



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

A report on

**Fairwater Primary School
Wellwright Road
Fairwater
CF5 3ED**

Date of inspection: February 2020

by

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

About Fairwater Primary School

Fairwater Primary school is in Cardiff. There are currently 225 pupils between four and eleven years of age on roll, taught in nine single or mixed age classes.

Currently, 35% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the National average of 19%. Most pupils speak English at home and no pupils speak Welsh as their first language. The school has identified 24% of pupils as having special educational needs, which is above the national average of 21%. The school hosts a wellbeing centre that serves schools across the area.

The headteacher took up post in September 2017. The school's most recent inspection was in July 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

Fairwater Primary school is a very caring, inclusive learning community, which nurtures its pupils successfully. There are strong, supportive relationships between pupils and staff and the school values all pupils as individuals. Teachers know their pupils very well. They plan an engaging range of challenging activities to develop the pupils' skills effectively. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They apply themselves well during activities and make good progress over time. A team of well-trained and effective teaching assistants deliver a range of intervention programmes successfully to support pupils who need extra help to learn. School leaders, governors and staff share a clear vision for continuous improvement. There are well-established processes to identify priorities for improvement and valuable opportunities for staff to take responsibility for leading development initiatives.

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 Improve processes for allocating resources to school improvement priorities

R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to influence what and how they learn

R3 Improve attendance

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 their work with the wellbeing centre based at the school, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Many pupils start school with literacy and numeracy skills below those expected for their age. Most pupils make good progress in developing these and other skills during their time at the school. Many pupils recall prior learning successfully and apply themselves to their tasks diligently. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who attend the wellbeing centre at the school make good progress and develop as increasingly independent and confident individuals.

Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. From the outset in the reception class, most pupils listen attentively and express themselves confidently during activities. Many Year 2 pupils share their ideas happily, for example when discussing the letter the class had received from Farmer Jac as part of their work on Cold Jac Farm. Most key stage 2 pupils share their opinions purposefully with their partner or during whole class discussions. For example, many Year 5 and 6 pupils express their ideas enthusiastically when discussing what will happen to the red and white dragons during a fight scene.

Most pupils are keen to use Welsh and respond positively to the encouragement their teachers provide throughout the day. Many older pupils are increasingly confident speakers. They use connectives successfully to extend their conversations with each other and with visitors. A minority are starting to use their Welsh spontaneously during free times. For example, pupils who run the healthy tuck shop speak Welsh with their peers as they carry out their duties.

Many pupils in the reception class develop early reading skills successfully. They recognise the letters of the alphabet and understand the sounds that they represent. They develop an understanding of rhyme, for example by identifying words that rhyme with cat and read short sentences successfully.

Many Year 1 and 2 pupils read with increasing confidence, using a variety of strategies to help them. Many more able pupils read words of increasing complexity with good fluency and expression. Across key stage 2, many pupils continue to develop as skilful readers. They speak confidently about different types of books and stories, and their favourite authors. Many more able Year 5 and 6 pupils have well developed higher order reading skills and can identify inferred messages from the text.

Many reception pupils take part in a variety of mark making activities and develop their early writing skills well. They begin to form letters and short words during their activities in the class and in the outside areas and many more able are developing writing skills quickly.

Many pupils write confidently in a variety of contexts across the curriculum. For example, Year 2 pupils write the story of three little pigs, varying their sentence structure successfully using mostly accurate punctuation. Most spell familiar words accurately, and attempt plausible phonetic spelling of more challenging words. The more able are beginning to use more complex punctuation, such as speech marks and exclamation marks, in their work.

In Year 4, many pupils show good imagination. For example, they produce highly descriptive poetry based on the work of the poet Kit Wright. Many more able Year 5 and 6 pupils write confidently. For example following some in depth research, they produce highly effective news reports about the impact of the treaty of Versailles between the world wars. Generally, pupils' handwriting is legible and most pupils develop a neat consistent style. Spelling is generally accurate. Less able pupils do not allow their lack of confidence in spelling to impede their willingness to write and express themselves at length.

