



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

A report on

**Abercerdin Primary School
Kenry Street
Evanstown
Gilfach Goch
Bridgend
CF39 8RS**

Date of inspection: February 2020

by

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

About Abercerdin Primary School

Abercerdin Primary School is in the village of Evanstown, near Bridgend. The school has 163 pupils aged between 3 and 11, including 20 pupils who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Pupils are taught in seven classes, five of which are for pupils of mixed ages.

The school's three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals is around 20%. This is above the average for Wales of 18%. The school identifies that around 10% of its pupils have special educational needs, which is below the Welsh average of 21%. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity and nearly all come from homes where English is the main language.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2012. The school's last inspection was in 2014.

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

Abercerdin Primary School is an inclusive and caring community that supports pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Nearly all pupils feel safe and valued. They display high standards of behaviour and most enjoy their time in school.

Staff provide a wide range of learning experiences that meet the needs and interests of most pupils well. As a result, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and develop good literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills. Staff know pupils' individual needs well and provide effective support to help pupils overcome identified barriers to their learning.

Leaders model high expectations for all members of the school community. They set a clear direction for developing the school and secure the commitment of staff who work together purposefully. Leaders place a strong emphasis on the professional development of staff. They focus resources and training appropriately to bring about improvements in pupils' standards and wellbeing.

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 Strengthen opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills and to influence what and how they learn
- R2 Plan effectively for all pupils to use their mathematical skills in worthwhile contexts across the curriculum
- R3 Sharpen school improvement processes to plan and monitor priorities for improvement robustly

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Many pupils enter the school with skills that are in line with or below those expected for their age. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with special education needs, make good progress and achieve well.

Most pupils in the foundation phase listen well. By Year 2, they focus attentively for extended periods, such as when enjoying the daily class story. Many explain their ideas well and begin to use simple technical vocabulary readily. For example, Year 1 pupils learn the names of components of a circuit they build to light the room for the class teddy bear when the school is empty. In key stage 2, most pupils listen respectfully and take the views of others into account in discussion. By Year 6, many pupils are confident speakers. They express their thoughts and opinions clearly. For example they describe how they overcome difficulties to draw the outline of a building accurately.

Most pupils across the school make good progress in reading. Many learn letter sounds quickly and build on this knowledge to start to read simple words and texts successfully. By Year 2, almost all pupils clearly enjoy reading. Many tackle unfamiliar words confidently and read with good understanding. For example, they predict sensibly how a story may develop and discuss whether it should have a happy ending. Many pupils in key stage 2 read fluently and with good expression. By Year 6, most pupils read a variety of texts and web pages independently. Many express a preference for the type of book they like to read, giving reasons for their choices by referring to the text. Most pupils use their reading skills effectively to learn across the breadth of the curriculum.

Most pupils develop their writing skills successfully as they move through the school. More able pupils in the reception class write simple sentences using capital letters appropriately, for instance, to describe their bedtime routine. By Year 2, most pupils write at increasing length, for example, to produce an entertaining persuasive letter when applying for a job as one of Santa's elves. In key stage 2, most pupils build on their knowledge of spelling successfully and use correct grammar consistently. By Year 6, many pupils write imaginatively to good effect. For example, they use description and conversation well to enliven a horror story based on Frankenstein. They draft, edit and revise their work effectively. Most pupils respond diligently to teacher's comments to correct their work. However, they do not always extend and enrich their vocabulary independently when making improvements.

Most pupils achieve a good standard of spoken Welsh. In the foundation phase, nearly all pupils enjoy playing games and using apps to develop their vocabulary beneficially. By Year 2, most pupils respond enthusiastically to a wide variety of questions. For example, they describe the weather or the food they like to eat. Many speak in full sentences and vary the content of their responses confidently. In key stage 2, most pupils sustain a positive attitude towards learning Welsh. Most pupils pronounce words accurately and a few more able pupils speak expressively and at pace, for example, when performing a dialogue about a visit to the leisure centre. Pupils make good progress in developing their skills in reading and writing.

