



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

**A report on**

**Wick Marcross C.I.W. Primary School  
Church Street  
Wick  
Cowbridge  
Vale of Glamorgan  
CF71 7QE**

**Date of inspection: February 2019**

**by**

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

## About Wick Marcross C.I.W. Primary School

Wick and Marcross Church in Wales Primary School is in the village of Wick, near Cowbridge in The Vale of Glamorgan local authority. There are 115 pupils on roll. The school has five classes. These include three single-age classes and two mixed-age classes. The rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 5%. This is well below the national average of 18%. The school identifies 6% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This figure is below the national average of 21%. No pupils come from Welsh speaking homes and no pupils have English as an additional language.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when inspecting a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

The school's last inspection was in July 2014. The headteacher took up her appointment in September 2005.

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

As they move through the school, almost all pupils make good progress in developing their skills and many make very good progress in mathematics. Nearly all pupils behave very well. Teachers provide stimulating and interesting lessons and most pupils apply themselves well to learning. Almost all have a positive attitude and are keen to learn. Most develop their personal and social skills to a high standard and show respect and concern for others.

The headteacher provides strong, inspiring leadership and the school has clear values and aims. Many staff have taken up their posts in the current school year and have rapidly begun to work as an effective team to maintain a good standard of provision for pupils. There are purposeful opportunities for parents to visit the school and to become aware of their children's learning.

The school has clear systems to evaluate its own performance, to make improvements and to raise standards effectively. It creates a successful environment and ethos for learning. Governors support the school well and school leaders have secured funding for significant enhancements including the building of a new nursery.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

R1 Improve standards of oracy in Welsh

R2 Improve standards of handwriting in key stage 2

R3 Ensure that the monitoring and tracking of progress made by pupils in foundation phase, when working independently, are effective

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

As they move through the school, nearly all pupils make good progress. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils make very good progress in mathematics and a minority make very good progress in English. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress from their starting points.

In the foundation phase, most pupils listen attentively to adults and respond appropriately to questions. Most pupils develop their speaking skills well. For example, after visiting the school's new building site, pupils from the reception and Year 1 classes explain clearly about safety and why they need to wear high visibility jackets and hard hats. Many develop their reading skills effectively and most read with understanding and use their knowledge of sounds suitably to tackle unfamiliar words. In Year 2, more able pupils read fluently and predict what might happen next in stories. Most pupils in Year 2 write successfully for various purposes, such as stories or, when studying history, a diary entry written as someone involved in the Gunpowder Plot. They use basic punctuation successfully to organise their work into simple sentences and form their letters correctly.

Most pupils in key stage 2 have good listening skills and speak confidently and clearly in class. For example, when speaking about flood protection in the Year 3 and 4 class, many pupils use relevant vocabulary such as 'dredging' or 'flood plain' correctly in discussion. Most demonstrate good understanding of what they read in different texts. They use dictionaries and internet searches effectively to learn about new words or topics. Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrate strong interest when reading together. For example, nearly all talk about their class mystery novel, 'The London Eye', enthusiastically and many devise good questions in tasks to identify a person who is missing inexplicably. Most pupils in key stage 2 write lists of facts and instructions in appropriate ways and label illustrations in their books effectively. Most pupils record their scientific experiments well by making predictions and describing their methods and conclusions. Many plan the content of their writing for different purposes successfully. They write extended pieces and experiment with different styles well. Many Year 4 pupils write in easily flowing, joined writing. However, too many pupils at the end of key stage 2 work only in print.

Most pupils develop their mathematical skills well. In foundation phase, most learn to count correctly and many apply their numeracy skills confidently in different areas of learning. For example, in Year 2 they measure the size of a crater made by dropping a marble from different heights and use tally charts to record their findings correctly. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils apply suitable calculation strategies using the four rules of number to solve problems. For example, in a history task, they check the cost of household items fifty years ago and compare these to modern prices. They calculate correctly which items have risen or fallen in price and by what percentage. Most use their number skills accurately in science and other projects when measuring distances, or weighing and timing different variables.

As they move through the school, many pupils develop their skills in information and communications technology (ICT) well. In the foundation phase, most use tablet

computers readily, for example to view media files using quick access (QR) codes. They use word processing programmes confidently to create items, such as posters, or menus related to their class activities. As pupils of all ages move through the school, most develop their skills to research on the internet and extract and relocate images and information competently. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use word processing packages confidently to re-draft, illustrate and present their written work. Many pupils use presentation software well. For example, in their project on 1960s music, Year 5 and 6 pupils use background images of the Beatles to add interest to their own recorded video presentations. Most make good progress using data programs to present basic bar graphs and pie charts. More able pupils are beginning to use spreadsheets and line graphs appropriately.

