



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

A report on

**Somerton Primary School
Hawthorn Fosse
Newport
NP19 9AB**

Date of inspection: June 2019

by

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

About Somerton Primary School

Somerton Primary School is in the city centre of Newport. There are 185 pupils on roll aged from 3 to 11 years of age, including 20 part-time nursery pupils. They are taught in six mixed-age classes with a few pupils spending part of their day in nurture provision.

The three year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 45%, which is well above the national average of 18%. The school identifies around 30% of pupils as having additional learning needs. Just over a quarter of pupils come from an ethnic minority background and around 24% speak English as an additional language. A very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

The interim executive headteacher took up her post in September 2016 and is also the substantive headteacher of Eveswell Primary School. The local authority has opened a consultation into the possibility of creating a permanent federation between the two schools.

The school's previous inspection was in October 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

Most pupils at Somerton Primary School make strong progress from their starting points as they move through the school. They develop effective literacy and numeracy skills that they apply well in subjects across the curriculum. They behave well and show high levels of tolerance and consideration for other pupils and adults. Staff know their pupils well. Teachers deliver lessons and plan learning experiences that engage and motivate pupils successfully. The school's systems for tracking and monitoring pupil progress are very effective in ensuring that pupils make good progress over time. The school's nurture provision provides high quality support for vulnerable pupils, which helps to improve confidence and attendance significantly for these pupils. Leadership at the school is exceptional. Senior leaders have a clear vision for continued school improvement and their work has had an outstanding impact on all areas of the school in recent years.

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

Recommendations

R1 Raise standards in Welsh oracy

R2 Improve the independence of pupils involved in groups such as the school council

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 case studies on its work in relation to supporting vulnerable pupils through nurture provision, and whole school improvement through highly effective school-to-school working, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils enter the school with language and numeracy skills that are well below those expected for pupils of their age. However, most pupils make good and often very good progress in developing these skills by the end of Year 6. Nearly all pupils with additional learning needs make at least good progress from their starting points.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop effective listening skills. A majority speak appropriately to communicate with adults and their friends, when describing characters from books such as 'Owl Babies' for example. However many pupils do not pronounce all words clearly. The majority of key stage 2 pupils are articulate and express their ideas and opinions maturely. They listen to the views of others respectfully and adapt their speech and style to suit a range of situations, including purposeful discussions about the benefits and disadvantages of plastic use.

Most pupils enjoy reading books and respond enthusiastically to a range of texts from an early age. As they move through the foundation phase, most make effective progress in developing their reading skills and demonstrate a sound understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds. In key stage 2, most pupils apply their reading skills effectively when working across the curriculum. Many read and interpret information in books and on the internet, skimming and scanning texts efficiently when carrying out research for their topic work.

By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils write well for a wide range of purposes, for example writing short poems to describe dinosaurs and creating non-chronological reports about the Sumatran tiger. They write legibly and use basic punctuation accurately. A majority spell common words well and make suitable attempts at spelling more difficult words. Many pupils in key stage 2 write fluently and at length for a range of audiences. For example, Year 4 pupils write detailed non-chronological reports about Tudor monarchs and Year 6 pupils write detailed recounts of a visit to Dan yr Ogorf Caves. Throughout the school, many pupils use a good range of punctuation for their age. Most pupils take great pride in their work. The standard of handwriting and presentation is consistently high and is a strength of the school.

By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils develop effective number skills. Most read and write numbers to 100 and compare and order two-digit numbers accurately. When using money, most pupils add up and give change under one pound accurately. Many pupils apply these skills efficiently to a real-life context, for example, hatching chicks in the incubator and charging entry to visit the chicks, calculating the profit made.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils reach a good standard in mathematics. Many calculate the percentage or fraction of an amount competently, for example when calculating the reduction in price of Chinese food in a sale. They multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals accurately. Many pupils measure carefully and calculate the internal angles of three and four sided shapes correctly. Many pupils

construct accurate line graphs to show the drop in temperature when using different insulators and most construct pie charts accurately. Many pupils apply their numeracy skills well across the curriculum.

At the end of the foundation phase, many pupils understand basic Welsh instructions and they use simple words and phrases to respond suitably. In designated Welsh lessons, key stage 2 pupils ask and answer simple questions related to their topics and a few are beginning to extend their sentences. However, pupils do not engage in Welsh conversations outside these lessons and many struggle to recall the Welsh they have learnt previously. As they move through the school, the majority of pupils make suitable progress in improving their Welsh reading and writing skills.

Many pupils improve their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well and use them confidently to support their work in other curriculum areas. In nursery, pupils develop an understanding of how technology can help them when playing in an office area, using a telephone and keyboard naturally in their play. In Year 1, pupils improve their number skills well by using a range of stimulating computer games.

