



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

A report on

**Marlborough Primary School
Blenheim Road
Roath
Cardiff
CF23 5BS**

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by

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

About Marlborough Primary School

Marlborough Primary School serves the areas of Penylan and Roath in Cardiff. There are currently 523 pupils on roll, including 64 part-time pupils in the nursery. The school has 16 classes and two specialist resource base classes for children with severe and complex needs.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is 8%. This is well below the average for Wales of 18%. The school has identified 9% of pupils as having additional learning needs, well below the national average of 21%. Currently, 5% have a statement of special educational needs. Many of these pupils are in the two special resource base classes, with only a few in mainstream classes. The local authority currently looks after four pupils.

About a third of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and about a quarter speak English as an additional language. Among these pupils, there are 28 different home languages.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2011. The school was last inspected in January 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

At Marlborough Primary School, nearly all pupils feel safe and valued. They behave very well and are polite, caring and respectful towards each other and adults. They have positive attitudes to learning, which is a strength of the school. Most pupils develop their personal and social skills to a high standard and show respect and concern for others. Most make good progress in developing their numeracy and literacy skills, levels of oracy skills are particularly good. In most classes, teaching is good, lessons are stimulating and pupils apply themselves well to tasks. Throughout the school, most pupils with additional needs achieve well. The majority of pupils in the learning resource base make steady progress, often from very low starting points. The headteacher, along with the senior leadership team, promotes a clear vision and provides strong leadership. Governors understand their role and support the school effectively. Self-evaluation procedures generally identify relevant strengths and areas for development. Findings feed purposefully into the school development plan and bring about improved outcomes for pupils

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 Sharpen monitoring and school improvement planning so that it identifies precisely the specific aspects that require improvement
- R2 Share the school's best practice in teaching to improve pace and pupil engagement in all classes
- R3 Implement the planning for developing pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills fully across the school

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils enter the school with standards at or above those normally expected for their age. Most make good progress during their time at the school and leave with standards at least in line with expectations.

Most pupils have well-developed oracy skills. In the foundation phase, most speak clearly and confidently to adults and each other. For instance, pupils in Year 2 discuss enthusiastically the conditions that their seeds will need in order to germinate knowledgeably. Pupils from the learning resource base take pride in showing their school to important visitors and explaining how the different areas are used. Across key stage 2, most pupils build well on these early skills. In class, they use their speaking skills well to develop their thinking and reasoning, for example to consider why there are imperial, metric and non-standard systems of measurement. They articulate their views to different audiences using a wide, well-chosen vocabulary. For example, Year 6 pupils discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Brexit confidently with inspectors.

Most pupils develop their reading skills well as they move through the school. In lower foundation phase, most pupils learn the sounds that letters make and use this knowledge well to decode simple words. By Year 2, most read simple texts fluently, with expression and understanding. They talk about their favourite authors and the books that they enjoy reading. By Year 4, many pupils enjoy reading more challenging texts, for instance making use of dialect and accent to portray Hagrid's character in a Harry Potter novel. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils are competent readers. They infer information from what they read, and form logical deductions.

Most pupils across the school make good progress in writing. Many foundation phase pupils form their letters correctly and, by the end of Year 2, many write thoughtfully, for example to report on the amount of litter on local beaches or to describe a character from a story. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils write in a neat, joined script and construct interesting, correctly punctuated sentences. More able pupils think carefully about the messages they convey through their writing. For example, Year 6 pupils write persuasively about whether they think commercial fishing is responsible or not. However, pupils only occasionally write imaginatively at length, for example to create stories.

In the foundation phase, most pupils ask and respond to simple questions in Welsh appropriately, for example asking how they are when greeting one another. In key stage 2, most pupils develop their Welsh language skills well during Welsh lessons. By Year 6, most write simple sentences accurately, and read from suitable Welsh texts with growing understanding. Members of the Criw Cwmreig promote Welsh games such as Mr Blaidd on the playground. Older pupils understand the importance of learning Welsh, although use of their oracy skills beyond Welsh lessons is limited.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop their mathematical skills well. Most understand how numbers work and correctly perform age-appropriate calculations. They estimate and measure length and weight accurately, and use a range of graphs and charts to represent data. From Year 2, most pupils use their maths skills effectively to solve problems and reason about numbers. Most pupils use their numeracy skills very well in other subject areas, for example in science, where they record data from investigations carefully and use it skilfully to draw conclusions about their work.

Pupils' skills in ICT are appropriate. For example, in the foundation phase, most use applications to practise their spelling and number skills on tablet computers confidently. They use a drawing application to produce simple pictures independently. In key stage 2, most pupils use word processing and presentation software confidently to communicate information effectively and create simple graphs and spreadsheets. They use tablet computers effectively to research information.

Pupils with additional needs in the mainstream classes make good progress against their individual targets. However, pupils in the specialist resource base do not always make good enough progress from their starting points and in relation to their ability, particularly in developing their writing skills across key stage 2.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Pupils' wellbeing and attitudes to learning are good. In lessons and at break times, nearly all pupils behave well. They are tolerant, polite, caring and respectful towards each other and adults.