Across the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress with their mathematical skills. In the outside area, reception pupils show a good understanding of the characteristics of familiar shapes such as a square, triangle and circle. They respond well to the challenges, for example to work out how many blocks they will need to build an enclosure for sheep.

During mathematical activities, the more able Year 1 pupils enjoy investigating how many items they may be able to buy for £2 in the vet's surgery. In key stage 2, many pupils apply their numeracy skills successfully in a range of different contexts. For example, they use calculations accurately when comparing the capacity of different stadia at the rugby world cup. As part of their work in science, they record the rates at which paper spinners fall, repeating the test to find the average fall time and draw sensible conclusions.

In the foundation phase, many pupils use Information and communication technology (ICT) devices such as tablet computers to practice forming letters. They use different apps to record and evaluate their work. They plan specific routes for programmable robots accurately.

Many older pupils access their HWB account safely at home to continue with their work from school. They use word processing and presentation packages, spreadsheets and databases confidently, for example when looking at the population of cities and numbers of casualties during the Second World War. Overall, pupils' use of technology enhances learning effectively.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils behave well in class and when moving around the school. They listen carefully in assemblies and show respect to one another. Most pupils speak politely and confidently to adults and are keen to discuss their learning and information about the school. They have a growing awareness of their rights and share this understanding effectively. For example, pupils created an informative leaflet outlining what it means to be a rights respecting school and distributed this to parents and governors.

Nearly all pupils are proud of their school and are keen to discuss their work and progress. Most have positive attitudes towards their learning and concentrate well. They are developing resilience and use a range of self-help and partner strategies to seek solutions when challenges arise. For example, many Year 5 and 6 pupils persevere well when trying to accurately measure the wingspan of a dragon, before doubling the measurement. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are confident and capable. They are growing in ambition and becoming increasingly independent.

The warmth and strength of the working relationships between pupils and staff ensure that most pupils feel safe in school. Nearly all pupils understand the need to be careful when using the internet and know what to do if they have any concerns. Digital Leaders recently led an internet safety assembly that reinforced important messages about keeping safe online. Most pupils have a sound understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle. The school prepares healthy snacks for foundation phase pupils and key stage 2 pupils run a healthy fruit tuckshop, which many pupils use. Many pupils discuss the importance of taking part in regular exercise and attend various extra-curricular clubs such as football, cricket or dance.

Many pupils from a broad range of backgrounds and abilities have the opportunity to contribute to leadership groups. These groups include School Council, Eco Committee, Digital Leaders and Criw Cymraeg. Each group makes a positive contribution to the life and values of the school. For example, the Eco Committee play an active role in raising pupils' awareness of looking after their environment by organising litter picks, recycling projects and encouraging energy conservation. The School Council have been involved in mobilising the school to fund raise for charities and have recently been involved in campaigning for new key stage 2 toilets. Criw Cymraeg engage pupils successfully in using their Welsh language skills outside in the playground as well as in class with their peers. This has contributed well to the increased appreciation of the Welsh language across the school.

Attendance levels do not compare well with levels at similar schools. A few pupils regularly arrive late.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers have high expectations of pupils and ensure an appropriate level of challenge during activities. There is an air of mutual respect across the school and staff model good behaviours, which has a positive impact on pupils' engagement and attitudes. Staff have very strong relationships with pupils and as a result, pupils remain on task for extended periods. Teachers and support staff maintain a calm, hardworking environment. Teaching assistants use their varied skills to support and nurture pupils successfully. Nearly all pupils move smoothly from one activity to another, and immediately settle to their activities. This is a noteworthy feature of the school.