Most pupils' numeracy skills develop well across the school. For example, reception pupils create a tally chart to record items that use electricity as part of their 'Energy topic'. Most develop a simple understanding of time by sequencing key parts of their day. By Year 2, many pupils recognise number bonds to 100 and handle money confidently. For instance, they find the change for one or two items from £2.00 successfully. As they move through the school, most pupils build on their previous learning effectively. For example, pupils in Year 4 use a scale on a map to measure and calculate distances between European cities, converting cm to km correctly. By Year 6, most pupils in use numbers and tackle tasks confidently. For instance, they use their knowledge of two-dimensional shapes to work out the value of missing angles accurately. However, pupils in both phases do not apply their skills in a wide enough variety of contexts across the curriculum.

Across the school, most pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively to research and communicate their findings. For example, Year 2 pupils retell the story of Gelert using an online writing app and create a piece of word art for a Mother's Day card. Most pupils in key stage 2 use their ICT skills competently to share data and information. For example, they create engaging presentations from their research into the Swansea Blitz and produce a variety of graphs as part of their science work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use spreadsheets to support their calculation and create databases to profile biographical information about celebrities.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and valued. They know whom to go to if they need help with their work or if they are worried. Nearly all pupils are polite and eager to interact with visitors. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Most pupils are considerate and relate well to each other and to adults.

Most pupils are keen to participate in lessons and stay on task for appropriate lengths of time. They show a positive attitude to learning and many discuss their work eagerly. For example, Year 4 pupils explain enthusiastically and in detail how they use their understanding of electricity to create a pressure switch to trigger a 'burglar alarm'.

Most pupils follow instructions and carry out classroom routines responsibly. They understand very well what is expected of them and work cooperatively, for instance to clear away resources at the end of lessons efficiently. However, pupils sometimes rely too heavily on adults' guidance, for example when completing practical tasks or when they encounter a difficulty. This restricts their ability to tackle problems for themselves or to make decisions about the next steps in their learning independently.

Many pupils play an active part in the life of the school and make worthwhile contributions to improve the environment. For example, the school's 'Change makers' are helping to reduce the amount of single-use plastic in the school. They have worked with teachers to redesign their classrooms to provide a learning environment that is well suited to their needs. Carrying out these leadership roles gives pupils a clear sense of purpose and many show obvious pride in the changes they have made.

Most pupils have a strong understanding of the school's core beliefs and demonstrate awareness of the importance of acting fairly and showing tolerance towards others. Many pupils participate in fundraising for local and national charities and are developing a good understanding of their role as ethical citizens, for instance through the work of the school's international club.

Most pupils understand the need to eat and drink healthily and to take regular exercise. They make healthy choices with regard to diet and appreciate the value of physical activities. Most pupils make enthusiastic use of the opportunities for rigorous exercise provided by the school during lessons and through after-school clubs.

Pupils are aware of the importance of attending school regularly and punctually. Overall rates of attendance generally compare well to those of similar schools.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

All staff have positive and nurturing working relationships with pupils that embody the school's core values firmly. Staff across the school have worked in partnership with pupils to develop classroom environments that are bright, well-organised and comfortable spaces for pupils to learn. They establish clear routines that contribute purposefully to the calm and efficient atmosphere in the school. This enables nearly all pupils to focus well during lessons. All staff manage pupils' behaviour consistently well.

Teachers and learning support staff show a strong understanding of pupils' individual strengths and needs. Teachers plan a wide variety of learning experiences that engage and motivate most pupils well. They provide clear explanations and instructions during lessons and resource activities thoughtfully so that most pupils settle to tasks readily and begin making progress swiftly. Teachers provide all pupils with suitable opportunities to work individually, in pairs and in groups. In the most effective lessons, they set challenging tasks that require pupils to collaborate purposefully in their learning. For example, they provide specific roles for Year 5 pupils to co-operate as a team when designing a model windmill using recycled components that they purchase from a fixed budget.