In key stage 2, many pupils become skilled at using ICT in a wide range of situations. For example, Year 3 pupils use drawing packages competently to construct disaster-proof buildings and pupils in Year 4 create eye-catching leaflets to display Welsh food. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use coding skills with understanding to create their own adventure games. They interrogate databases correctly to eliminate suspects when solving a crime and use simple spreadsheets to collect and organise data.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils feel safe and secure in school. They know that staff listen to them and deal quickly with any problems that they might have. Most have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

Nearly all pupils have a strong awareness of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. Pupils in the foundation phase grow a range of vegetables in their courtyard garden, and pupils in the nurture class help cook healthy meals each week. Most pupils understand the need to exercise and enjoy regular physical activity at playtimes, for example by making good use of the playground trim trails. Many pupils in key stage 2 enjoy taking part in active extra-curricular clubs, such as netball and dance.

Many pupils are conscientious learners who take pride in their work and are keen to do well. Through a whole school approach, most pupils develop increasing resilience in their learning as they move through the school. Many pupils engage well with adults and each other. Younger pupils in particular are keen to talk to adults about their work and what they are doing in class. Most pupils behave well in classrooms. This includes when working independently and with an adult. They know the school rules and appreciate that staff apply them consistently. Most pupils move around the school calmly and behave well at playtimes.

Many pupils co-operate well when working in pairs and in small groups and they help each other with their work. They concentrate well for appropriate periods. For example, Year 1 pupils watch carefully to record how many different types of birds visit the school courtyard. As they move through the school, many pupils improve their independent learning skills rapidly. For example, pupils in nursery help themselves to their morning snack independently and older pupils take responsibility for organising the layout and design of work in their topic books.

Most pupils recognise the importance of caring for people less fortunate than themselves. They take part in regular charity events raising money for local, national and world causes. In addition, pupils deliver food parcels to older members of the local community at harvest time. Older pupils took part in a 'presents for the homeless' project where they helped to collect items for people living on the streets.

Many pupils take part successfully in community activities. For example, Year 5 pupils take part in litter picks in the local area and the school choir sing at a local supermarket at Christmas.

Many older pupils take on leadership roles with commitment. They participate in groups such as the school council and eco committee with enthusiasm. The work of these groups is beginning to have an impact on improving aspects of the school. For example, members of the Criw Cymraeg have recently started to lead assemblies and to promote a Welsh phrase of the week. However, most groups are mainly adult-led and pupils do not take on roles such as chairing meetings or preparing an agenda well enough.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

School staff provide a highly engaging curriculum that excites pupils and encourages them to learn and investigate in the indoor and outdoor learning environments. In nearly all classes, teachers and support staff foster positive attitudes to learning and engage pupils well. Nearly all teachers provide learning activities that promote and develop pupils' skills as independent learners effectively.

Teachers and support staff maintain strong working relationships with pupils and have consistently high expectations of pupil standards and behaviour. On the few occasions required, staff address any instances of poor behaviour firmly, but with empathy and in nearly all instances, this is effective in defusing situations and bringing pupils back on task.

Nearly all teachers use their ongoing assessments of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well to design activities that challenge pupils to achieve at a level that is appropriate to their ability. As a result, most pupils make good progress in developing and consolidating these skills during lessons across the curriculum.

Many staff provide useful written and verbal feedback to pupils that indicates clearly what pupils have done successfully and what they need to do to improve further. In many cases, teachers provide older pupils with time each week to respond to their written comments. This enhances pupils' skill development effectively and strengthens their ability to edit their own work independently.

Nearly all school staff support the curriculum well through a programme of valuable visits to places such as local farms and heritage sites, along with regular visits by speakers to the school. As part of the key stage 2 curriculum, the school offers pupils an enhanced variety of musical experiences, including African drumming and singing. These activities effectively inspire pupils to try activities they may not have experienced previously.

Nearly all teachers capture pupils' imagination well. Topical projects, such as Black History Month, and celebrations from cultures represented in the school provide insight into the real world and raise pupils' aspirations and sense of belonging. The school has started to plan well for the implementation of the digital competence framework which has improved opportunities considerably for pupils to enhance their learning through the use of technology.

There are generally appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in specific Welsh lessons. Many adults model the Welsh language with pupils regularly during the school day, which ensures that nearly all pupils have a good understanding and a positive attitude towards the language. However, this has not yet had sufficient time to impact on improving standards.

Teachers ensure that pupils learn about the culture and heritage of Wales meaningfully. For example, the school holds an annual school Eisteddfod and pupils study the works of famous Welsh artists including Rhiannon Roberts and David Burton. Pupils also have opportunities to research local Welsh landmarks such as Tredegar house and Newport castle. Most pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of being bilingual and view Welsh as a living, useful language.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is a caring, inclusive community that supports pupils' social and emotional development highly effectively. This has a very positive impact on pupils' standards and sense of wellbeing. Teachers identify pupils' educational, emotional and social needs at an early stage and apply an individualised, bespoke approach that fosters and promotes pupils' good behaviour. Nearly all adults are consistent and highly skilled in establishing positive and purposeful relationships with parents and pupils to support the school's aspiration of every child being 'Respectful, Safe and Successful'.