Teachers set a brisk pace to lessons and activities. They set age appropriate lesson objectives and agree meaningful success criteria that many pupils use maturely to evaluate their own progress. Teachers use effective questioning techniques and give pupils time to think before they answer. Many teachers and support staff share their passion for different aspects of the curriculum. For example, the recent drive to improve pupils' confidence when speaking Welsh in less formal situations has been successful due to the consistent way the staff use incidental Welsh with the pupils throughout the day. They demonstrate a very positive attitude with the pupils that empowers them to believe in themselves and develop ever-increasing confidence when using the language. Many pupils benefit from staff interests and expertise in specific areas, such as gardening and yoga

Teachers and support staff agree individual targets with pupils, which they discuss and review regularly. For example, many Year 5 and 6 pupils have a thorough

understanding of their own progress. They explain what they need to do to develop their work further. Teachers provide useful verbal feedback regularly throughout activities, so that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. For example, in key stage 2, teachers use 'spot checks' to encourage and clarify pupils understanding of the task.

There is a consistent and effective approach to written feedback across the school. Pupils receive useful opportunities to assess their own work, discuss their progress with their 'shoulder partners' before receiving feedback from their teacher. Key stage 2 pupils receive structured feedback after completing specific tasks and they explain the positive impact this has on their learning. Pupils respond maturely to teachers' comments to bring about improvements.

The areas of continuous and enhanced provision in the foundation phase classrooms and outside learning areas provide a wealth of opportunities for the younger pupils to learn and develop their skills. Teachers provide engaging focused tasks designed to develop pupils' skills. They combine these well with a range opportunities for pupils to apply their skills independently throughout the week in activities and challenges for pupils. These are often linked to specific literacy, numeracy or ICT skills. For example, pupils use their numeracy skills to see how many sandcastles they can make before the minute timer runs out.

Leaders, teachers and support staff collaborate well to ensure that the curriculum is broad and stimulating for pupils. Teachers plan together, and provide effective activities to meet the needs of all pupils. They ensure the right level of challenge for pupils of different abilities. For example, a lower ability Year 5 and 6 reading group learn to skim and scan when reading to discover information from a challenging text. Planning for the development of skills is effective and, as a result, most pupils of all abilities make good progress.

Most staff seek pupils' views about what they would like to learn. However, in general, pupils do not have enough influence over how or what they learn.

Care, support and guidance: Good

All staff contribute effectively to a caring, supportive and inclusive ethos that permeates the life of the school. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal, social and emotional skills. As a result, most pupils develop positive attitudes to learning.

Leaders, teachers and support staff track pupils' academic and social progress robustly. They administer an extensive range of valuable assessments. The information gathered enables pupils to access an effective range of learning experiences and interventions. The newly appointed Home School Link Officer has strengthened relationships with families, particularly in relation to attendance. Recently revised procedures for monitoring and tracking attendance indicate improved outcomes.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is a strong feature of the school. The school is home to a wellbeing centre, which serves pupils from across Cardiff. The centre provides specific and beneficial care, support and guidance for its pupils.

Through a range of informative assessments and transition work staff get to know pupils' individual needs very quickly. All parents receive valuable daily communication about their child's progress and relevant areas for improvement. This well-organised and careful approach enables staff to monitor individuals very closely.

The extra-curricular and extended curriculum across the school and within the wellbeing centre helps pupils to develop important life skills. For example, pupils participate in outdoor pursuits and team-building activities to develop their confidence and self-esteem. They participate in activities that take them out of their comfort zone. This purposeful work allows pupils within the wellbeing centre, to re-integrate successfully, with decreasing support, into their feeder schools. They are able to use the range of strategies they have developed to engage fully in mainstream classes with their peers.

Across the school, all staff use a consistent and positive behaviour management system that promotes the emotional resilience of learners successfully.

The school has established very good working relationships with parents and they value the school's caring and supportive ethos. The school informs parents about activities and events through newsletters, text messages and social media websites. Staff regularly invite parents to visit their child's class to see them working. They also enjoy opportunities to celebrate their achievements through presentations about their current topics. The school listens carefully to parents' views and responds appropriately to their ideas and concerns. Reports to parents are informative, clear and personal to the child and meet statutory requirements.

