



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

A report on

**Gwaunmeisgyn Primary School
Woodland Road
Beddau
Pontypridd
CF38 2DH**

Date of inspection: June 2019

by

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

About Gwaunmeisgyn Primary School

Gwaunmeisgyn Primary School is in Beddau in Rhondda Cynon Taf. There are 317 pupils on roll between the ages of 3 and 11, including 32 full-time nursery pupils. There are ten mainstream classes and an additional two local authority funded classes that cater for pupils who have complex learning difficulties.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is approximately 19%, this is similar to the all-Wales average. Around 16% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is below the national average of 21%. All pupils speak English as their first language, a very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

Estyn last inspected the school in November 2012. The headteacher has been in post since January 2019.

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

At Gwaunmeisgyn Primary School, nearly all pupils feel safe and enjoy school. Many take on roles to help develop the work of the school, for example as play leaders. All staff work hard to ensure that there is a caring and inclusive environment. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress, their behaviour, and their attitudes to learning. All teachers and support staff have high expectations of pupils.

Most pupils make good and often very good progress as they move through the school. Most pupils' communication skills are strong, and they apply their literacy and information technology skills effectively in a wide range of contexts. Pupils in the complex learning difficulty classes make good progress overall.

Teachers provide a wide range of learning experiences to engage and motivate pupils to learn. The school promotes pupils' understanding of their Welsh culture and heritage well through its curriculum and activities. The recently appointed headteacher, along with the school's leadership team, provide calm, strong, purposeful leadership. Together, with a conscientious team of staff, they work successfully to improve pupils' outcomes.

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 pupils' Welsh oracy skills across key stage 2
- R2 Provide more purposeful opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and their peers work and to respond to feedback
- R3 Refine self-evaluation and improvement processes to focus more closely on what pupils can or cannot do

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Many pupils begin school with communication and mathematical skills below the expected level for their age. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make good and at times very good progress. Most pupils in the complex learning difficulty classes make good progress from their starting points.

Most pupils across the school listen attentively. They talk confidently and enthusiastically about their work to visitors, using a wide range of vocabulary. Many younger pupils listen well and speak clearly to adults and each other. For example, in the nursery, pupils explain in detail their drawings of a beach and creatures from the sea. By the end of key stage 2 many older pupils express their ideas clearly, using interesting vocabulary. For example, they use personification confidently when describing a picture of a forest, noting that 'the trees danced'. Most listen to each other well and contribute purposefully to group discussions to achieve agreed outcomes, such as when debating the advantages and disadvantages of sailing around the world as a family.

Most pupils show enjoyment in reading and are keen to read to adults. In the foundation phase, most pupils make accurate use of their knowledge of letter sounds to read words aloud and develop good reading skills. In Year 2, most express their views about the books they have read, identifying what they like about the story, for example liking the fact that the book had an alligator and hoping that it did not eat the characters. Across key stage 2, many pupils read appropriate texts fluently and with expression. They enjoy discussing books and their favourite authors. Most can predict what might happen next. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are confident, independent readers and can explain accurately the meaning of words, such as diligently and gesticulating.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing successfully. For example, in the nursery and reception class, many pupils develop beneficial emergent writing skills. They hold implements such as chalk and pencils in a suitable grip. They recognise their name and can write it on a chart. By the end of the foundation phase most pupils write for a broad range of different purposes, for instance, recounts of trips, fact files of themselves and favourite characters, and riddles. When writing, most pupils at the end of key stage 2 use punctuation accurately and make plausible attempts at spelling unfamiliar words. They write competently for a broad range of purposes and use paragraphs well. Pupils that are more able produce writing of high quality that is lively and engages the interest of the reader well, for instance when writing an emotional diary entry on the day the Second World War is declared. Overall, standards of handwriting and presentation are good across the school.

