



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

A report on

**West Park Primary School
West Road
Nottage
Porthcawl
CF36 3SN**

Date of inspection: September 2019

by

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

About West Park Primary School

West Park Primary School is in Nottage, near Porthcawl in the Bridgend local authority. There are 416 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11, including 52 nursery children who attend full-time. There are 15 single-age classes in the school.

The rolling average for the past three years means that about 5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is well below the national average of 18%. Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

The school identifies around 6% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is much lower than the national average of 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2017. The school's last inspection was in October 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

While at West Park Primary School, nearly all pupils, including those who require additional support, make good progress from their individual starting points. The school provides a safe and caring environment where pupils thrive as confident, ambitious and resilient learners. Standards of pupils' behaviour are very good. Many pupils acquire valuable leadership skills through taking on a variety of additional responsibilities that have a significant influence on their wellbeing.

Teachers provide pupils with a challenging and stimulating curriculum through which they develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum's attention to 'mission time' activities develops pupils' creativity and independence well.

The headteacher has a clear vision for continuous improvement at the school. She receives valuable support from the team of staff who contribute well to key decisions relating to standards and provision. This collaborative approach builds leadership capacity within the school successfully. The school's processes for evaluating its strengths and areas for improvement are robust and effective.

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

Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' spelling and handwriting in key stage 2

R2 Extend the governing body's role in gathering first-hand information to support their decisions concerning standards, provision and finance

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 a case study on its work in relation to the contributions of many pupil groups, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils start school with age-appropriate skill levels overall. Many pupils start at nursery with well-developed speech. As they progress through the school, nearly all continue to improve their speaking skills and, by Year 6, many are articulate. In lessons, most pupils listen carefully. In groups, they show consideration and do not interrupt or contradict one another.

Nearly all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who need extra support, make good progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT from their individual starting points. Towards the end of the foundation phase, nearly all read confidently at an age-appropriate level. They decode unfamiliar words phonetically and, should they misread a word, they realise and correct themselves. They pay good attention to punctuation.

In key stage 2, nearly all pupils read widely, giving reasons for their preferences of books. They break down complex words successfully and many deduce the meanings of unfamiliar words from their context. A majority are beginning to use higher-order skills. For example, they analyse an author's style and recognise his using sarcasm for comic effect. Nearly all use indexes efficiently when searching non-fiction texts.

Most foundation phase pupils are developing a cursive style of handwriting and many join letters appropriately. However, the standard of pupils' handwriting and presentation in key stage 2 is variable.

In the foundation phase, many pupils write effectively for different purposes, for example, when recounting their visit to Caerphilly Castle. They use capital letters and full stops in their sentences and include adjectives for interest. Many pupils' spelling is either correct or plausible. When writing stories, they structure their work carefully with a beginning, middle and end. Many pupils make substantial progress over time.

Throughout key stage 2, nearly all pupils write extensively, adapting their style to suit their purpose and intended audience. Many write well at length in various contexts, for instance they write persuasive letters to the council outlining their concerns over litter. When summarising an experiment about how dolphins hear in water, they use technical vocabulary well. Many pupils punctuate their work accurately and organise writing in paragraphs correctly. However, a minority of pupils, including the most able, take insufficient care over spelling.

Most foundation phase pupils use their mathematical skills well in many contexts. For example, they use numbers up to a thousand in their 'Space' topic. They sort data about activities in a medieval castle and present findings in an accurate chart. They measure accurately in millimetres and use double numbers to design castles for knights and dragons. In key stage 2, most pupils use their mathematical skills well to solve problems, giving reasons for their thinking. Most apply a broad range of numeracy skills well across the curriculum. For example, they calculate the

distances Rugby World Cup teams travelled to Japan. When researching the number of straws used by pupils who drink school milk, they calculate that they generate nearly seven kilometres of plastic waste annually.

Nearly all pupils know how to stay safe on the internet. In the foundation phase, most pupils use their ICT skills confidently. They combine text, images and sounds to create a virtual superhero and compile fact files about planets. In key stage 2, pupils develop a wide range of ICT skills that support their learning well. They use various devices and apps to communicate ideas, sort and present data and model alternative scenarios. For example, they build spreadsheets to record their heart rates during exercise and create imaginative presentations using a green screen to highlight the problem of plastics in the ocean.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress in building their Welsh language skills. Many foundation phase pupils respond readily to questions and instructions in Welsh. They read in their Cwtch Cymraeg and write interesting letters to Mistr Urdd. Many develop a useful vocabulary of colours and everyday objects. In key stage 2, most engage in Welsh conversations confidently using present and past tenses correctly. They describe their families and name their favourite hobbies. Many in key stage 2 are beginning to write at length in Welsh, when entering the school eisteddfod, for example.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

The very high standard of pupils' wellbeing is a notable strength of the school. Nearly all pupils feel safe in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. They enjoy school activities and nearly all display exemplary behaviour in lessons and conduct themselves well at playtimes. Most pupils display high levels of care and concern for one another. They have strong, respectful working relationships with adults in the school and know where to turn to for support when needed.

