



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

A report on

**Hendre Infants School
St Cenydd Road
Trecenydd
CF83 2RP**

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by

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

About Hendre Infants School

Hendre Infant School is in the Caerphilly local authority. There are 175 pupils on roll aged from 3 to 7 years, including 60 who attend part-time in the nursery. The school organises pupils into seven classes, one of which is mixed age.

About 25% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average of 18%. The school identifies about 12% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is below the national average of 21%. A very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background or have English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher took up her post in January 2016. The school's previous inspection was in May 2013.

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

Hendre Infant School provides an engaging learning environment and stimulating activities that pupils enjoy and benefit from. Staff are particularly effective in delivering lessons that have 'real life' purposes that capture the interest of pupils. A vibrant curriculum and structured approach to the development of skills supports most pupils to make good progress during their time at the school.

The school engages effectively with parents. This ensures that they have a good understanding of how well their child is progressing and how they can help them to develop their skills at home. Staff know pupils well. They use this knowledge successfully to plan pupils' next steps in learning and to ensure they incorporate pupils' ideas and interests well into their planning.

Leadership of the school is effective. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school based on high expectations for pupils' progress. The senior leadership team and other staff share this and work together conscientiously to maintain ongoing improvements to the quality of the school's provision.

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 Provide pupils with opportunities to develop their independent investigative and problem solving skills
- R2 Improve the quality of outdoor learning experiences for older pupils
- R3 Improve attendance

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

A majority of pupils enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are in line with those expected for their age. A minority begin school with social skills below those expected for their age. Most make good progress as they move through the school. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress from their starting points.

Most pupils develop effective speaking and listening skills. As they progress through the school, they speak with increasing confidence to each other, staff and unfamiliar adults. They are keen to talk about their learning and the activities they engage with. For example, pupils in the nursery describe clearly the life cycle of the butterfly and how a caterpillar forms a 'cocoon'. In most cases, pupils listen well to the contributions of others and respond thoughtfully. For example, pupils in the reception class listen carefully to a partner's explanation of the beginning, middle and end of their story and contribute their own ideas. By Year 2, most pupils make relevant and sensible contributions to group and whole class discussions. This aids the development of their wider skills and, in particular, supports them to produce good quality writing. Most pupils communicate effectively using the Welsh language. For example, pupils in reception ask and answer questions confidently about their likes and dislikes. They build up a good range of phrases over time and, by Year 2, speak to each other about where they live, the weather and how they are feeling. However, they do not use the language in work across the curriculum frequently enough.

Most pupils in the nursery class develop simple mark making skills soon after joining school. They quickly begin to understand how letters and words convey meaning. In reception, most pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds effectively to write short words independently. Over time, most pupils develop a sound understanding of a wide range of forms of writing and apply this well in their own work. For example, in Year 2, pupils use engaging language to create informative booklets about the lives of wolves. By the time they leave the school, most pupils achieve good standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, the quality of older pupils' letter formation and handwriting is too variable. By Year 2, most pupils write simple sentences in Welsh with increasing independence.

At an early stage, most pupils begin to understand the importance of books and develop an enthusiasm for reading. In the nursery class, they enjoy exploring the story of the 'Hungry Caterpillar' and work successfully with a teaching assistant to sequence the main events of the story. As they progress through the school, nearly all pupils develop a strong knowledge of letter sounds and use these well to read unfamiliar words. In Year 1, most pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of the features of books. For example, they talk with confidence about the roles of the author, illustrator and publisher in producing a book. By Year 2, most pupils begin to develop higher order reading skills. For instance, they suggest why they think a character may be a 'bad person' because of the language the author has used to describe them. Most pupils read simple Welsh language texts at a level that is appropriate for their age and ability.

Most pupils develop effective numeracy skills and a secure mathematical knowledge. They apply these well in lessons and in activities across the curriculum. They have a strong understanding of the four rules of number and understand which to use to solve particular number problems. Most pupils in the nursery make strong progress with counting, for instance working with an adult to count the six legs they have drawn on their picture of a butterfly. In reception, they recognise and label the simple two-dimensional shapes they have used to create an image of a house. By Year 2, they use a good range of measures effectively, for instance using a thermometer to measure temperatures around their class and outside.

Most pupils develop valuable creative skills that they express across the curriculum in a wide variety of forms. For example, pupils in Year 1, explore different textures imaginatively when creating clay models of mini-beasts. Pupils in reception work well collaboratively to explore ways to create a large model tractor from a variety of recycled materials including old tyres, planks of wood and cable reels. Over time, most pupils develop their physical skills well. In Year 1, they demonstrate careful control when working with a partner to create a sequence of gymnastic shapes and movements. However, few pupils develop the necessary skills to investigate and solve problems independently.