Teachers assess pupils' progress carefully. They provide good opportunities during lessons for pupils to share their learning and to evaluate their progress. Most teachers use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to express their thinking more fully or clearly. Teachers and learning support staff provide useful verbal feedback and prompts to pupils that help them to improve their work. They use this information to build upon pupils' skills and knowledge in future activities successfully. In a few lessons, adults scaffold pupils' learning too rigidly and manage their progress too closely. This limits pupils' opportunity to explore their own ideas and learn from their own and others' mistakes.

Teachers plan appropriately for the systematic development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Across the school, they provide regular activities that develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills progressively. For example, they make effective use of a structured phonics programme to build younger pupils' understanding of letters and sounds successfully. Teachers read stories during

morning registration to stimulate older pupils' enjoyment of reading and to develop their comprehension skills beneficially. They provide suitable opportunities for pupils to use their skills in 'mission' activities across the curriculum. For example, Year 4 pupils complete independent research as part of their topic work and present their findings using notepad computers. However, planning for pupils to apply their mathematical skills purposefully in other areas of their learning is inconsistent and pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop the full range of ICT skills.

In the foundation phase, teachers make worthwhile use of outdoor learning and a broad range of practical activities to develop pupils' spoken language and social skills effectively. Teachers in both phases enhance pupils' learning through frequent enrichment days that develop pupils' interest and enjoyment across a variety of areas of learning. For example, they enable pupils to broaden their knowledge of diversity by learning about Chinese language and culture from regular visitors to the school. They plan appropriately to develop pupils' creativity through activities such as drama or mosaic making when working with visiting artists.

Teachers provide good opportunities for all pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. They plan short daily sessions that rehearse and reinforce pupils' use of spoken Welsh successfully. Many members of staff act as enthusiastic role models for the language. They use spoken and written Welsh during lessons to extend pupils' vocabulary and to increase their understanding beneficially. Teachers make valuable use of assemblies, classroom routines, songs and daily prayers to give prominence and status to the Welsh language. As a result, most pupils display positive attitudes to learning Welsh and engage well in lessons. The school promotes pupils' understanding of their Welsh identity and culture effectively, for example through the study of Welsh artists and local history and through visits, such as to the Urdd centre in Llangrannog and the National Museum in St Fagans.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There is an inclusive and caring ethos across the school where staff nurture pupils' personal and social skills successfully. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and model these consistently well. As a result, the school has a purposeful atmosphere that supports pupils to develop habits and attitudes that influence their learning helpfully.

The school has effective systems in place for identifying and tracking the progress of pupils. Leaders identify pupils who require additional learning support quickly and accurately. There are well-established systems to provide these pupils with effective support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills successfully. Staff monitor the impact of these programmes closely. As a result, nearly all pupils receiving additional support make good progress in overcoming their difficulties. Staff keep the progress of all pupils, including those who are more able, under regular scrutiny through termly progress reviews. They provide suitable challenge and adapt interventions appropriately when needed. This ensures that teachers provide work that matches the needs of most pupils effectively.

Staff monitor pupils' personal, social and emotional wellbeing carefully and provide very good support to individual pupils with particular needs. They make effective use of a range of specialist services. For example, staff have worked closely with a national charity to provide beneficial support for pupils and families affected by

bereavement. In addition, the school has developed its own effective approaches to address the needs of vulnerable pupils. For example, the experienced wellbeing manager provides practical support and guidance for pupils and families that impacts positively on pupils' attendance and wellbeing. The school communicates effectively with parents and provides useful information about pupils' progress and their learning in class. For example, staff run a helpful information session to provide guidance to parents on how to support their children's reading at home.

The school has a successful programme of personal and social education that helps pupils to relate well with one another and to understand their own and others' needs. The school makes effective use of a variety of visitors to help pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and to lead a healthy lifestyle. There is a good range of after-school clubs that offer sporting and creative activities. These help to develop pupils' physical and social skills well. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Staff give pupils suitable opportunities to take on leadership roles. Pupils' involvement in developing the learning environment illustrates the school's commitment to ensuring that pupils play a purposeful role in helping to develop the school further. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their fundraising and entrepreneurial skills through contributing to seasonal fetes. However, staff take a leading role in directing pupils' activity too often. As a result, pupils do not always have enough opportunity to exercise their decision-making fully or to take sufficient responsibility for shaping the direction of their own learning.