Most pupils have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities in relation to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They respond well to the school's values framework that is evident across the school and exemplify a strong sense of respect, sensitivity and tolerance. They understand and show exceptional empathy with the feelings of others. For example, in their work on Malala Yousafzai and the difficulties she faced, many pupils describe the qualities she possesses to sustain her campaign. They are equally clear that with rights come responsibilities. As a result, most pupils have a deep understanding of fairness and equality and this is evident in their behaviour in and around the school. Pupils benefit from opportunities to understand their impact on the world through their work on plastic and its impact on the oceans. Pupils are eloquent advocates for environmental reform, and staff and parents refer proudly to the televised protest march against pollution. These experiences have had a very positive influence in developing pupils' creative, thinking and problem-solving skills, in addition to boosting their self-confidence.

Nearly all pupils concentrate very well in lessons. They are ambitious and enthusiastic learners who take on new challenges and learning opportunities confidently and with relish. Most pupils discuss their work supportively with their peers and their high quality collaborative work is a notable feature in nearly all classes. As a result, nearly all pupils show respect towards peers' contributions and respond appropriately to their ideas.

Nearly all pupils contribute enthusiastically to their learning. They offer ideas and suggestions and listen carefully to instructions from teachers. Nearly all pupils work purposefully and as a result they develop resilience and a growing awareness of the importance of perseverance in order to complete tasks. Younger pupils have a very good understanding of learning behaviours that help them to tackle difficult tasks and succeed in their work. Older pupils contribute ideas to topics and are beginning to contribute worthwhile ideas and develop independence in “mission time” lessons.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and they keep fit through taking part in regular physical activity during and after school. For example, the school cross-country club at lunchtime is very popular with pupils and encourages fitness and competition. At break times, nearly all pupils make very good use of outdoor areas to be active in order to support their health and fitness. For example, pupils make imaginative use of materials such as crates, tyres and tarpaulins to build dens.

Most pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities within classes and during break times. Most apply regularly for key leadership roles, which they enjoy and take very seriously. These develop pupils successfully as ethical, informed and active citizens. The highly effective contribution of the many pupil leadership groups is a strength of the school. These groups include the school council, eco committee and the digital leaders, who have a weekly programme of activities to support younger learners, blog regularly on the school website and keep computer software up-to-date. The role of the ‘Restaurant Committee’ is instrumental in developing good behaviour and positive attitudes in the lunch hall. The ‘Cryw Cymraeg’ is proactive in encouraging pupils to use Welsh around the school, while the ‘Playground Patrol’ ensures that pupils interact harmoniously on the yard. Taken together, the extensive involvement of pupils is having an exceptionally positive effect on developing pupils’ skills as responsible members of the school community.

Nearly all pupils know how to stay safe on the internet, for example by using strong passwords.

The school’s attendance levels have placed the school in the lower 50% when compared with similar schools for three of the past four years.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Working relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are strong and help to promote a positive atmosphere for learning in all classes. All staff have high expectations and nearly all pupils respond well to the challenges that they set. Nearly all lessons proceed at a good pace. Teachers and support staff manage pupils’ behaviour well. They provide effective support for pupils who need extra help with their learning.

Teachers generally use a wide variety of approaches and resources to cater for pupils’ needs. These include engaging presentations for pupils and opportunities for individual, pair and group work. They develop pupils’ thinking and problem-solving skills successfully in a range of different situations. Teachers set clear expectations for learning and monitor pupils’ progress while they undertake activities or complete their work. Teachers and support staff give timely feedback to help pupils improve

their work further. They provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to consider their own performance and refine it where necessary, as they work through their tasks. This promotes pupils' independence successfully. For example, in the foundation phase, staff will stand back while pupils work out how to make a superhero's den. On other occasions, they model how to edit a photo on a tablet computer before giving the pupils confidence to replicate this, giving them a sense of achievement. Overall, approaches to teaching ensure that classrooms are filled with a purposeful activity where most pupils are consistently on-task and produce a range of high-quality work across the curriculum.

Overall, the school provides a rich and varied curriculum for pupils. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that pupils' learning experiences build systematically on what they already know and can do. A developing feature of the curriculum is the opportunity for pupils to follow their own interests and conduct research during 'mission time'. These opportunities enable pupils to exercise choice over what and how they learn and secure their commitment to their learning. For example, pupils created video adverts persuading people not to drop litter, whilst others compose and perform a song related to Celtic warriors.

The school focuses appropriately on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The principles of the foundation phase are established firmly. Teachers provide effective focused tasks and continuous activities that encourage pupils to lead their own learning. Teachers are adapting the curriculum in anticipation of the new curriculum for Wales purposefully. This enhances the learning experiences they provide for pupils. For example, staff in key stage 2, in conjunction with their pupils, have developed interesting tasks or challenges based on the Expressive Arts area of the new curriculum for Wales.

