



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

A report on

**Oakfield Primary School
Ferntree Drive
St Mellons
CF3 0AA**

Date of inspection: December 2019

by

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

About Oakfield Primary School

Oakfield Primary School is in St Mellons in the Cardiff local authority. There are 426 pupils aged 3 to 11 years at the school, including 59 places in the nursery, within a 112 place provision.

The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 35%, which is much higher than the average for Wales (18%). Many pupils are of white British ethnicity, with a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very few pupils speak Welsh as a first language at home. The school has identified around 32% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is above the national average of 21%.

The last Estyn inspection was in May 2012. The current headteacher was appointed in September 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

Oakfield Primary School is a happy and highly inclusive community where pupils make good progress from their starting-points and develop strong literacy and numeracy skills. Nearly all pupils have high levels of wellbeing and very positive attitudes to learning. Standards of behaviour in lessons and around the school are very good and there is a strong sense of mutual respect and trust between staff and pupils.

Staff provide a very caring and supportive environment that encourages all pupils to give of their best. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and deliver interesting learning experiences that help pupils to develop as confident individuals.

The headteacher and other leaders have high expectations and set a strong strategic direction for the school. They have established very thorough and robust leadership and self-evaluation processes. Leaders are very successful in sharing the best aspects of professional practice within the school and with other schools. A strong culture of teamwork enables staff to develop well professionally and this has a positive impact on pupils' standards and the high quality of pupils' wellbeing in the school.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' confidence and skills in speaking Welsh
- R2 Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners
- R3 Ensure that all teachers give pupils enough opportunities to write at length across the curriculum

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 the way in which the headteacher distributes responsibilities in such a way that leadership is broad based and teachers have opportunities to collaborate and actively engage in change, innovation and capacity building, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Many pupils enter the school with skills that are well below those expected for their age. As pupils move through the school, many make good progress, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop effective oracy skills. They listen well to staff and each other and they contribute sensibly during class discussions. Many read confidently and develop an appropriate understanding of the link between letters and sounds. Many pupils develop their early writing skills well. By Year 2, older pupils write successfully in a range of basic genres. For example, they produce interesting stories about pirates and create a purposeful fact file on dinosaurs, using sensible openings and endings.

In key stage 2, many pupils speak confidently and make purposeful contributions to class discussions. For example, pupils in Year 6 participate enthusiastically in class when playing a 'readopoly game'. Throughout the key stage, many pupils read texts eagerly and fluently. For example, Year 4 pupils discuss their books on fossils and evolution enthusiastically. They evaluate characters in the books they read confidently and the more able suggest how some books can be improved. Across the key stage, many pupils make good progress with their writing. For example, in Year 4, they produce interesting pieces on amazing giraffes and woodland animals and stimulating research work on living conditions in Tudor times. By Year 6, older pupils write successfully in a range of formal and informal genres. They research the lives of evacuees during the Second World War and create effective profiles of notable people, such as Vera Lynn and Glenn Miller. Many pupils organise and punctuate their writing correctly and present it well.

Foundation phase pupils develop a useful understanding of basic Welsh words and phrases. In key stage 2, the majority respond to simple questions about numbers, colours and the weather appropriately. However, throughout the school, many pupils lack the confidence to speak Welsh outside of designated Welsh lessons. Pupils' standards in reading and writing are developing suitably.

Most pupils' numeracy skills across the school develop well. In the foundation phase, most pupils in the reception class count a set of Cinderella's shoes correctly and sort them successfully according to their colour. By Year 2, most handle money confidently and develop a good understanding of measurement, time and data. Most pupils apply their numeracy skills well in other areas of their learning. For example, they collect information about the weather in Cardiff and use this to create simple bar graphs.

In key stage 2, most pupils build successfully on their previous learning and make good progress in their mathematics skills. They discuss their number work confidently by using relevant mathematical terminology. By Year 6, most display an effective understanding of strategies that enable them to add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers confidently, for example, when calculating the areas of different

football pitches. Most pupils apply their numeracy skills well in other areas of their learning, for example, to investigate which brand of kitchen paper is the most effective at absorbing water.