Most pupils develop a sound knowledge of mathematical concepts as they move through the school and become confident mathematicians by the time they reach Year 6. In the foundation phase, a majority of younger pupils understand the concept of heavier and lighter. They use this knowledge suitably to predict which item weighs more when given two toys. Many older pupils have effective number skills. They

identify odd and even numbers accurately and realise well that multiplying in twos is 'doubling'. Many pupils create and analyse information from bar charts accurately and are beginning to tell the time independently, By the end of key stage 2, pupils are confident in applying their mathematical skills in order to solve more complex real life problems, for example when creating informative holiday brochures to different destinations.

Most pupils in the foundation phase begin to build a useful vocabulary of Welsh words. They count in Welsh and describe the weather, colours and foods reasonably well. Pupils who are more able in Year 2 read simple Welsh texts fluently and with understanding. They write simple Welsh sentences, for example, they create interesting pen portraits well. In key stage 2, many pupils write in Welsh, practising familiar sentence patterns. Many read basic Welsh texts competently, although their pronunciation is often inaccurate. Across key stage 2, many pupils' ability to extend their oral Welsh skills is inconsistent.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are strong across the school. In the foundation phase, many younger pupils use programmable toys effectively and create interesting pictures using art programmes. Year 2 pupils access a wide range of programs independently, they save and upload aspects of their work with little or no support. In key stage 2, many pupils use databases and spreadsheets confidently. Most develop competent research skills to produce multi-media presentations, for example when creating interesting fact files about space. In both complex learning difficulty classes, most pupils make steady progress and use their ICT skills creatively.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils behave very well within lessons and when moving around the school. They are polite, well-mannered and considerate of one another. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school. They know where to go if they are worried and feel confident that staff will listen to any concerns they raise and deal with them promptly.

Pupils value their leadership roles in groups such as the school council, 'criw Cymraeg' and digital leaders. Nearly all pupils in these groups understand their roles well and work diligently to ensure that they have a positive impact upon wellbeing across the school. For example, the school council liaised effectively with senior leaders to initiate 'fitness Friday', which has been very popular with both pupils and staff. The digital leaders provide valuable support and coaching, particularly for younger pupils using the internet. They undertake learning walks with enthusiasm across the school and highlight areas that both staff and pupils could improve. Nearly all pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep safe online.

Nearly all pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They exercise regularly as part of physical education lessons and after school clubs, such as, football, rugby and multi-sports. As a result, they have a good understanding of the benefits of physical activity on their health. Most pupils understand the importance of making healthy choices due to initiatives such as the fruit tuck shop run by Year 6, assemblies and whole school themes focussing on personal hygiene, healthy eating and staying safe. Many pupils take part in a broad range of extra-curricular activities, such as choir, craft club and forest schools that benefit them physically and contribute effectively to their general wellbeing.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong, and issues such as tolerance and equality, through informative assemblies and engaging with visitors from the local community. A particular strength of the school is the way in which all pupils show a high level of kindness and consideration for each other. For example, in the support and encouragement they give to their peers and those pupils with additional learning needs.

Most pupils are confident learners who are becoming more independent. They work collaboratively and take into account the views of others. Most are able to sustain concentration and avoid distractions. Most remain absorbed and engaged in their learning and as a result, many complete their tasks to a good standard. Most key stage 2 pupils talk confidently about perseverance and resourcefulness. They refer to the school's 'brain, buddy, table, table boss' strategy that encourages them to work with their peers to solve problems together and helps to develop their independence.

In the complex learning difficulty classes, most pupils are developing their ability to follow their activities independently or in small groups successfully. They are very well behaved and courteous. They relate purposefully to others and are ready to communicate successfully through a variety of means with other pupils and adults.

Most pupils and parents have responded positively to the school's focus on improving attendance, and pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Nearly all teachers deliver lessons that motivate pupils successfully. Staff work well together to provide a range of learning experiences of good quality. They foster a calm and courteous learning environment where pupils show mutual respect towards others. Most teachers question pupils skilfully in order to challenge and extend their thinking. They provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups. Teachers consult with pupils purposefully about what and how they want to learn, and this helps create a vibrant classroom environment. As a result, pupils engage purposefully in most lessons. Learning support assistants provide valuable support and this enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress.

