



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

A report on

**Wauanceirch Primary School
Dwr Y Felin Road
Wauanceirch
Neath
Wauanceirch
SA10 7RW**

Date of inspection: June 2019

by

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

About Waunceirch Primary School

Waunceirch Primary School is in Neath in the Neath Port Talbot local authority. Currently, there are 226 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11. This includes 20 pupils who attend the two learning resource centres. The school has eight other classes.

The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 31%, which is well above the national average of 18%. The school identifies around 43% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is well above the national average of 21%. A very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background. A very few speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher was appointed in February 2015. The school's previous inspection was in March 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

Most pupils, including those in the learning resource centres, make good progress from their starting points. Pupils take on roles and responsibilities enthusiastically and contribute well to the life of the school. The school develops the wellbeing of pupils well. Staff create a caring, inclusive, family ethos. This has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement, their attitudes to learning and behaviour.

Teachers give pupils a wide range of stimulating learning opportunities. These are effective in engaging most to succeed and to give of their best. There are many opportunities for pupils to contribute to the choice of themes and topics. The school promotes pupils' understanding of Welsh culture and heritage well.

The leadership of the school is effective and senior leaders work well with a supportive and committed team of staff. Staff benefit well from well-planned professional development opportunities.

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 Enhance the opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh language skills outside of designated Welsh lessons

R2 Improve pupils' attendance

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

As pupils move through the school, most make good progress from their starting points, including those with additional learning needs and pupils in the learning resource centres.

In the foundation phase, most pupils listen attentively to adults and respond sensibly to questions. By Year 2, most develop their speaking skills effectively and give clear explanations when asked to identify verbs and adjectives. Many develop well as readers and use a suitable range of strategies to read simple texts independently and enthusiastically. Many read with understanding and use their knowledge of sounds suitably to tackle unfamiliar words. Many pupils in the nursery and reception classes enjoy experimenting with mark-making and eagerly make shapes and patterns in the sand. By the end of Year 2, most pupils organise their ideas well and they write engaging pieces of extended prose, for example on schools past and present.

Most pupils in key stage 2 have effective listening skills and speak confidently in class, for example, when discussing their proposed new project on adventurous activities. Most demonstrate a good understanding of what they read in different texts. They use dictionaries and internet searches well to learn about new words or topics. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate a strong interest in books, for example by Roald Dahl and J K Rowling, and talk enthusiastically about the characters and plots. In Year 6, pupils read a range of non-fiction books competently, for example on space, penguins and the 1960s. Across key stage 2, pupils write in a suitable range of forms. Older pupils plan their work well and use an impressive range of vocabulary, for example when writing about King Richard and the adventures of Robin Hood. They structure their writing successfully, using appropriate punctuation and paragraphs, for instance when writing sensitive pieces on the Aberfan disaster.

Across the school, many pupils develop a basic understanding of Welsh words and phrases. A few read simple Welsh texts suitably. Pupils' writing skills develop appropriately. However, most pupils lack the skills and confidence to speak Welsh, especially outside of designated Welsh lessons.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their mathematical skills well. For example, in Year 2 most develop a useful knowledge of number bonds up to 100. They add and subtract well and apply their knowledge to simple problems. For example, when working out the cost of items in a shop, they are able to give the correct change from a pound. They use standard units to measure how far a car rolled down a slope and measure different packages of food for the shop. In key stage 2, most pupils continue to make good progress and they apply suitable calculation strategies, using the four rules of number to solve problems. They have a sound understanding of shape and area and most use different units correctly for measuring and weighing. Many can solve problems using basic algebra, for example when working out the perimeters of irregular shapes. Pupils transfer their numeracy skills effectively to other areas of the curriculum, particularly when solving real-life problems, such as when they use co-ordinates to read a map of Folly Farm.

As they move through the school, nearly all pupils develop effective information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Nearly all nursery pupils use remote control vehicles with increasing skill. Most pupils in the foundation phase access and navigate online activities successfully, including data-handling programs. Nearly all pupils in Year 2 create bar charts and simple databases confidently. In key stage 2, most pupils in Year 3 create well-structured databases and use a range of applications efficiently to create soundscapes and trailers for their stop-motion animations. Most pupils in Years 5 and 6 use spreadsheets to manage a budget successfully, for example when costing the re-design of the school playground. Most Year 6 pupils create competent databases on penguins and use the green screen to superimpose photographs of themselves onto festive landscapes.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe and valued in school. They demonstrate care and tolerance for each other and treat other pupils and adults with respect and consideration. Most pupils respond positively to school rules and understand the consequences of unacceptable behaviour. The pupil safeguarding officers provide a high level of support and help other pupils to resolve issues in school and on the yard.