Most pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. In the foundation phase, most use computers confidently to practise their numeracy and spelling skills and to send group emails safely. Most pupils in key stage 2 develop their ICT skills successfully to communicate information, present data and model different scenarios. For example, older pupils use a spreadsheet confidently to match pupils' feet to shoe sizes. Older pupils research aspects of Victorian life carefully on the internet and create imaginative audio-visual presentations to display the importance of e-safety.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and display very positive attitudes to their learning. They are happy to talk to staff and are confident that the school will listen to them and act upon their concerns or suggestions. Nearly all pupils feel safe and valued. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay safe online. For example, they discuss the importance of keeping passwords and personal information secure.

Nearly all pupils take part in planning their topics and have very high levels of interest and engagement in their work. They show an increasing ability to plan jointly and to express an opinion about what they are learning. From an early age, most pupils have a good understanding of what they do well and what they need to do to improve their work.

Most pupils' behaviour is very good. Nearly all pupils settle in lessons quickly and move between tasks sensibly and efficiently. Their willingness to work individually, in pairs and groups is a strong feature of the school. Nearly all pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly manner and speak confidently to adults in a range of situations. Most pupils behave very well during lunchtimes and on the playground. They understand the well-embedded and very strong anti-bullying strategies introduced by staff and pupils. Nearly all pupils engage purposefully in a wide range of games such as football, netball shooting, hoop and ring games. Nearly all pupils carefully consider their friends' needs. For example, Year 6 buddies nurture younger pupils from the time they start in school and ensure that no child is without a friend during lunch and break times.

Most pupils display high levels of concentration when working and they are keen to make progress in their learning. They work hard and are very proud of their achievements and this is reflected in the high standards of presentation. Pupils know that teachers and support staff value them highly as individuals and this is a strength of the school. As a result, pupils develop a very strong sense of self-esteem and make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils contribute successfully to the decision-making process in many aspects of school life. For example, they determine the focus of an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and this helps to engage pupils and to enrich their learning very successfully.

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Older pupils understand the importance of making healthy choices when choosing a snack and the contents of packed lunches. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 are aware of the importance of keeping fit and understand how exercise plays a key part in keeping them healthy. They participate in a wide range of beneficial extra-curricular opportunities, such as rugby and football, and learn dance routines. Older pupils use their orienteering skills to explore Penyfan and the surrounding environment. They also take part in a residential trip to Storey Arms, which helps to develop their ability to work collaboratively and builds their confidence and self-esteem. Many pupils use their knowledge of healthy living to influence the habits of family members.

Pupils enthusiastically embrace many and varied opportunities to undertake leadership roles through the Oakfield Senedd, for example in the school council, Welsh council and as digital leaders. They understand the importance of their responsibilities and describe their achievements confidently. For example, the school council and eco club named the school classrooms and chose the colour schemes for a recent new building in the school. Pupils support and represent their peers maturely. For example, buddies in Year 6 work very well with pupils in the reception class to support them with activities such as reading and making puppets. They describe how this experience helps to strengthen friendships across year groups and to reinforce their sense of responsibility.

Nearly all older pupils develop a very good understanding of the importance of citizenship through their awareness of values, such as trust, respect and perseverance. They explain these values maturely. For example, when discussing prejudice, pupils in Year 4 explain confidently what they know about racism and that it is not acceptable to judge a person's character by their appearance. Younger pupils in the foundation phase also develop their personal and social skills very well. For example, they take turns when using tablet computers or share beads independently as they make a necklace to give to Cinderella.

Attendance rates in recent years have improved markedly from a low starting point. Most pupils and their parents understand the importance of regular attendance at school and the positive impact that this has on pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The school has created a carefully-planned curriculum that addresses the requirements of the foundation phase and the national curriculum well. Teachers have responded enthusiastically to adapting the curriculum to meet the purposes of the new curriculum for Wales. Teachers plan interesting topics that provide good opportunities for pupils to use aspects of their literacy and numeracy skills confidently in different contexts as they move through the school. For example, pupils in key stage 2 use their skills successfully to research space, the universe and the force of gravity. Provision to develop pupils' creativity is a strength of the school. Pupils receive the opportunity to play a range of musical instruments and they take part in regular music-making groups and performances. For example, pupils in the choir develop their creative and performance skills when they sing at the school fair.

However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to develop their independent learning skills in order to decide what and how they learn. On occasions, a few teachers rely too heavily on pupils completing worksheets and this means that pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend and practise their writing skills.

Staff foster very positive working relationships with pupils. They create a calm and purposeful atmosphere in classes and they manage pupils' behaviour very well. Many teachers use engaging strategies to capture pupils' interest at the start of lessons effectively. They set clear objectives and match activities precisely to pupils' previous learning. Many teaching sessions proceed at a brisk pace and maintain pupils' interest successfully. Adults question pupils skilfully to extend their understanding and knowledge. Teachers deploy teaching assistants well to make effective use of their expertise and skills. Teaching assistants provide valuable support and guidance to pupils of all abilities.