The school values creative and expressive aspects of the curriculum and provide the pupils with meaningful opportunities to perform regularly. Nearly all pupils celebrate the culture and heritage of Wales through Eisteddfodau, educational visits to local landmarks, and pupil led assemblies.

Pupils benefit from the school's comprehensive range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. These include coding, Lego, drama, gardening and yoga. The school plans well for pupils to take on a growing range of responsibilities as they mature. For example, digital leaders organise ICT equipment and help other learners with their ICT skills in class.

The school's core values of respect, trust and kindness permeate the culture, curriculum and ethos of the school. Assemblies and religious education lessons develop pupils' sense of spiritual awareness and knowledge of cultures around the globe, and within their local community in Cardiff. For example, pupils in key stage 2 visit a Hindu temple to learn about different faiths and cultures.

The school promotes healthy eating and drinking well and helps pupils to understand the benefits of healthy choices. The curriculum, physical education lessons and extra-curricular activities ensure that most pupils understand the advantages of regular exercise. The school sets high expectations for behaviour and works successfully with partners to address issues when they arise. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher shares her vision and high expectations with the whole school community. Together with staff, she has agreed whole school aims, which emphasise pupils' achievement and wellbeing within an inclusive school environment. Senior leaders work well as a team and focus very closely on provision and outcomes for pupils.

Governors know the school well and provide valuable support for school leaders. They spend time in school and take part in purposeful self-evaluation activities. They undertake their roles conscientiously. Their role as a critical friend is developing well and they challenge the school's leadership on aspects of provision appropriately. Members of the finance committee monitor the school's resources carefully. They ensure that there are enough staff and resources for pupils to learn in a safe and stimulating environment, both indoors and outside in the extensive school grounds. Recent spending priorities include extending the range of ICT available to pupils and this has promoted pupils' enthusiasm and independence in their learning.

School self-evaluation processes are rigorous. In each term, leaders look carefully at a wide range of aspects of teaching and learning. They consider pupil data in detail and evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils to prioritise specific areas for development. Leaders look at pupils' work, listen to pupils' views and observe teaching. Staff and governors contribute to these activities, and the findings lead into the school's development plan for the year ahead. The school also takes good account of national priorities.

Improvement plans include sensible actions and success criteria, which are useful in helping to monitor progress. Members of the senior leadership team and subject leaders play a key role in ensuring that actions within the various priorities are achieved. However, leaders do not always give enough consideration to how they allocate resources, such as finance, to support improvement priorities.

There is a very strong emphasis on professional learning for all staff. When new staff join the school, senior leaders work alongside them to help them to become familiar with the school's policies and expectations. They often develop quickly as leaders and have opportunities to influence school improvement. For example, standards in Welsh have improved rapidly and all staff, including new members of the team, now contribute confidently to ensuring that Welsh has become a strong feature.

All staff understand their roles and responsibilities. There are effective arrangements for their performance management. Teachers and support staff reflect on their own areas for development and senior leaders comment on their strengths. Staff often work in pairs within the school or join groups of local schools to develop identified aspects of provision. For example, staff joined two other local schools to develop strategies to promote collaborative work in lessons. As a result, lessons are more interactive and teachers use a range of strategies to promote learning. This work has had a very positive impact on pupil engagement and wellbeing.

Teachers and support staff discuss individual pupils and monitor their progress together. As a result, all staff know pupils very well and meet their needs very successfully. Leaders ensure that teachers know the expectations for their pupils and intervene where pupils make less than expected progress.

The school uses its pupil development grant effectively. It focuses on providing help for vulnerable pupils to meet their emotional needs as well as giving support for literacy and numeracy where needed. Many pupils who are eligible for free school meals make good progress from their starting points. The work of the Home School Link officer is beginning to impact on families and the attendance of a small group of 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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