Pupils' application of their information and communication technology (ICT) skills is a strength. Most pupils develop a wide range of ICT skills and a good understanding of how they can use these to help them in their work. For example, pupils in reception create a pictogram to show which pets are the favourite in their class. Pupils in Year 2, create and explore a simple data base, comparing homemade and shop bought Welsh cakes. They work well with a partner in an online virtual world to create model buildings.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy in school. They know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset and are confident that adults will support them. Nearly all pupils are polite, well-mannered and considerate of others. Most pupils' behaviour is good and they manage their feelings appropriately.

Many pupils are keen to take on roles of responsibility. For example, the eco-committee and school council have promoted successfully the school eco-code and helped to improve the outdoor environment by arranging the purchase of a wicker hut. Digital leaders and Criw Cymraeg support pupils with their understanding of how to stay safe online and the development of pupil and staff Welsh language skills. For example, the Criw Cymraeg encourage the use of Welsh around the school and reward pupils and staff who use the Welsh phrase of the week with a sticker during assembly.

Most pupils understand how to make healthy food choices and identify what should be included in a healthy lunchbox. They know that drinking plenty of water is good for them. Most pupils respond well to the variety of physical activities that the school offers, for instance they complete the daily mile enthusiastically and older pupils talk positively about cricket and hockey sessions. They have a good understanding of the importance of being physically active. Nearly all pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online. For example, they know that they should not share personal information, such as their name or address, with others.

Nearly all pupils are keen and eager to learn at the start of lessons. They show interest in their work and are excited about discovering new facts and skills. Pupils contribute regularly to teachers' topic planning by suggesting what they would like to learn. They are beginning to understand how the activities they choose help them to develop as learners and citizens of the world. For example, as ambitious, capable learners.

Most pupils concentrate effectively on tasks and work well individually, in pairs and in small groups. They have a good understanding of the 'Hendre Heroes' characters. These help them to reflect on their own learning successfully. For example, they describe how they have been like 'Super Simon' when concentrating on their learning and ignoring distractions.

Most pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly. However, over the last three years, levels of persistent and unauthorised absence have risen and overall rates of attendance have remained lower than those in similar schools.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

In most cases, teachers deliver an engaging range of lessons and activities that interest pupils and capture their imagination. For example, pupils in Year 2, develop a wide range of skills whilst planning enthusiastically a 'Big Hendre' event as a culmination to their topic on food. They develop their writing skills as they create posters to advertise the event and write letters to local dignitaries and celebrities to invite them to attend. In many cases, teachers use real life experiences effectively as a stimulus for pupils' activities. For example, pupils in reception and Year 1, develop their understanding of materials successfully when helping a local farmer design packaging to stop his eggs from being broken on the way to the shops.

All staff develop positive working relationships with pupils. They know pupils well and use this knowledge effectively to ensure that lessons meet the needs and interests of most pupils. They work well with pupils to gauge what and how they would like to learn. For example, following the observation by nursery pupils of a blue tit feeding on caterpillars in their outdoor area, practitioners planned for pupils to investigate the life cycle of a butterfly. In most cases, staff demonstrate consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and standards. They maintain a gentle, encouraging tone and address any issues of poor behaviour quietly and effectively.

During lessons and activities, staff assess and respond to the progress pupils make, for example by modifying the level of challenge within tasks. In most classes, staff ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to be successful. This helps pupils to work to a high standard and make good progress. Staff feedback to pupils is effective. They provide clear verbal guidance on what they have done well and what that they need to improve. In most cases, they ensure beneficial opportunities for pupils to respond to their feedback by practising a skill or providing them with a task to challenge them to achieve at a higher level, for example to check they are using capital letters correctly, or to add adverbs to their instructions on how to make a smoothie.

Provision to develop pupils' skills is effective. It ensures that pupils build upon their previous learning successfully as they move through the school. Arrangements for

the development of pupils' literacy skills are a particular strength. For example, daily guided reading sessions ensure that most pupils make good progress with their ability to understand and respond to texts. A structured approach to the development of pupils' writing skills ensures that pupils gain a good understanding of the features a wide range of fiction and non-fiction text types.

Teachers ensure that topic work provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to practise skills learnt in specific maths, English and ICT lessons in activities across the curriculum. For example, practitioners in the nursery plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to use a digital microscope to explore natural materials from their outdoor area. However, staff do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their independent investigative and problem solving skills through the use of continuous and enhanced provision. As a result, not all pupils develop strong enough skills in perseverance and resilience.

In the majority of classes, teachers apply the principles of the foundation phase effectively to support pupils' learning. This includes purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their resilience, collaborative working and independent learning skills. In the nursery, practitioners plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to regularly and effectively develop their skills in the outdoor area. However, older pupils do not benefit from same quality of outdoor learning experiences. For example, activities often do not focus sufficiently on the specific learning advantages of the outdoor environment, such as access to the natural world and the use of natural materials.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school provides an engaging, caring and nurturing environment. This supports all pupils to make good progress and to develop their self-esteem and confidence successfully. All staff work together to promote a consistent approach to behaviour management that supports the school's positive ethos and impacts very well on pupils' sense of wellbeing.