Many pupils in the Foundation Phase respond appropriately to simple commands given by staff in Welsh and use simple sentences about the weather. Although pupils in key stage 2 are growing more confident about speaking in Welsh, many have very basic Welsh communication skills. A few pupils in key stage 2 read simple Welsh books fluently and with good pronunciation. Many are beginning to write sentences and short paragraphs correctly when following a model. However, when speaking the language, the patterns and vocabulary pupils employ are too limited and they do not develop their spoken Welsh language skills enough.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

In lessons, when on the playgrounds and moving around the school, almost all pupils' behaviour is consistently good.

A strength of the school is the positive attitude and enthusiasm most pupils have for learning. In classes, almost all pupils are attentive to their teachers and eager to do well. From arrival in the morning most foundation phase pupils are keen to participate immediately. They respond well to the range of tasks presented to them throughout the day. Nearly all work positively with adults and when given more independent activities. In key stage 2, most pupils participate enthusiastically in discussions led by their teachers. Most collaborate well when working in pairs or groups and have a constructive approach when working together.

Because of extensive building work during the inspection period, all pupils occupied one playground in space far more limited than usual. Nearly all shared spaces and equipment fairly and respected the temporary zones created to protect the youngest. 'Play Makers' from key stage 2 discharged their roles responsibly and effectively to help younger pupils access equipment and play enjoyably.

Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school. They are enthusiastic to be outside and enjoy their playtimes and extra-curricular activities. They are confident that adults will listen to their concerns and deal with any problems.

Many pupils, in different age groups, understand the positive thinking methods promoted in the school to encourage self-belief and confidence. They speak enthusiastically of how this helps them.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily. Pupils of different ages talk knowledgeably about sensible food choices and many bring fruit

to school for healthy snacks or use the fruit tuck shop. Most are aware of the importance of physical activity and many play energetically at break times. Pupils support extra-curricular sports well. They speak enthusiastically about different sports they enjoy in school, such as football, tag rugby and netball. They are proud that all pupils are free to take part in whatever school sports they wish.

Many pupils throughout the school take on roles of responsibility readily. Pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 vote for various groups and committees. They speak positively about the different leadership roles available to them. They are aware of ways they have contributed to decisions in school, such as the remodelling of the key stage 2 shared area or changes to the choices of after school activities available to them.

Individual pupils demonstrate a strong awareness of the importance of good attendance at school and the disadvantages of missing school. However, the school's levels of attendance overall do not compare well with those of similar schools. Levels of persistent absenteeism are low.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

Systems for planning learning are thorough. The school delivers a broad range of activities that engages nearly all pupils throughout the school successfully.

Teachers in the foundation phase have created a stimulating learning environment using indoor and outside spaces to offer a wide range of interesting activities. For example, a themed area of a 'building site' and 'builder's supplies shop' provides well-structured experiences. These use current opportunities cleverly to engage with the builders on the nearby new school building site, which naturally interests pupils. There is a carefully considered balance between tasks directed by the teacher and learning led by pupils. This provides good opportunities for many pupils to choose how they would like to learn and helps encourage independence effectively. Themes studied in key stage 2 are chosen to excite interest. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils create artificial volcanoes as part of an introduction to learning about natural disasters. New themes of learning are introduced with special 'launch' days, designed to capture pupils' interest and allow them to help choose the steps they take when starting a topic.

Staff plan most lessons effectively, deliver them at a good pace and enthuse almost all pupils successfully. Throughout the school, teachers have a secure command of nearly all subjects and skills they teach. They ensure that there are plenty of interesting, practical tasks for pupils to have purposeful, hands-on experiences. Most staff make good use of questions and use classroom discussion that promotes pupils' thinking well and links to previous learning. Teachers' classroom management is effective. Good behaviour is promoted well and staff consistently highlight good conduct and reinforce positive behaviour.

Teachers nearly always explain the learning objectives carefully in lessons so that pupils are clear what they must do to succeed. They mark work regularly in green ink and pupils respond and improve their work with their special 'upskilling' pink pens. This is particularly effective in key stage 2 where, in their marking and in class, teachers consistently help pupils to focus on how they can 'upskill' to improve their work. Throughout the school, teachers deploy learning support assistants

successfully. All staff work together well to provide effective support for target groups and individuals. Working relationships between staff and pupils are supportive and productive.

The school maps appropriately where different skills will be practised in a variety of subjects to meet the differing needs of pupils. Teachers incorporate the requirements of the national literacy and numeracy frameworks well in their planning. This ensures communication, numeracy and ICT skills are practised in different areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils use ICT to produce informative leaflets for the local community about sustainable gardening.

The school has created a Forest School area that has been developed effectively to provide active, outdoor learning opportunities for pupils of all ages. Teachers supplement the curriculum well with educational visits and enriching experiences. For example, they ensure that pupils have many opportunities to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales through their visits to historical sites such as Big Pit and in cultural contexts including study of Welsh artists.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is a caring and inclusive community with a strong level of respect, trust and co-operation between staff, pupils and parents. Through the curriculum and daily practices, teachers promote pupils' understanding of respect for others and tolerance effectively. The school provides active ways in which these may be understood. For example, pupils design murals and school displays highlighting values the school places at the heart of its approach to learning.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and cultural awareness. For example, through a visit to a book festival or when performing in their school eisteddfod. Pupils participate in many community activities, such as reading and singing with the village pensioners' group. They support extra-curricular activities well, which are varied and include sport, science club, baking and artistic projects such as making mosaics.