Teachers give useful feedback to pupils and identify strengths and areas for improvement in their work clearly. They encourage pupils to reflect on and improve their work. Teachers make good use of the assessments of pupils' progress to plan future learning appropriately.

The school is developing the foundation phase successfully. Teachers work productively with teaching assistants to ensure a suitable balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. They use questioning effectively to extend pupils' thinking. As a result, many pupils show motivation in their learning and tackle tasks with enthusiasm. Teachers plan carefully for the use of the outdoor areas and ensure that pupils work purposefully and independently outdoors. For example, the forest area provides exciting opportunities for pupils to explore the natural world.

Learning opportunities promote pupils' understanding of their Welsh heritage effectively. There is a strong Welsh ethos in the school and, as a result, most pupils have a very positive attitude towards the Welsh language and culture. There are visits to many local venues, such as Caerleon and Big Pit, and an annual Eisteddfod. In addition, teachers encourage pupils to study the work of Welsh artists and authors regularly. These experiences enrich pupils' knowledge and help to strengthen their Welsh identity. However, there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to use and improve their Welsh oracy skills in more informal situations.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is a very happy, inclusive and caring community. Staff know the pupils well and provide a nurturing environment that successfully builds pupils' self-esteem. Parents and carers regard the school as a safe haven where their children's wellbeing and learning are central to its work. For example, the local police officer visits regularly to talk about 'stranger danger', internet safety and road safety. The school creates effective intervention sessions, such as the school phobia group, to help pupils with specific concerns. All staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and, as a result, pupils' behave exceptionally well.

The school has detailed systems to monitor and track the progress and wellbeing of pupils. Teachers make purposeful use of assessment outcomes across all areas of

learning to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. They identify pupils' needs at an early stage and provide them with very effective intervention and support. Teaching assistants work very well with teachers and external agencies, such as the team around the family, to provide valuable support for pupils and their parents. This has led to significant improvements in pupils' attendance and their wellbeing.

The school promotes the importance of healthy living very well. There are purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. These include a fruit tuck shop and healthy lunch box policy. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, such as netball, football, tag rugby and dance, contributes successfully towards developing pupils' wellbeing and fitness. There are special sessions on mindfulness and yoga to help those pupils who occasionally find it difficult to settle in school. The school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The provision to develop pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues is very effective. The school promotes the importance of tolerance, respect and courtesy actively and celebrates diversity successfully. For example, in one assembly, pupils of different faiths meditate and pray in accordance with their own customs. There are highly developed opportunities for pupils to build an awareness and understanding of other parts of the world, different religions and cultures. For example, there are strong links with Spain and Romania.

Provision to develop pupils' creative and expressive skills is a strong feature of the school's work. For example, pupils work on Indian music, art work and meditation. They make large canvases involving Rangoli patterns, take part in Bollywood dancing, visit a Hindu Temple and create clay Diva lamps. They also invite a storyteller to school to model storytelling and to create rhymes relating to Cardiff. A local Welsh artist works with more able and talented pupils to produce an attractive mural in school. The school choir performs at local venues and pupils participate in the local literacy festival. Topics, such as 'All about Music', encourage younger pupils to learn about music and to make their own instruments. Pupils in Year 4 learn to waltz while younger pupils create a dance inspired by a well-known story. Teachers invite local musical companies to visit the school each week to promote pupils' instrumental skills and there are very engaging opportunities for pupils to develop their dance skills.

Staff give pupils many opportunities to take an active part in decision-making and leadership. Various groups include an active Senedd, Criw Cymraeg, Helpwyr Heddiw and digital warriors. Pupils prepare manifestos, which they present to the Senedd and school leaders, and this promotes pupil voice very effectively. Pupils have opportunities to improve their fundraising and entrepreneurial skills through the Oakfield Pupil Association. This association works closely with the parent teacher association to raise funds and buy additional resources for the school. For example, Year 6 pupils become entrepreneurs and make a 'buzz' game to raise money at the Christmas Fair. In addition, teachers plan very effective opportunities for pupils to contribute to the next steps in their learning.

