



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

A report on

New Inn Primary School

**Off Golf Road
New Inn
Pontypool
Torfaen
NP4 0PR**

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

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

About New Inn Primary School

Name of provider	New Inn Primary School
Local authority	Torfaen County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	598
Pupils of statutory school age	450
Number in nursery classes	72
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 21.3%)	14.2%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 22.2%)	13.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/03/2014
Start date of inspection	14/11/2022

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection. Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Pupils at New Inn Primary School thoroughly enjoy attending school. They are keen to talk to visitors and speak confidently about their learning experiences and the wider life of the school. Pupils feel happy and safe and learn from an early age how to take responsibility for their actions and how to look out for others. They know who to turn to when they need help in any situation. During their time in school, pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those affected by social disadvantage, make at least good progress in many areas of learning. They have many opportunities to make decisions about improving their school and often make decisions about what they want to learn. In general, they have fewer opportunities to decide how they learn or to develop as increasingly independent learners.

The school places importance on well-being for its whole community and school staff work well together to create a respectful, nurturing and inclusive environment. This ethos is especially reflected in the warm and positive relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants think about ways to engage pupils in their learning through a range of interesting activities and experiences. Leaders ensure that staff have plentiful opportunities for developing their own knowledge and skills and for working together to meet individual pupils' needs, supporting the school's vision to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education and for future life, developing respect for the world they live in.

The headteacher leads a strong and committed team of leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. Together with governors they work hard to bring about change in the areas they identify for improvement. They work with other schools, and with outside agencies to develop the support, provision and care needed for every pupil to make progress. Staff are committed to forming trusting relationships with parents and carers to further improve pupils' experiences and opportunities. Leaders and teachers are developing a curriculum to reflect the community in which they live and the global influences which add to pupils' knowledge. Leaders keep the work of the school under regular review and there are suitable arrangements for evaluating the quality of school improvements. Monitoring activity, though, does not always pick up on the areas most in need of improvement, such as the way teachers support pupils to understand their next steps in learning, or how effectively their planning helps pupils to apply the skills they learn across the curriculum.

Recommendations

- R1 Sharpen self-evaluation and improvement processes to focus more specifically on the impact of teaching on learning
- R2 Improve the quality of feedback to better support pupils to understand their next steps in learning
- R3 Improve provision to support pupils to apply their numeracy and writing skills creatively across the curriculum
- R4 Extend opportunities for pupils to make choices about their learning increasingly independently

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

When they join the school, many pupils have skills that are about the level expected for their age. During their time at school, most pupils, including those from more disadvantaged backgrounds and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress from their individual starting points in many aspects of their learning. A few make accelerated progress. However, as they move through the school, their activities are not always sufficiently challenging and as a result not all pupils make as much progress as they could.

As they move through school, most pupils make good progress in developing their oracy skills and speak confidently to adults. They apply these skills effectively across a wide range of contexts. Most pupils listen attentively to adults and to peers and respond thoughtfully to questions. Younger pupils ask and answer simple questions in Welsh and older pupils take turns in conversations appropriately. They listen respectfully to understand different perspectives, for instance when discussing the reasons why countries engage in war.

Most pupils in the reception class recognise letters and sounds and many are beginning to combine letters to form simple words. As they move through the school, pupils enjoy reading a range of texts and develop their understanding of what they read well. They use a range of strategies to decode words and infer meaning from complex texts. Pupils in Year 2, for example, confidently explain what happens to a puddle when the sun comes out. Most pupils engage with Welsh texts enthusiastically and make good attempts at pronouncing Welsh words.

Most pupils make good progress with their writing skills. Younger pupils enjoy mark making in sand, for example and quickly learn to form letters. By reception, they write their names, simple words and phrases with increasing accuracy. Pupils in Year 2 create informative posters on countries across the world to advertise sporting events. They use punctuation correctly and spell familiar words. By Year 4, pupils use an increasingly complex vocabulary and sequence sentences to engage the reader. Most older pupils write effectively in a range of genres, for example, using adjectives and similes when writing alternative endings based on a story they have read. They plan and draft work, using dictionaries appropriately to check their spelling. However, opportunities for older pupils to write purposefully and independently across the curriculum are limited. Pupils make suitable progress when writing in Welsh as they move through the school. By the time they reach Year 6 they enjoy writing using extended patterns and a wider range of vocabulary.

