



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

A report on

**Cilfynydd Primary School
Ann Street
Cilfynydd
Pontypridd
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF37 4EN**

Date of inspection: February 2020

by

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

About Cilfynydd Primary School

Cilfynydd Primary School is in Cilfynydd in Rhondda Cynon Taf. There are 139 pupils on roll. This includes 19 part-time pupils in the nursery. The school organises pupils into six classes, five of which are mixed-age.

The three year average for pupils eligible for free school meals is around 23%. This figure is above the Welsh average of 18%. Nearly all pupils come from homes where English is the first language.

The school has identified about 12% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is below the average for primary schools in Wales (21%).

The head teacher took up post in September 2018. The school's last inspection was in May 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

Nearly all pupils in Cilfynydd Primary School feel safe and cared for, and have a strong sense of belonging to the school community. They have positive attitudes to learning and participate in lessons eagerly. Pupils understand their role in caring for each other and know who to go to if they have any issues. All staff develop positive working relationships and help pupils to feel confident in the school environment.

Throughout their time in school most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those eligible for free school meals, make good progress from their starting points.

Most teachers plan and deliver interesting learning experiences that engage pupils enthusiastically. They have high expectations of behaviour and of what pupils can achieve. Staff create a calm environment where pupils are well behaved and are respectful to each other.

Leaders succeed in creating an inclusive community for all pupils. All members of staff work well as a team and have a clear understanding of their roles. Members of the governing body work diligently and are supportive of the school's work. Leaders focus purposefully on developing a professional learning community for staff.

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 Sharpen school improvement processes to address issues identified during the inspection
- R2 Improve provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills
- R3 Improve pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Throughout their time in school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those eligible for free school meals, make strong progress from their individual starting points.

Across the school, most pupils listen well to each other and to adults. From an early age, most pupils in the foundation phase express themselves clearly and respond well to questions. In key stage 2, nearly all pupils contribute to group discussions maturely. They listen to others politely, ask appropriate questions and respond accordingly. They share their views purposefully and appreciate other people's points of view.

In the foundation phase, many pupils make good progress in developing their phonics skills and apply these well when reading. In reception, many read their own names and begin to recognise sound blends. By Year 2, many pupils read confidently using their knowledge of letters and sounds effectively to decipher unfamiliar words accurately. A few talk enthusiastically about the types of books they enjoy and their favourite authors. Many are beginning to read with expression. In key stage 2, most pupils read a range of books successfully. Most pupils are enthusiastic readers who are eager to discuss their books and share what they have learnt from their reading with visitors.

Across the school, most pupils develop their writing skills well. For example, pupils in Year 1 write short sentences about the dragon's egg in their class. By Year 2, many are beginning to organise their writing effectively and write confidently for a wide range of purposes. A minority write extended stories effectively using colourful vocabulary, for example to describe Lilly as a remarkably fast runner. In Years 3 and 4, many pupils use imaginative vocabulary, such as tranquil and inviting, when describing the beauty of the Pyrenees in a travel brochure. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils depict events and characters well, for example when writing about evacuees during the Second World War. A few more able pupils write with increasing sophistication across a range of genres. Many pupils use an appropriate range of punctuation when writing extended pieces. Most pupils make effective use of their reflection books to record their feelings and think about their work. For example, one pupil wrote 'my favourite subject is art because if you make a mistake it doesn't matter because art is art and anything can be art!' Most pupils apply their literacy skills well when working across the curriculum.

Throughout the school, most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their Welsh language skills. In the foundation phase, pupils respond appropriately to a wide range of Welsh instructions. They ask and answer simple questions confidently, for example when answering the register and during 'helpwr heddiw' sessions. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils sustain a short conversation in Welsh using familiar sentence patterns. However, pupils' reading and writing skills throughout key stage 2 are underdeveloped.

Most pupils develop their mathematical skills well and build on previous learning. By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils partition and order numbers to 100 confidently and begin to understand place value. They begin to add, subtract, multiply and divide competently. When using money, many pupils calculate the change from £1 correctly. Most pupils apply their numeracy skills well in other areas of their learning. For example, in Year 2, pupils successfully use their multiplication skills to calculate the ingredients needed to make chocolate reindeer for their enterprise project.