The provision to develop pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues is effective. The school has established strong partnerships with several organisations that benefit pupils' cultural and spiritual development notably. For example, regular visitors from a cultural centre in Cardiff enhance pupils' understanding of other cultures and religions well. Staff make good use of video conferencing to help pupils learn about the lives of people in Belarus through a charity set up after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The school's work on a 'Night Out' project with the Arts Council of Wales provides a rich cross-curricular learning experience that enables pupils to use their key skills purposefully to manage and participate in a creative performance.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is inclusive and communicates high aspirations for pupils' achievement. She leads by example and is ably supported by a skilful deputy headteacher. The senior leaders create a strong team ethos to which all staff contribute effectively and pupils feel safe, happy and valued. Staff at all levels understand their roles and responsibilities well. They have a secure understanding of the school's priorities for improvement and provide valuable support to one another in meeting the school's aims. For example, the effective wellbeing manager offers purposeful help to staff in integrating pupils with emotional difficulties into class.

The headteacher pursues suitable new initiatives energetically. She has prioritised preparing for the new curriculum for Wales purposefully and places a strong focus on enabling pupils to play a full part in society. Leaders give appropriate attention to national priorities, such as improving pupils' Welsh language skills. They use

partnerships well to drive specific improvements effectively. For example, transition activity with the local secondary school broadens the curriculum in science for Year 6 pupils and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Governors provide strong support. They review progress on improvement priorities diligently and offer valuable challenge. For example, they highlighted shortcomings in the school's learning environment that led to an improved quality of light throughout the school. They obtain first-hand evidence of pupils' standards in class, but this is not systematic enough to enable governors to act consistently as a critical friends.

The school's self-evaluation processes use a purposeful range of activities that include analysis of performance information, scrutiny of pupils' work, observations of teaching and learning and evaluations of teachers' planning. They lead to identifying relevant areas for school development that link to priorities in the school improvement plan. However, although leaders evaluate the performance of individual pupils meticulously, they do not always plan the specific steps that are needed to secure improvement precisely enough. For example, while leaders have identified the need to develop pupils' use of their mathematical skills, plans do not set out clearly enough the actions required to achieve this. As a result, teachers do not always know exactly what they need to do and leaders are less able to monitor the progress and impact of their actions robustly.

The school has a good track record in making improvements. Standards have risen as a result. For example, the good quality of provision to support pupils' wellbeing has a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to learning. The clear focus on improving pupils' spoken Welsh ensures that pupils achieve well.

The headteacher creates a strong culture and ethos to promote the professional learning of all staff. Staff are committed to their own professional development and appreciate the way they are supported by good quality training. For example, all staff have received extensive training in how to teach the literacy scheme that is used throughout the school.

The school works very effectively with other schools in Wales to share effective practice and to learn from other settings and practitioners. For example, staff have collaborated with colleagues in nearby schools to strengthen the systematic development of pupils' literacy skills and to research beneficial adaptations to the learning environment in preparation for implementing the new curriculum.

The school uses its indoor environment imaginatively to promote pupils' learning and to meet the social and emotional needs of pupils. It also makes the most of the outdoor environment, for example through making effective use of the limited available space to provide an outdoor construction area.

The school manages its budget effectively. Decisions on expenditure link appropriately to the school's priorities for improvement. The headteacher is successful in securing additional funding from local business and national bodies to fund new initiatives in the school. For example, an outdoor area has been redeveloped into a well-resourced space for physical activity using a grant from a local enterprise. The school uses its pupil development grant effectively to enhance provision for targeted pupils. For example, it funds participation in school visits and provides additional support for vulnerable pupils joining the school.

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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