During their time in school, most pupils develop useful mathematical skills. The youngest pupils count objects successfully and apply their knowledge when building towers with blocks representing a given set of numbers. Many younger pupils use the language of maths accurately, naming shapes when creating imaginative dinosaurs and when calculating using two-digit numbers. As they move through the school, pupils use analogue and digital clocks and generate graphs to represent data they collect, for example on favourite books. Year 6 pupils develop their understanding of place value and recognising and classifying shape. They select the most appropriate

methods of calculation using either multiplication or division, for example, when budgeting for a family holiday. Across the school, many pupils are beginning to develop their mathematical reasoning skills, however, in general, pupils do not apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum to the level they are capable of.

Most pupils develop their digital skills well and from a young age they use information technology purposefully across a range of activities. Pupils in reception develop their fine motor control when using a finger to control an object on-screen. Year 4 pupils use devices confidently when researching and presenting ideas and older pupils use them creatively to construct websites supporting others' well-being. They use spreadsheets and data bases to solve problems effectively in more authentic contexts.

Nearly all pupils progress well in their physical development during their time at school. Younger pupils improve and refine their technique, running, jumping, stopping and turning enthusiastically. They confidently experiment with their levels of control, mirroring their partners and becoming more precise as they move. Older pupils develop team and coordination skills well, and benefit greatly from their engagement with local sports teams. Many pupils are inspired to develop their sporting interests further outside school through local clubs and academies. Nearly all pupils take part in swimming, enhancing their general fitness and well-being.

Pupils across the school engage enthusiastically in creative activities such as art. They learn to use a range of skills, for instance drawing local landmarks, collaging dinosaurs and experimenting with pastels. However, pupils do not generally develop their technical skills or respond to the work of other artists in a progressively challenging way.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils are proud to belong to New Inn Primary School. From a young age they develop positive relationships with staff and begin to form lasting friendships amongst their peers. The school's commitment to securing well-being for pupils and families is a strength and as a result pupils are happy, healthy and ready to learn.

The school places a high priority on building strong, trusting relationships with families, supporting them sensitively. For example, pupils struggling with their emotional well-being benefit greatly from targeted support, which improves their attendance.

The positive attitudes to school that nearly all pupils display contribute to the school's warm, inviting and calm ethos. Behaviour is exceptional throughout the school, and pupils are respectful of each other and of staff. They create their own rules and understand the importance of following them. They have a secure and often sophisticated understanding of strategies to combat bullying and the school's focus on values in the curriculum strengthens their ability to regulate their own emotions and to develop the resilience they need to deal with the challenges of life.

Across the school, pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They engage well and persevere. The youngest pupils develop well as independent and curious learners. They often lead their learning confidently, adapting tasks to make the most of their

opportunities. For example, pupils in the school's nursery create an exciting opportunity to act as archaeologists, identifying and exploring dinosaur bones. Older pupils show resilience when problem-solving. In Year 4, pupils explore the issues facing large families when booking holidays in other countries. They discuss the possible implications in pairs and small groups and reason, for example that the holiday would cost more and leave you with less spending money or that you may have to give things up to save for the holiday in the first place. Pupils in Year 6 work as a team to plan a party with a given budget, planning, costing and justifying their decisions. They listen carefully to each other's ideas and build on them, suggesting solutions and asking further questions. However, as pupils move through the school, they generally have fewer opportunities to make decisions about their learning and, as a result, pupils do not always build on their independent learning skills effectively enough.

Many pupils are beginning to use success criteria to assess their own and others' work. When given the opportunity, many pupils respond well to verbal feedback during lessons, for example to improve the quality of their writing. Generally, however, pupils do not receive feedback focussed on important, specific next steps in learning and, as a result, have a limited knowledge of how to improve their work over time.

Pupils learn how to be ethical citizens, for example, through their work on climate change and its effect on the locality. Older pupils make links with the school's Eco Committee, suggesting ways to promote sustainability. They develop their understanding of the impact of our actions globally and think about how the consequences of our actions impinge on human rights. They have a sound understanding of rights and how they make a difference to their own and others' lives. During collective worship most pupils develop a deeper sense of the values they reflect on. Across the school, pupils develop their knowledge of diversity through, for example, their work on world cultures and religions and through considering how to communicate with a range of people such as those in the deaf community.