In key stage 2, most pupils develop a sound understanding of mathematics and achieve well. They understand the relationship between percentages, decimals and fractions and calculate the fraction of numbers successfully. Most pupils convert grams to kilograms and work out the area of compound shapes correctly. Many pupils can represent data accurately in tables and charts. In Year 6, many pupils read the 24-hour clock accurately and apply this to real life situations. For example, they use a timetable to plan a journey.

Across the school, most pupils develop appropriate skills in information and communication technology (ICT). The youngest pupils use a range of applications to support the development of their language, number and fine motor skills. Pupils in Year 2 use programmable toys successfully to navigate a course around a map of St. Fagans. Across the school, a minority of pupils use quick response codes created by the teachers to find relevant information on a range of topics.

A minority of key stage 2 pupils use a narrow range of programs and applications to enhance their work. For example, pupils create a presentation on light and shadow to show their learning in science. However, there are limited examples of work on databases and spreadsheets and their use of ICT across the curriculum is limited.

Nearly all pupils have a good understand how to stay safe online.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe in school and are confident to talk to adults and their friends if they are worried or upset. They have positive attitudes to learning, engage well in lessons, enjoy their learning and take pride in their achievements. A strong feature of the school is the collaborative way that all pupils and staff plan together. They identify what they want to learn. This stimulates their curiosity and interest and strengthens their commitment to work.

Nearly all pupils behave very well in classes, during break times and at lunchtimes. They move around the school sensibly, for example when going to their lockers to store or retrieve equipment. They settle quickly in class and are ready to learn promptly. Nearly all pupils are consistently polite and treat each other, staff and visitors with respect. Most pupils are considerate when listening to the views of others and share their thoughts and ideas readily, for example, when discussing their points of view on whether it is good for pupils to come to school with a smile.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their independence well. For example, in the reception class, pupils discuss how they might keep a dragon's egg safe. In key stage 2, most pupils co-operate effectively when working together. They

concentrate well, work at a good pace and are productive throughout lessons, for example when designing and building a watchtower out of spaghetti in Year 6.

Pupils speak confidently about making the right food choices and about the benefits of exercise. They share these messages with parents to encourage them to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Most pupils bring their own fruit and water to school and enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities such as multi-sports, cookery, coding and health and fitness.

A majority of pupils are developing effective leadership skills through their work with pupil groups such as the Health and Wellbeing group and Criw Cymraeg. These leadership roles are beginning to have a positive impact on the school. For example, members of the school council have led assemblies about children's rights and as a result, many pupils understand that not all children grow up in fortunate circumstances. Many pupils within the various groups understand the importance of their responsibilities and describe confidently the changes that they have made. For example, the school council encouraged pupils to wear yellow items of clothing to school to raise funds and increase awareness of mental health issues.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Positive working relationships between pupils and staff creates a purposeful learning environment where pupils behave exceptionally well and persevere in order to complete their work.

Staff know their pupils well and this enables them to provide specific support in order to help improve pupils' attainment and wellbeing. They use questioning techniques skilfully to ensure that pupils understand new concepts and develop their knowledge and skills.

Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils. They make imaginative use of a variety of stimulating teaching methods and use resources imaginatively to engage and sustain pupils' interest in learning. Teachers share the learning objective with pupils at the beginning of each lesson and provide clear instructions that enable them to undertake their work confidently. A team of skilful support staff provide highly effective pastoral and learning support. They contribute enthusiastically to the experiences of pupils in lessons, through extra-curricular provision and in meeting the particular needs of groups of pupils.

In the foundation phase, teachers make effective use of the indoor space available to them. They plan a comprehensive and exciting curriculum, which engages pupils' interests consistently. However, planning for use of the outdoor areas to enhance pupils' experiences is limited overall. In key stage 2, teachers plan opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of contexts across the curriculum. They make appropriate provision for pupils to develop their writing skills in other areas of learning through interesting topics linked to the local area. For example, pupils extended writing in their topic books enhances their knowledge of the blitz in Swansea. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills are less well developed.

Teachers give pupils helpful verbal feedback on the quality of their work. This helps them to understand new ideas clearly and enables staff to measure pupils' progress. Recently, the school has successfully introduced self and peer assessment for pupils. This is beginning to make a positive difference to their ability to reflect on their progress and to their standards of writing. However, in key stage 2, teachers' written comments do not consistently indicate how pupils might improve the quality of their work in future tasks.