Most teachers share clear objectives for learning with pupils and this helps them to understand what they expect of them. During lessons, many help pupils to identify how they can improve. However, teachers' written feedback does not consistently guide pupils well enough about how to improve specific areas of their work or provide them with sufficient opportunities to make improvements. There are a few purposeful opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' work. However, these are not regular and often enough.

The school has developed its own curriculum that runs over a two-year cycle. This provides a comprehensive range of engaging learning experiences, that meets pupils' needs well. Immersion days at the start of each topic stimulate pupils' enthusiasm for learning successfully. These include a range of visitors to the school. For example, a local farmer and his tractor visited for the topic 'down on the farm' and a physiotherapist met with pupils at the start of the topic 'people who help us'.

In lower foundation phase, teachers plan a wide range of learning activities to develop pupils' skills in both the indoor and outdoor areas. For example, pupils develop their understanding of floating and sinking when loading boats with treasure as part of their pirate topic. In the foundation phase complex learning difficulties class, staff use music and lighting effectively to create a stimulating learning environment that engages the interests of pupils well. As they move through the foundation phase, lessons generally ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning. However, at times, particularly in the upper foundation phase, adults over direct activities. This limits older pupils' opportunities to make choices about how and what they would like to learn and to develop their independent learning skills.

Teachers consider usefully how to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills well when planning learning across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 5 use spreadsheets purposefully to record, analyse and compare the cost of a range of items in a supermarket. As a result, most pupils use their ICT skills confidently and skilfully. Across the school, most teachers plan well for pupils to use their reading and writing skills purposefully, for example when writing formal letters to a museum administrator as part of their history based topic.

There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about Welsh history and culture. For instance, pupils enjoy visits to many places of interest such as, St Fagan's and Cardiff Castle and nearly all take part in the annual Eisteddfod.

Across the school, the majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh. The school has useful planning that sets out a clear and systematic range of Welsh language patterns for pupils to develop as they move through the school. Many teachers use this competently in their weekly Welsh lessons and in short daily Welsh language sessions. In the foundation phase, many staff use Welsh with pupils throughout the day and as a result, pupils are becoming more confident in using the language in informal situations. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop their language skills as they progress through key stage 2.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring and nurturing environment, which enables pupils to thrive. Leaders and teachers monitor pupils' progress closely using a robust tracking system that provides them with useful information on the progress of groups of learners. They use this to identify pupils who would benefit from targeted support effectively.

The school identifies pupils with additional learning needs successfully through well-structured collaboration between pupils, school staff, parents and specialist agencies. The additional needs leader facilitates a wide range of supportive and beneficial interventions to meet pupils' specific needs. Support staff work diligently and engage pupils well in these sessions, and as a result, most pupils with additional learning needs make worthwhile progress in developing their literacy numeracy, social and personal skills.

Links with external agencies and specialists are good. For example, medical specialists support pupils with a range of individual needs and this allows them to participate fully in the life of the school. The implementation of detailed person centred planning, developed with professionals such as the education psychologist and the local cluster of schools, allows staff to address individual pupil needs comprehensively.

Pupils from the complex learning difficulty classes receive valuable opportunities to follow specific mainstream activities, such as visits to local places of interest, singing with the school choir and joining in with clubs during lunchtime and after school. This enhances their learning experiences and helps them to develop effectively their social and communication skills outside of their classroom.

A range of carefully planned programmes supports pupils' emotional health and wellbeing effectively. For example, support assistants lead sessions that develop pupils' emotional wellbeing beneficially. Mindfulness sessions for pupils further contribute to creating a calm learning environment. In the foundation phase, teachers lead simple yoga sessions that allow pupils to relax in the school environment.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Its curriculum supports pupils successfully to be aware of the need to maintain a healthy diet. The school nurse leads sessions on maintaining a healthy lifestyle and the pupils' health and wellbeing committee supplement this well with their work at break times promoting healthy snacks.