The school has built successful links with schools from more urban areas to allow children to visit and develop friendships with others living in different locations. This promotes pupils' social and life skills successfully. To develop an understanding of places overseas, foundation phase pupils have established email links to 'Polar Pen Pals' in Antarctica. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to have a positive impact on school life. For example, the school council has gathered views on pupils' mode of travel to school to assist in developing a transport plan.

The school has strong systems to track pupil progress, wellbeing and attainment across most areas of school activity. Teachers monitor development of skills in numeracy and literacy effectively. They use this analysis, alongside in-depth knowledge of pupils, to plan for individual needs successfully. They devise carefully structured education plans for individual pupils where necessary. These plans are clear and have measurable outcomes that parents, pupils and teachers review together regularly. Experienced learning support assistants use varied methods to help targeted pupils make progress. As a result, nearly all pupils make at least the expected progress towards achieving the individual targets that are set for them

Foundation phase staff have a clear understanding of each individual child and monitor and track children's development of specific skills well. However, newly adopted systems for delivery of the wider range of learning activities are at an early stage of development. The monitoring and tracking of the progress made by pupils in mixed age groups in foundation phase, when independently choosing their learning, are not yet embedded effectively.

There are well-established systems to support pupils whose parents serve in the forces. A Forces Family Engagement Officer provides a good link between pupils in the school and the base. The school provides effective emotional and wellbeing support when additional needs are identified.

The school shares important information with parents by various methods, including newsletters, information leaflets, social media and the school website. The headteacher and staff are accessible and helpful and the school has an open-door approach that enables staff to deal with any concerns quickly. The school has worked effectively to set up a range of 'Family Friday' parent events to link families socially and provide support and advice about how to engage with their children's learning.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of how to keep safe, including when online, well. For example, pupils are aware of their 'e-safety song' that helps them remember key facts to avoid danger when using the internet. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy and safe lifestyles. For example, in the foundation phase, the school nurse visits to teach the children about the importance of handwashing. Pupils in key stage 2 organise provision of healthy snacks in school. The school has effective arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher provides inspiring and strong leadership. She is passionate in her vision to develop a school that values each child as an individual and which promotes the wellbeing and achievement of all pupils. She is effective in communicating her vision to staff and governors.

There have been many recent changes in staffing. Despite this, the quality of shared responsibility and motivation in the school is high. The headteacher encourages staff to take on leadership roles and to develop these thoroughly. School leaders recognise and nurture individual strengths and they have a good record of supporting professional development. The leadership and management of major change in the current year are very effective, enabling all staff to make strong contributions. As a result, staff feel empowered to improve aspects of their own practice. All teachers take part in action research projects, which have a positive impact on teaching and learning throughout the school. For example, work on developing an approach to positive thinking is having a good impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils see that mistakes can be learning opportunities and persevere with tasks more effectively.

Senior leaders, teachers and support staff work very well in partnership. All contribute to the strategic improvement of the school and respond positively to change. This is a significant strength. For example, they work together purposefully in preparing the imminent expansion of the school with the addition of a nursery and extra classroom. Performance management arrangements for teachers and the headteacher are effective and align closely with school improvement plan priorities.

Overall, the school's monitoring and self-evaluation processes are rigorous and robust. School leaders evaluate the performance of pupils and analyse data thoroughly to identify aspects of pupil performance and school provision that need improvement. They use a broad range of valuable information to inform their thinking, such as learning walks, data analysis, book scrutiny, listening to pupils and use of parent questionnaires. As a result, leaders and staff know the school very well and address improvements or underachievement successfully. Improvement plans have measurable targets, which support incremental change well. For example, targets to improve approaches in mathematics have led to most pupils applying their mental arithmetic skills successfully in their calculations and problem solving. The school has commenced a programme to improve staff skills in using and teaching the Welsh language. However, this has not yet made significant impact on improving the standards of pupils' oracy in Welsh.

The school works closely and effectively with other schools in well-established networks. This enables members of staff and pupils to benefit from sharing ideas and seeing best practice. For example, the school leads cluster work in developing and using one-page pupil profiles effectively to enhance support for individual pupils.

Highly committed governors make a strong contribution to the success of the school. Members of the governing body have an excellent understanding of the school's performance and play a prominent part in its self-evaluation and strategic planning processes. This enables them to hold the school to account successfully and to help set a clear strategic direction.

The school has a suitable number of qualified teachers and learning support assistants who contribute well towards improving wellbeing and pupil outcomes. Leaders manage resources rigorously to support pupils and to meet the priorities of improvement plans very well. The school makes effective use of the pupil development grant to provide extra support and enrich the curriculum for pupils eligible for free school meals and vulnerable learners. For example, a learning support assistant has received specialist training to support these pupils.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

© Crown Copyright 2019: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 24/04/2019