Most pupils know how to stay healthy by eating a balanced diet and through undertaking regular physical activity. For example, the healthy eating officers ensure that pupils choose healthy options for playtime snacks and at lunchtimes. The school organises regular 'healthy lunchbox' competitions and pupils in Years 3 and 4 work with the local authority's healthy schools officer to investigate sugar levels in the drinks that pupils bring to school.

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and show positive attitudes to their learning. They demonstrate curiosity and imagination and participate eagerly in a wide range of interesting learning opportunities. Pupils' resilience and determination to succeed contribute effectively towards ensuring that they show high levels of motivation and interest in their work. For instance, older pupils in the foundation phase refer to scaffolds displayed in the classroom when facing difficulties with a task. In key stage 2, pupils regularly seek the advice of another pupil in class.

Most pupils develop independent learning skills well in the foundation phase and use these purposefully as they progress through the school. Across the school, most pupils collaborate successfully in pairs and small groups and, as a result, their confidence in speaking with others develops very well. Most are confident to take risks and to undertake new challenges and they understand that they learn from making mistakes. In the learning support centres, most pupils make good progress in developing the skills and strategies necessary to understand their feelings and manage their behaviour successfully.

Throughout the school, pupils contribute purposefully to decisions about what and how they learn. They also play a significant part in the development of many school improvement initiatives. For example, pupils revised the structure of the school council to make it more of a whole-school council to ensure that all pupils' voices are heard. Most pupils develop a good understanding of their own rights and of the challenges faced by children in different communities.

The school employs a range of strategies to promote good attendance and current rates of attendance show signs of improvement. However, the overall attendance of pupils has been low when compared to that in similar schools over the last few years.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

All members of staff have positive and effective working relationships with pupils. They are calm and respectful in their interactions with pupils and display a strong understanding of their needs. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Most use an appropriate range of strategies successfully to gain pupils' attention and to sustain a suitable pace of learning. All teachers share learning objectives appropriately with pupils and provide clear instructions that enable pupils to approach tasks confidently. Most teachers match activities to meet the needs of pupils successfully, including those with additional learning needs. Teachers in the learning resource centres collaborate together well to provide effective learning experiences for pupils.

Most lessons move at a suitable pace and teachers use probing questions well to develop pupils' thinking skills and to extend their understanding. Teaching assistants are effective in providing additional support for learning and helping to meet pupils' needs. During lessons, teachers provide useful feedback to help pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to improve. They praise, encourage, and challenge pupils and support their progress effectively.

Members of staff reflect well on their practice and are developing creative approaches to learning. The curriculum links pupils' learning to the four purposes of the new curriculum for Wales well and places a strong emphasis on pupil-led activities. Topics are planned carefully following discussions with pupils about what they already know and what they would like to investigate. This ensures that pupils' learning experiences build on their current knowledge effectively. For example, in key stage 2, older pupils develop an interest in the 1960s after visiting a particular venue and research the topic in detail. They study key events of the decade and design and create attractive items of clothing from the period.

In the foundation phase, staff nurture pupils' independence and develop their skills successfully. There is a beneficial mix of adult-led and child-led activities. The staff develop a learning environment in classrooms that is stimulating and engaging for pupils. Planned activities make purposeful use of the outdoor provision. For example, teachers ensure that pupils develop their practical skills successfully when using the school allotment to grow their own produce.

Staff offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils and many pupils have the opportunity to engage in and benefit from these additional learning experiences, such as the sports, pet, art and craft, eco, cooking and storytelling clubs. These have a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and their personal and social skills.

The curriculum promotes the history and culture of Wales well and provides a clear focus on local places of interest. For example, pupils regularly visit St Fagans and various venues in Cardiff, Caerleon and Merthyr Tydful. The school celebrates St David's and St Dwynwen's days and pupils take turns to act as helpwyr heddiw and members of the criw Cymraeg. The provision for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills through designated Welsh lessons is appropriate. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and improve their Welsh oracy skills outside of designated Welsh lessons.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has effective tracking systems to monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing. Teachers use the tracking and assessment information they collect to provide beneficial intervention programmes for pupils in need of support. As a result, most pupils make good progress toward their individual learning targets.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator monitors and supports pupils with additional learning needs effectively. There are regular reviews of pupils' individual education plans, which reflect pupils' needs well. The school works closely with a variety of external agencies, such as speech and language specialists and the counselling service, to provide effective support for pupils. The Little Stars class provides vulnerable pupils in the foundation phase with a bespoke curriculum and, as a result, many of these pupils integrate effectively into mainstream classes as they progress to key stage 2.