The school maintains strong relationships with parents and informs them well about their child's progress. Arrangements include detailed reports and regular parents'

evenings. Parents and the community make significant contributions to the school, for example, by providing purposeful equipment for the outdoor areas. There are many opportunities for families to take part in the school and the school runs courses for parents so that they can help their children with their work. The school also actively helps those families in need of additional support. The individual mentoring of pupils and families with face-to-face meetings in the school community room benefits the more vulnerable groups. The school also collaborates very closely with Fare Share Cymru by mitigating waste and redistributing food to families.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher leads the school very effectively. He has a strong vision for the school, which he shares successfully with staff, pupils, governors and parents. As a result, the whole team is committed to ensuring that every individual has the best possible start at Oakfield. This vision focuses clearly on providing all pupils with learning experiences of good quality within a secure and supportive environment to enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes. Senior leaders and staff create a whole community approach to raising aspirations for pupils and their families.

The headteacher distributes responsibilities very successfully and purposefully among staff at all levels. This has helped to develop individual members of staff professionally, improved leadership capacity in the school and promoted successful collaboration among staff. Staff roles are well defined and there are clear lines of communication between all staff. This promotes teamwork of high quality across the school. The headteacher has extremely high expectations of all his staff and these are drawn up in partnership with staff on an annual basis. The school shares its positive leadership strategies with local schools and leaders have visited the school to observe these in practice. This has contributed to developing leadership capacity in other local schools.

The headteacher is innovative and undertakes projects and initiatives that are advantageous to pupils and their parents. He is fully committed to being a creative school, shares good practice with others and provides pupils with regular opportunities to participate in arts projects so as to develop their creative skills. For example, pupils created ceramic murals and participated in story-telling projects.

Leaders are preparing very well for the implementation of the new curriculum. Staff have been organised very successfully in curriculum teams to make the most of the expertise of individuals, for example to lead the creative arts team, and to reflect the areas of learning in the new curriculum for Wales. All members of staff lead a particular subject or aspect of learning and play a key role in supporting the strategic development of the school. As a result, staff feel empowered and respond very enthusiastically when developing their areas and aspects of learning. A highly successful example of this is the way in which all teachers implement wellbeing strategies.

The school has a very strong culture of self-evaluation, which focuses clearly on pupils' outcomes and wellbeing. Self-evaluation arrangements are planned carefully and enable leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's performance effectively. The curricular team members collect first-hand evidence from a wide range of sources, including the views of parents. Pupils are given a prominent voice in the

process and play a core part in setting priorities for improvement. For example, pupils play a key role in the formulation and development of the creative curriculum. The Senedd chooses the school's values and pupils have the opportunity to suggest which after-school clubs they would like leaders to provide. Staff have strong ownership of the self-evaluation and improvement process and this ensures that the school continues to build, sustain and embed improvements. For example, staff have greatly improved nearly all pupils' progress, their wellbeing and attitudes to learning.

The strong focus on professional learning reflects the high priority the school places on developing the skills of all staff. Regular, robust monitoring and rigorous performance management procedures ensure that staff receive highly effective professional development opportunities that support the school's priorities very successfully. For example, the school's curriculum team identified the need for additional training in numeracy in the foundation phase and this has a positive impact on the teaching of mathematics. Teaching assistants are trained very effectively to implement a range of successful intervention programmes. Senior leaders also promote the professional development of staff by reallocating them to different classes in the school. This gives staff a wide range of experiences, improves professional dialogues and supports the school's capacity for improvement.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and governors undertake their responsibilities conscientiously. They regularly undertake monitoring and evaluation tasks and, as a result, they have a very good understanding of the school's main strengths and areas for improvement. There is an excellent balance between support and challenge in the way governors undertake their role as critical friends and hold senior leaders to account.

The headteacher and governors manage the school's budget well. They make efficient funding decisions in order to respond to the school's needs. The school makes very effective use of additional funding, for example, to increase resources, such as ICT equipment, and to improve the outdoor areas, which impact positively on pupils' skills and wellbeing.

The school places a high priority on reducing the impact of deprivation on vulnerable pupils. For example, pupils have highly effective and regular opportunities to extend their creative experiences in music and art. This results in pupils achieving high standards in artwork, which is very visible in classrooms and around the school. The school also provides high quality, targeted pastoral support for vulnerable pupils to ensure that their learning is not affected adversely when facing challenges. The school uses the pupil development grant purposefully to support pupils' wellbeing and to ensure their successful inclusion in school life.

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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Publication date: 06/02/2020