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute well to their success as they progress through the school. Most pupils are confident, capable and resilient learners.

Across the school, pupils are involved in shaping their own learning by contributing their ideas and interests at the start of new topics. When talking about their work, pupils are enthusiastic and keen to share their ideas and opinions. However, when there is over-directed learning by adults, a few pupils lose concentration and attention. Pupils work well together as learning partners. This approach encourages them to learn from one other and to develop the skills of co-operation and independency.

Most pupils feel safe in school and know who to go to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils look after each other and care for their friends. For example, older pupils who are Buddies, Pals and Peacemakers provide friendship and support during lunchtime. Most pupils understand how to stay safe online.

Pupils who are involved in leadership roles, such as school council and eco council members, develop a good understanding of the purpose of committees and the part they play in decision-making. Members take their responsibilities seriously and pupils work hard to improve their school. For example, the school council has worked with staff to review the school's behaviour management policy. Pupils identify charities to support and organise events to raise funds for them.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of being active and living a healthy lifestyle. Many pupils are enthusiastic about taking part in physical education and outdoor learning activities. Year 6 pupils speak with enthusiasm and excitement about the benefits they gained from their residential trips to Llangrannog and Abernant outdoor learning centres. Most pupils develop good social, creative and physical skills through an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs.

Most pupils are developing well as ethically informed citizens. For example, Year 6 pupils show a good understanding of the importance of sustainability in the fishing industry and suggest sensible solutions to address the problems. Many children understand that the choices they make have an impact on the environment.

Pupils' attendance has remained strong over a number of years. School council members appreciate the importance of attending school regularly. They designed and displayed attendance posters to promote and encourage good attendance by all. Punctuality is good, with most pupils arriving in school on time for the start of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Across the school, the curriculum is varied and interesting and provides a broad range of experiences through themes that stimulate and engage most pupils. Teachers consult pupils about what they know about their new topic and discuss what they would like to learn. For example, pupils in Year 4 chose to find out more about the belief systems of world religions so they could gain a better understanding of the faiths of some of their peers. This provides good motivation for them to learn. Across the school, teachers work closely with support staff to plan and deliver a range of good quality learning experiences that engage most pupils effectively.

There are good opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills progressively in their work across the curriculum. As a result, pupils in key stage 2 write in a range of interesting genres, including recounts of visits, a manifesto to stand for the school council, persuasive writing and newspaper reports. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces of imaginative writing. Careful planning enables pupils to apply their numeracy skills purposefully in different subject areas, particularly geography and science.

In most instances, where teaching enables pupils to make the best progress, teachers question pupils skilfully to assess their understanding and to move their learning forward. Most teachers display good subject knowledge and understand how pupils learn best. They make good use of talking partners to enable pupils to articulate their learning. However, occasionally, there is a lack of pace and, in some cases, learning experiences are too adult-directed and limit pupils' independence.

All teachers provide useful verbal and written feedback to pupils on the quality of their work. In most classes, written comments make it clear what a pupil has achieved and identify what they need to do next to improve their work. Useful opportunities for pupils to mark each other's work are helpful and enable them to identify for themselves what they need to do to improve.

The school has invested heavily in improving the infrastructure and hardware for pupils' ICT. As a result, nearly all pupils have opportunities to use ICT regularly. Recent planning to improve pupils' ICT skills progressively and systematically has been developed, but it is too early to see the impact of this on pupil outcomes.

The school has a progressive approach to developing pupils' Welsh skills across the school. Every class has a daily helpwr heddiw session that enables pupils to practise speaking Welsh regularly in class. However, there are missed opportunities to encourage pupils to speak Welsh outside the classroom. Teachers take good account of pupils' views to encourage the use of Welsh in the playground through games and activities. Topics such as Post War Wales, Welsh Heroes and Villains and Once Upon a time in Wales introduce pupils to Welsh artists, including Graham Sutherland and Kyffin Williams, and to the richness of the countryside and history of Wales.

In lower foundation phase classes, a good mix of adult-directed and independent, child-led activities encourages them to participate in purposeful play, challenges pupils and enables them to develop independence. However, in older foundation phase classes, there are too few opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through play, investigation and exploration outdoors.

Throughout the school, planned visits linked to current topics enhance pupils' learning well. For example, pupils visit Cardiff Bay to learn about the history and development of the area and the Brecon Beacons to compare different habitats and to experience orienteering.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring and inclusive community that helps to develop pupils' strong personal social and emotional skills.

Appropriate tracking is in place for monitoring pupil progress, although systems are not yet refined enough to identify accurately how well specific groups of pupils progress from their starting points. Regular progress and wellbeing meetings use a range of relevant information to identify pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Teachers and leaders use this information suitably to allocate a variety of interventions to support identified pupils' learning.