Nearly all staff provide valuable opportunities to promote the Welsh language as a natural part of all of the school's work. Teaching staff are positive language role models and promote the use of the Welsh language from a very early age. As a result, pupils' confidence in speaking to one another throughout the school is developing well.

Staff ensure that all pupils benefit from rich and interesting experiences to develop their understanding of the culture of Wales. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils took part in a march raising awareness of the profile of 'plastic pollution' on Porthcawl and other Welsh beaches. Visits to Margam Park and performances at Porthcawl Grand Pavilion and residential visits to Llangrannog enrich and enhance their experiences successfully.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The schools' arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing are comprehensive and highly effective. An agreed set of school values is instrumental in ensuring that teachers pay close attention to supporting pupils' emotional and social development. This shared commitment leads to a happy, caring, harmonious and inclusive school community. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school promotes pupils' moral, social and cultural development particularly well. Staff encourage pupils to be responsible citizens, prepared to help other pupils by setting up and supporting a large number of effective leadership groups. Their work in supporting the community contributes strongly to this. Pupil groups raise money for charities, visit local care homes to support residents in the use of tablet computers and pupils and carry out litter picks in Rest Bay. The school's attention to promoting pupils' spiritual development is progressing more gradually.

The school has effective systems to track the progress and wellbeing of groups of pupils, and staff use this information successfully in order to allocate specific provision. Teachers and assistants identify pupils' needs at an early stage and take appropriate steps to meet their needs effectively. Pupils with special educational needs and those who require extra support have individual plans that containing personalised targets that help them to make progress in their learning. The school makes very good use of the expertise of specialist agencies and an internal wellbeing officer in reviewing plans regularly with pupils, teachers and parents. As a result, most pupils with special educational needs and those who require extra support make good progress from their starting points.

The provision for promoting pupils' understanding of the importance of healthy eating and drinking is effective and the school places high priority on promoting pupils' physical activity. Staff successfully encourage pupils to keep fit through regular physical education sessions and extra-curricular activities. There is a good range of activities on offer that include very good opportunities for developing outdoor education skills at playtimes. Pupils regularly use the extensive range of equipment and apparatus to engage in vigorous activity. A good example of this is den-building, organised and led by older pupils at lunchtime. In the foundation phase, most pupils are active in all weathers, leaning and exploring during continuous provision activities.

The school promotes very good home-school relationships and an active forum encourages parents to have a voice in school activities. A regular blog produced by pupils, weekly newsletters and the school website keeps parents well informed. Nearly all parents appreciate the regular correspondence and feel the school is ready to listen to their contributions. These activities, along with the work of the parent teacher association, encourage parents to play a full role in the life of the school.

The school works constructively with outside agencies such as the police and health services. This has had a positive effect on developing pupils' ability to stay safe and to be responsible citizens.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, communicates a clear and powerful vision for the school that develops pupils as confident learners with high levels of wellbeing. She sets high professional expectations within a supportive culture, so that staff feel valued and engage enthusiastically in efforts to continually improve the learning experiences for pupils. Teams of staff work very well together to secure improvements in the school. For example, the foundation phase staff create a vibrant outdoor learning environment where pupils thrive. Senior leaders manage their teams purposefully and are good role models. They share a common purpose and strategic direction for the school.

Governors are committed to supporting the school. They understand the priorities for school improvement well and have a sound grasp of why particular approaches are taken. However, they do not gather sufficient first-hand knowledge about the school to either challenge or endorse decisions under discussion effectively. For example, governors have not planned to mitigate a potential budget deficit.

The school deploys a broad range of valuable strategies to find out how well pupils are doing. Senior leaders involve all teaching staff in action research to find out what is and what is not working for the pupils. As a result, staff know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. For example, they identified the need to improve the pupils' ability to write in Welsh and this is now a priority for the school. Parents also play an important part in identifying strengths and weaknesses in what the school provides. For example, the school acted on feedback from a parents' forum to improve the annual pupil reports.

The school identifies priorities for improvement successfully and takes appropriate steps to address these. Leaders also take good account of national priorities such as the development of the new curriculum for Wales. The school has a good track record of improvement. For example, the way teachers assess pupils' work has been a focus in recent years and it is now a strength of the school.

Leaders create a strong culture that supports the professional development of staff. The school is a very effective learning community. Staff learn from each other purposefully as they develop their skills. For example, teachers regularly visit each other's classrooms so that good practice is identified and shared throughout the school. Leaders use performance management targets effectively to develop staff expertise. These targets also link usefully with whole school improvement priorities, such as developing pupils' independent learning across the curriculum. Leaders address areas where staff are less strong quickly and effectively.

The school has sufficient staff and resources of good quality to deliver the planned curriculum effectively. Staff use its indoor and outdoor environment imaginatively, notably the outside learning environment which is a very positive feature of the school.

The school uses its pupil development grant purposefully to fund an effective wellbeing officer and to provide learning support for some of the most vulnerable pupils.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

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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