The school implements a wide range of strategies to develop pupils' personal and social skills to a high level. These programmes reflect the school's aim to promote respect, resilience and responsibility. For example, whole-school emotional learning support arrangements help pupils to regulate their own behaviour and to make positive choices.

The school ensures that pupils have many opportunities to participate actively in the local community. For example, pupils help to improve the local environment by litter picking and they develop their understanding of citizenship and their responsibilities to others through visits to local businesses, such as the local hairdressing salon.

There are beneficial links with parents and the school uses a wide range of methods, including social media, to ensure that parents have up-to-date information about school events. The school provides guidance of high quality to parents whose children have complex needs. There are effective strategies to seek parents' views, for example, through regular coffee mornings when the school provides parents with information on how they can support their children at home. The school has a suitable range of activities to stress the importance of regular school attendance and persistent absence is low, but the arrangements have not secured high levels of attendance overall compared with other similar schools.

The school provides many successful opportunities to promote healthy living and there is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs that many pupils attend. The school offers a healthy breakfast and provides fresh fruit at break times. The healthy school pupil ambassadors carry out many purposeful activities to promote healthy living, including regular visits to assemblies, healthy lunchbox competitions and the development of the outdoor areas to promote active play.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development effectively during personal and social lessons. Visits to the local church and a retirement home promote pupils' social skills appropriately. Visitors to the school, such as an African steel drum group and Polish parents, help to develop pupils' cultural understanding successfully. The school also has close links with a college in Madrid and this enables pupils to compare their experiences with pupils in another country.

The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn the importance of staying safe, for example by discussing the dangers of substance misuse and teaching them internet safety rules. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher is a purposeful leader who has steered her staff along a highly effective improvement journey. She has a clear vision for the school, which is shared by staff, pupils, parents and governors. She receives strong support from the deputy headteacher and senior leaders, who provide clear strategic direction for the school and have high expectations of staff and pupils. All teaching staff contribute effectively to raising standards and improving provision in their various areas. Staff at all levels work together as a close and effective team and display purposeful leadership in their roles. Regular staff meetings consider important matters appropriately, such as the school development targets and pupils' performance.

Governors make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. They have a sound understanding of the school's priorities and they challenge leaders and managers to improve important aspects of the school's work, for example in relation to improvements in pupils' wellbeing. They receive informative reports on school performance from the headteacher, staff and pupils. The governors use this information well to check on the school's progress in implementing its strategic priorities and to make sure that the school is spending its money effectively. For example, during a recent learning walk, governors evaluated various pupil-led tasks and the positive impact that these were having on pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy.

The school has suitable processes to evaluate its performance and to plan for improvement. School leaders make suitable use of first-hand information, including lesson observations and listening to learners, in order to monitor pupils' progress. Staff identify strengths and areas for development accurately to inform improvement planning. For instance, as a result of improvements in the teaching of phonics, the school now shares its practices with other local schools. Staff, pupils, parents and governors contribute purposefully to the self-evaluation process. There is a clear link between the findings of self-evaluation activities and the priorities in the school development plan, which focuses well on improving provision and raising standards.

The school has robust performance management systems in place and relevant training supports this process well. A strong feature of the school's work is its success in providing many professional learning opportunities for staff. Individual staff learn well from others within the school and they share their own good practice with other schools. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities and well-trained support staff lead a range of effective intervention programmes.

The school uses its resources well. The indoor environment is attractive and pupils have access to resources of good quality. The outdoor learning environment is spacious with direct access to it from foundation phase classes. Staff ensure that pupils from across the school make extensive purposeful use of the forest school area.

The headteacher, with the support of the governing body, monitors the budget carefully. The school has a substantial deficit that has developed due to a variety of historical factors, mainly linked to the funding of a relatively large number of pupils with additional learning needs who require support on a one-to-one basis. The local authority has formally approved the school's deficit budget. Spending plans for the pupil development grant are clear and the school has an effective tracking system in place to measure the impact of any initiatives. As a result, pupils receiving the grant have successfully improved 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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