Suitably trained support staff deliver literacy and numeracy intervention programmes effectively. These sessions support pupils with weaker literacy and numeracy skills to make good progress. The school has useful systems in place to track and support pupils' attendance and wellbeing, for example through specific interventions to support vulnerable pupils. The popular SNUG (Safe, Nurtured, Understood and Guided) area provides a safe space for pupils who find playtimes challenging. Staff use a range of nurturing principles to support vulnerable pupils to build their self-confidence and self-esteem. As a result, most pupils with additional needs in mainstream classes make appropriate progress. However, provision for pupils with more complex needs in the designated specialist resource base is variable. For example, these pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing independently at a level appropriate to them.

There are positive working relationships with parents and the school communicates important information about the life of the school effectively through a variety of methods, including a monthly newsletter, social media and the school website. Parents value the school's open door policy and weekly drop-in sessions that senior leaders provide. These offer suitable opportunities for them express their views or raise concerns. A recent valuable workshop for parents helped them to understand how the school uses feedback to improve pupils' learning and how parents could help at home. The school has developed good relationships with a wide range of professional agencies to support pupils with identified needs. For example, regular coffee mornings include relevant workshops by professionals to help support parents of pupils in the specialist resource base. The wellbeing team also provides beneficial support to parents on an individual basis.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, particularly online, effectively. There are appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including geology and French. Activities such as gymnastics, netball, football, and dancefit, together with regular PE sessions and health week, successfully promote pupils' awareness of the importance of keeping fit.

There are valuable opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of right and wrong through assemblies and class topics, and for pupils to develop tolerance and respect for each other. For example, pupils from the specialist resource base integrate seamlessly into afternoon lessons to learn alongside their peers. Visits from local Sikh, Muslim and Christian religious leaders enhance pupils' understanding of spiritual similarities and differences. Most pupils develop a suitable understanding of their culture and local community through their class work, trips and visits. For example, the choir sings in the locality and older members of the community regularly listen to pupils reading. Staff provide effective support for pupils to develop resilience in their learning. For example, they focus on highlighting the importance of making mistakes, collaboration and persistence.

The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to express themselves creatively through music art and drama. For example, in their art lessons older pupils draw still life sketches, portraits and landscapes to a high standard and study different artistic styles such as the work of Jackson Pollock and Keith Haring. There are opportunities for pupils to learn to play an instrument or sing in the choir and perform at local events. These enhance pupils' self-confidence and their expressive capabilities well.

Safeguarding meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides strong leadership with a focus on maintaining high standards and improving provision. She communicates this well to all staff and the wider community, providing a very clear sense of direction. Members of the newly-formed senior leadership team support the headteacher well. They set high expectations to create a welcoming learning environment for all pupils. Leadership responsibilities are distributed thoughtfully and this is particularly effective in developing the staff's leadership skills in many areas of school life.

Nearly all staff fulfil their roles conscientiously and work well together as a close and effective team. They collaborate effectively to drive forward identified priorities and often share positive features of its provision with other schools locally and further afield. The school is successful in meeting many local and national priorities, particularly through initiatives to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment. However, efforts to support improvements in ICT and Welsh are taking longer to demonstrate sustained pupil progress.

The governing body is organised effectively and provides good levels of support and challenge to the school. Governors have recently completed a skills audit to highlight their strengths and training needs. The results have been used to match their experience and expertise to relevant curriculum areas to benefit the school. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and challenge the school appropriately.

The process of self-evaluation is well established. Leaders make good use of the information provided by parents, pupils, governors and staff to identify broad areas for improvement. They use a suitable range of first-hand evidence, including lesson observations, the analysis of data and the scrutiny of pupils' work, to support their findings. However, leaders do not always pinpoint the key areas for development, for example the need to refine school tracking systems to identify how well groups of pupils progress from their starting points and the few inconsistencies in teaching and learning experiences for pupils across the school.

The school's ability to plan effectively for improvement has raised standards in many areas. For example, a focus on the visual aspects of learning has led to improvements in pupils' attitudes to learning, and a whole-school focus on improving standards of numeracy has resulted in better outcomes for nearly all pupils. The school improvement plan has a suitable number of broad strategic priorities, each led by a member of the senior leadership team. Each priority has clear actions, costings and timescales for development.

The headteacher and senior leaders ensure that all staff receive opportunities to engage in a wide range of high quality professional learning activities. They have arranged for all staff to experience training from a number of very prominent educationalists and, as a result, most staff have improved their practice. For example, training in formative assessment has enabled teachers to create learning environments for pupils to become more active learners. The headteacher ensures that staff receive bespoke training to develop their leadership skills. This includes external training for senior leaders and opportunities for staff to work in teams to support school improvement. This has resulted in the school strengthening the internal leadership capacity to secure improvements in standards and provision. Leaders manage the process of performance management for teaching and support staff effectively and, in many instances, this has had positive impact on staff wellbeing and raising standards.

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 for the nursery and reception classes, providing good opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills in particular. 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. The headteacher and governors work closely together to provide strong financial management and ensure that the school receives good value for money in the purchases it makes.

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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