The school offers a suitable, broad range of learning experiences for pupils. Engaging topics, such as The Second World War provide interesting contexts for pupils to develop and apply their skills. A broad range of educational visits, including a residential trip to Mid Wales, enhances pupils' learning experiences well.

Provision to develop pupils' Welsh speaking and listening skills is developing appropriately. The school successfully promotes pupils' understanding of the history and culture of Wales by celebrating St. David's Day and visiting places of interest such as Cardiff castle and museums in Swansea and St. Fagans.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school provides a caring, nurturing environment where all pupils are valued. There are strong levels of mutual respect and co-operation between staff and pupils. Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and develop their levels of wellbeing positively.

The school's arrangements for tracking and monitoring pupils' learning are successful. They support the early identification of pupils requiring additional support. Well-trained staff deliver a range of intervention programmes successfully to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, reading and mathematics programmes ensures that pupils make good progress in their basic skills. All pupils with special educational needs have an individual education plan. Plans includes specific targets that teachers review and update regularly. Good links with a range of external agencies such as the speech and language service provide beneficial specialist support when required.

Effective communication with parents ensures that they are well informed about their child's progress. Parents receive useful information on a wide range of school topics, which helps them to support pupil's learning at home appropriately.

The school has beneficial arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and there are purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, which includes a healthy lunch box policy. The school offers a suitable range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, such as multi-sports, cookery, coding and health and fitness. External specialist teachers who provide weekly sports sessions further enhance the development of pupils' wellbeing and fitness.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Assemblies provide valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on the decisions they make and their relationships with others. Staff work successfully to develop opportunities that promote positive attitudes to difference and diversity. Members of

the two local churches visit regularly to support pupils on various themes including Advent, Diwali and Friendship. The school makes worthwhile use of the local church and chapel to celebrate or commemorate events, such as Harvest Festival and Remembrance Day with the community. As a result, most pupils have a sound understanding of equality, respect and of the community in which they live.

The school provides valuable opportunities for all pupils to become active citizens and to take on responsibilities, for example by encouraging groups such as the school council to influence the school's work.

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders promote a vision for the school, which focuses firmly on the individual progress and wellbeing of every child. They ensure that staff support and nurture pupils' development consistently. The headteacher has high expectations of all pupils and provides a caring and inclusive environment to help them make the most of their time at the school.

Leaders respond well to local and national priorities. For example, staff are adapting planning to ensure pupils have more opportunities to reflect and contribute to their learning as part of the school's journey towards a new curriculum for Wales.

Leaders evaluate pupil progress diligently through regular meetings with staff. This process supports staff to focus carefully on meeting the individual needs of all pupils.

The school has suitable processes to evaluate its performance and to plan for improvement. Leaders consider views of pupils and parents appropriately through useful questionnaires. Additional monitoring procedures, such as learning walks, give leaders and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This year's emphasis on improving pupil outcomes in reading and oracy is beginning to have a positive impact on pupil attainment across the school. However, leaders tend to introduce too many initiatives at the same time and do not always have a clear picture of what they wish to achieve through their actions.

All staff understand their roles and responsibilities. They have suitable job descriptions. There are appropriate procedures for the performance management of staff. Staff work collegiately and support each other well to develop different areas of the curriculum. Recently they have collaborated effectively to introduce daily guided reading sessions for pupils. This is making a positive difference to reading standards throughout the school.

Leaders ensure that staff have valuable professional learning experiences. For example, most teachers have had the opportunity to visit other schools as part of the process of preparing for the new curriculum. Work with the school improvement group within the regional consortium in relation to additional learning needs reform has proved highly beneficial and has resulted in school introducing person centred planning for pupils with special educational needs. Staff have also adapted their teaching and learning strategies effectively to improve pupils' collaborative working. As a result, nearly all pupils work well together and are becoming more resilient and ambitious learners.

The school works efficiently to engage with parents and the wider community. For example, it offers workshops to disseminate information about the new curriculum.

Governors understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities effectively. They know the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors participate in setting the school's strategic priorities and provide a good balance between support and challenge. They have a clear understanding of school finances. Overall, leaders use funding appropriately to support school improvement. The school uses the pupil development grant appropriately. For example, it employs teaching assistants to support learners that are eligible for free school meals to improve their skills and wellbeing.

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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