Efficient and robust procedures enable staff to track and monitor pupils' progress, effectively. This includes the careful tracking of specific groups of learners, such as those eligible for free school meals. Staff meet regularly to consider the progress of every child. They know the children well and use a productive range of assessment procedures to help them plan for the next steps in pupils' learning, successfully

The support for pupils with additional learning needs is effective. Staff identify any issues with a pupil's progress or development at an early stage. Well-trained and skilled teaching assistants provide good levels of support for targeted pupils through intervention groups and in the classroom. This includes specific support for reading, speech and language development and numeracy. Detailed, child friendly individual education plans provide clear targets for improvement. Teachers review pupils' progress regularly and renew individual targets in consultation with parents. These arrangements support most pupils with additional needs make good progress in relation to their starting points.

The school meets the needs of pupils with emotional and social difficulties effectively. For instance, small group work and individual tailored programmes for pupils improve their emotional resilience. Reception pupils benefit from a programme where they

consider how humans develop physically, emotionally and socially over time. For example, a mother brings her baby into school regularly and pupils discuss how the child has developed and changed over time.

There are a good range of opportunities for parents to engage with their children's learning. For example, the school organises events where parents join their children for breakfast, topic afternoons and workshops. This enables parents to work alongside their child and to learn about their daily activities. Many parents attend these events and value the link it provides to their child's learning. In response to parent's suggestions, staff have developed a range of effective lines of communication including regular emails and social media updates.

The school promotes healthy eating and drinking successfully. Pupils have good opportunities to find out about healthy food during lessons. For example, by making their own healthy food plate in response to the story, 'There is Broccoli in my Ice Cream'. The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn the advantages of becoming active citizens through membership of pupil leadership groups, such as the school council, eco-committee and by becoming digital leaders. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school provides an extensive range of activities to develop pupils' creativity, imagination and cultural knowledge. For example, pupils create paintings based on the work of the Welsh artist, Rhiannon Roberts. Teachers organise a wide range of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' understanding of their locality and the world of work, such as a visit to the restaurant of a Michelin starred chef that inspired pupils to create their own recipes. The school provides an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs that provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. These include Welsh dancing, guitar and cookery club. There are a few opportunities for pupils to find out about the wider world and global issues. For instance, pupils in reception and Year 2 took part in a cultural immersion day where they compared their lives to those of people in Pakistan. Pupils' receive opportunities to develop their spiritual awareness through carefully planned acts of daily worship and the exploration of different religious festivals, such as Ramadan.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides effective leadership for the school. Together with pupils, parents and governors, she has established high expectations for all members of the school community and developed a clear vision that focuses on promoting the wellbeing and achievement of all pupils.

The senior leadership team carry out their responsibilities and work with the headteacher conscientiously. They lead the work of staff well and ensure they develop their own leadership skills effectively, for instance, through attending regional leadership courses. Leaders work skilfully as a team and support each other effectively to improve aspects of the school's provision for pupils, for instance through the introduction of focused reading sessions that have had a positive impact on reading standards throughout the school. All staff model positive, professional working relationships with each other that support the school's caring ethos well. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Leaders support the professional development of all staff effectively. They promote a beneficial professional learning culture by enabling staff to undertake research such as investigating ways to improve pupils' key learning skills. This has made a positive difference to many pupils' levels of resilience and concentration. Regular, informative meetings and informal briefings keep all staff up-to-date with activities across the school. The school has well developed processes to evaluate its performance and to plan for improvement. Leaders analyse information on pupil performance and the quality of provision from a comprehensive range of sources, including questionnaires completed by parents and governors. They respond well to the outcomes and act on them accordingly, for example by improving communication with parents and increasing the number of after school clubs for pupils. Overall, the school's self-evaluation processes identify many of the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. However, leaders' analysis of the findings from self-evaluation, at times, is too generous, for instance in their assessment of the overall quality of teaching.

Many of the school's targets support national priorities well, such as improving pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. These are effective in bringing about improvement, and have a direct impact on the life and work of the school. For example, the school's response to the implementation of the digital competence framework is a particular strength. This has led to most pupils developing strong ICT skills.

Members of the governing body are supportive of the school and know its community well. They meet regularly and fulfil their statutory obligations efficiently. Governors receive detailed reports from the headteacher and senior leaders about progress in relation to the school's priorities. They have a good understanding of how well the school is performing. Most governors take an active role in contributing to the self-evaluation process, for example, they conduct learning walks around the school and make useful suggestions on how to improve areas of learning. Their role in determining the school's strategic direction and holding leaders to account is well developed.

The school uses its resources efficiently. Leaders make good use of the experience and expertise of teaching and support staff. The school has developed the outdoor provision successfully providing good opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills in particular. However, not all teachers plan well enough for its use. A wide range of good quality resources supports the delivery of the curriculum well. Leaders make good use of grant funding to enhance learning opportunities for vulnerable pupils, such as, to support pupils' wellbeing and their cultural development, and to reduce the impact of poverty.

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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