out relevant opportunities for all staff to develop professionally. These include useful visits to other schools to improve staff understanding of foundation phase pedagogy and principles, and the recent whole school focus on developing pupils' numerical reasoning skills. There is a strong culture of sharing good practice within the school and through working with other schools. For example, this has led to high standards of ICT in the school and to developing effective strategies for independent learning.

The school uses its resources well. The indoor environment provides an attractive and stimulating place for pupils to learn and pupils have access to plenty of good quality resources including books and ICT equipment. The outdoor learning environment is developing well and the school uses it increasingly effectively to support pupils' learning. The Friends of the School provide helpful additional income, for example to buy resources for the school's fitness trail. Leaders make good use of the expertise of individual teachers to support strong features of teaching and learning and to provide specialised teaching in music and physical education.

Governors monitor spending regularly to ensure that leaders use finances effectively to raise standards. They allocate the budget appropriately to address school priorities for improvement, for example to buy new resources for teaching mathematics. Leaders are proactive in seeking out external funding for onsite and offsite enrichment activities that support aspects of the curriculum effectively. There are clear plans for reducing the budget deficit and the school is working appropriately with the local authority to deal with this.

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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