The learning environment and high staff expectations encourages pupils to demonstrate very good behaviour in all areas of the school. Positive reward systems encourage pupils to be polite and courteous to each other and adults around the school. A culture of celebration allows pupils to show off their work proudly to adults and their peers.

The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a well-developed curriculum and a whole school focus on a monthly value, such as responsibility. There are good links with the local church. Its vicar visits regularly and supports the school to celebrate Christian festivals. Teachers develop this further through topics and lessons that focus on religions and traditions around the world. The school has established a strong collaborative link with a partner school in Bumbobi in Uganda. Pupils speak enthusiastically about this. It helps focus their work on children's rights and to gain an understanding of global issues. As a result, pupils understand the importance of everyone being different and special in their own way, and that tolerance is important when others hold different views and beliefs to themselves.

The school ensures that pupils have effective opportunities to lead school life through a wide range of effective committees, such as criw Cymraeg, the eco-committee and school council. They effect positive changes to the school environment, for example, sourcing new playground games and promoting welsh language use. The school makes effective use of pupil voice to develop the planning of class topics.

The school has effective and beneficial links with parents. Teachers provide parents with a clear and celebratory pupil profile each term. This profile follows children throughout their time in school and allows parents to monitor their child's progress. They provide worthwhile events for parents to learn about what happens in school, such as open mornings and a reading and maths café that shares with parents the school's approach to teaching. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has recently taken up his post. In a short time, he has worked conscientiously with the school community to clarify a vision for the school centred on learning together. This matches well with the intentions of the new curriculum for Wales. He brings a calm and clear sense of purpose to the school and sets high expectations of himself and others.

Within the school, there are effective arrangements to distribute leadership roles. Senior leaders carry out their responsibilities conscientiously and support the head teacher effectively. For example, they lead regular phase meetings that focus well on school improvement actions. As a team, they ensure that staff at all levels understand and carry out their roles effectively. Staff work together well and support each other beneficially, for example to develop an engaging curriculum. This has had a positive impact on pupils throughout the school.

Leaders have robust systems in place to manage the performance of staff. They set individual targets for improvement that focus on the needs of the individual and whole school priorities. They provide a beneficial range of professional learning that meets these requirements well. For example, valuable whole school training on developing systematic opportunities for pupils writing has had a positive impact on practices within the school and on pupils' writing skills.

The governing body fulfils its role diligently. Governors have a thorough knowledge of performance data and monitor the school's finances carefully. They visit the school regularly and take part in monitoring the school's provision competently, for example by making learning walks to evaluate the school's learning environment. This enables them to question leaders purposefully about strategic decisions and support the school to be an effective learning community.

Leaders have set in place a worthwhile range of practices that allow them to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. For example, comprehensive evaluations of data, regular learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' work. This allows them to draw useful conclusions about areas that need improvement. A highly beneficial annual stakeholder conference allows leaders the opportunity to evaluate feedback from pupils, parents and all staff alongside their own monitoring. This gives them a well-rounded view of how the school is performing. However, these beneficial processes do not always focus well enough on what pupils can do. As a result, although leaders are aware that the progress of particular groups of pupils may need improvement, they are not always clear about what it is that pupils do not do well. Where improvements are required, leaders plan carefully to address these issues. They identify actions they can take and organise staff and resources usefully to meet these needs, for example when focusing on improving pupils' ICT skills. As a result, many improvement initiatives have a worthwhile impact.

Leaders work effectively with other institutions to develop interesting learning experiences that support pupils well. For example, working with another local school, leaders have developed a creative approach to improving the problem solving and reasoning skills of foundation phase pupils. In the outdoor area, they developed pupils' numeracy skills creatively by designing and planting geometric willow structures.

The school uses its resources well. They allocate funding effectively to support improvement initiatives. Leaders ensure that the indoor and outdoor environments provide an attractive and stimulating place for pupils to learn. Areas, such as the forest school contribute valuably to pupils' learning and wellbeing. For example, pupils in the complex needs classes research and classify the mini-beasts they find purposefully. The school uses its pupil development grant appropriately to help those pupils who need support with their literacy and numeracy skills.

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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