The school has high quality procedures in place to track and monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing. All pupils have detailed, practical one-page profiles that all staff understand fully and use highly effectively to support each pupil. Teachers use carefully-considered individual education plans to provide beneficial support for pupils with additional learning needs. The plans include focused and measurable targets that staff, parents and pupils agree and review regularly. Senior leaders maintain a clear and rigorous focus on improving pupil outcomes and as a result, nearly all targeted pupils make very good progress in line with their abilities and needs. All parents receive regular and accessible information about their child's progress during parents' evenings and through informative end-of-year pupil reports.

Support staff liaise skilfully with external agencies to deliver relevant, well-planned intervention programmes that ensure that pupils, including those with English as an additional language, make accelerated progress.

Over the last three years, the school's nurture provision has had a significant and positive impact on improving the self-esteem and confidence of some of the school's most vulnerable pupils through high quality targeted support. As a result, nearly all identified pupils demonstrate improved levels of attendance, behaviour and engagement in school life. Support for pupils with additional learning needs is a very strong feature of the school.

The school makes effective use of a range of strategies, incentives and rewards to improve attendance, for example through the weekly celebration of good attendance and class awards. As a result, attendance rates show a general improving trend over the past three years.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills. For example, pupils in Year 4 and 5 have the opportunity to take part in an "ID" project, enabling them to work with a specialist artist and use forensic science and databases. These opportunities help to develop pupils' self-confidence and have a positive impact on their expressive capacities and their ability to work in a team.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development successfully by providing regular collective worship assemblies and through class-based discussions. The school develops cultural values well, for example through visits from parents who talk about their different home cultures and traditions. This helps to create a strong sense of tolerance and belonging.

Staff encourage pupils to eat and drink healthily and to participate in a wide range of physical activity. These include structured playtime games and extra-curricular experiences including football and dance clubs that promote health and fitness extremely well. The school teaches pupils how to stay safe including when using the internet. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The interim executive headteacher provides the school with highly effective leadership. This has had a significant impact on improving standards of pupils' outcomes and their wellbeing over the past three years. She works successfully with members of the school and local community to bring to life her vision for inclusive and nurturing provision for all pupils.

The headteacher is supported by a skilled and committed deputy headteacher who assumes responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school in her absence. The high expectations they have for pupils and staff derive from firm educational values, a strong moral purpose and ambitious objectives for all. These well-embedded features of leadership at all levels in the school have a very positive impact on improving pupils' progress and standards.

Staff have high regard for leaders and recognise the impact that they have made on moving the school forward. There is a strong sense of teamwork at all levels. All staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, exemplified in detailed job descriptions. Leaders ensure that they hold all members of staff to account for their work through robust performance management processes

A notable feature of the school's work is the way the governing body provides constructive support, challenge and valuable professional expertise in specific areas of the school's work. Governors have a sound understanding of the school's performance through the dedicated work of sub-committees supported by exceptionally purposeful information from leaders. Governors provide highly robust challenge to leaders on the impact of school improvement actions.

The school has a highly effective culture of continuous self-evaluation, which focuses clearly on pupils' outcomes. Regular activities, such as lesson observations, book scrutiny and whole school moderation of standards, give school leaders and staff an accurate picture of their strengths and areas to improve.

A comprehensive development plan links well to the outcomes of the self-evaluation process. It includes precise details about the school's main priorities. Detailed plans and actions for improvement support school development priorities effectively. Over recent years, the school has been very successful in identifying and improving important priorities, such as pupil behaviour and standards of literacy and numeracy.

A particularly successful aspect of the school's work is that all teachers work with a neighbouring school to help improve their practice. Leaders organise opportunities for staff to receive specific advice and helpful feedback about their practice. This ensures that teaching across the school is now effective in engaging pupils' interest and challenging all pupils to achieve to a high standard.

Leaders encourage all members of staff to develop professionally and collaboratively within their roles. Most teachers are members of professional learning groups. This has a strong impact on enhancing many aspects of the school's provision. For example, teachers have worked together to improve provision for reading and, as a result, standards and pupils' attitudes towards reading have improved greatly. In addition, extensive work to develop the outdoor provision for the foundation phase has increased pupils' independence. Teaching assistants also have valuable opportunities to develop their expertise, for example by visiting other schools to observe effective practice. The school works closely in partnership with its cluster of schools. In particular, this work has had a positive impact on the way that the school has developed its approach to improving attendance rates.

The school has a high quality range of resources to support pupils' learning and wellbeing successfully. Leaders and governors manage the school budget carefully to improve pupil standards and provision. They ensure that expenditure links directly to meeting the priorities in the school development plan. Leaders take full advantage of a wide range of opportunities to access additional funding and resources from external partners. This has enabled the school to make significant improvements, for example in increasing provision for ICT and for developing the outdoors.

Leaders make very good use of the pupil development grant to improve standards of literacy and numeracy for potentially vulnerable pupils, as well as providing valuable support for pupils' emotional wellbeing. Leaders have prioritised spending to support their highly effective nurture programme and this provides vulnerable pupils with an improved sense of self-worth and resilience.

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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