Nearly all pupils feel that their views about improving the school are valued. Pupils across the school have opportunities to develop leadership roles or to contribute their ideas through the school's many pupil voice groups. Their recommendations actively make the school a better place. Charity Ambassadors organise a 'walk to Ukraine' fundraising event and Heddlu Bach members work with the police to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Most pupils enjoy their opportunities to be active both at playtimes and during physical activities and sports. Older pupils enjoy attending the school clubs on offer, including netball, rugby and the new well-being club. Many pupils make healthy choices and understand the importance of eating a balanced diet and staying hydrated. They learn about the negative impact of activities such as smoking and the importance of staying safe online.

Many younger pupils benefit from the opportunities to learn freely outdoors and older pupils make the most of their time in the school's forest and meadow areas. However, across the school, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their skills in a wide enough range of authentic contexts outdoors.

Teaching and learning experiences

Across the school, staff develop strong working relationships with pupils. These positive relationships ensure that pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and remain engaged throughout lessons.

Lessons are often lively and stimulating and many teachers use a range of approaches to engage pupils in their learning. They use questioning effectively and give clear instructions to pupils about their expectations during lessons. They create valuable opportunities for pupils to work together and are beginning to support pupils to reflect on their learning. For example, in Year 5, pupils discuss issues and resolutions following their investigations into anti-bullying resources.

On occasion, teachers plan sequences of learning experiences that build pupils skills and understanding progressively. Younger pupils use digital skills such as cutting, pasting, resizing and making changes to font and colour before creating posters using digital devices. Older pupils combine a range of mathematical skills with digital skills and their own experiences, to plan a party. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively throughout the school to support all pupils, including those with additional needs to make good progress in many aspects of their learning. However, teachers do not provide opportunities for pupils to deepen their learning independently often enough.

Teachers are working together to develop an understanding of what progress in skills and learning look like as they move through the school. Many use verbal feedback appropriately to guide pupils. This work is at an early stage of development and teachers are not always clear about their expectations for progress over time. They do not include pupils in discussions about their learning closely enough, and as a result pupils are sometimes unsure about the purpose of their work and the steps they need to take to make progress in different aspects of their learning.

The school is developing its curriculum suitably and leaders and teachers work closely together to create themes that provide interesting learning experiences. Topics such as 'Remember Me', an intergenerational project on the Second World War enable pupils, particularly those from services families, to share their own knowledge and experiences as they learn about the way the world has been shaped by history and the impact of war on people today. Teachers are beginning to adapt their planning to provide learning experiences that motivate pupils and allow them to combine a range of skills, for example when creating leaflets on women in science. They plan appropriately for pupils to develop their digital, problem-solving and literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, younger pupils retell the story of Albi's adventures in their own words and Year 5 pupils write and act out playscripts on anti-bullying confidently to develop their understanding of characterisation. Teachers ensure that pupils develop their knowledge of mathematical concepts systematically. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their numeracy skills purposefully across the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to learn about nature during forest school sessions and enjoy the calmness and quietness of nature. Younger pupils benefit from the continuous opportunities they have to learn in the outdoors, developing their control of bikes and trikes, and blending leaves and water in the mud kitchen. Generally

however, teachers do not make the most of opportunities to develop learning in the outdoor environment.

The school provides authentic opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the history and culture of Wales. They imitate the work of Welsh artists, celebrate special days and learn about influential people such as Dorothea Bate, exploring her work on prehistoric fossils and replicating her finds using similar excavation techniques. In many classes, teachers encourage pupils to practise their Welsh language.

Staff develop pupils' understanding of healthy living well. From an early age they make healthy food choices and understand why it is important to stay hydrated. As they move through the school they learn about how to keep themselves safe physically and mentally, for example when exploring the effects of harmful substances on the body and how to stay safe online, keeping their personal information safe and identifying ways to avoid inappropriate content when researching.

Care, support and guidance

Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants at New Inn Primary School create a caring and inclusive environment that encourages pupils to be respectful, and to take responsibility for their actions. The supportive and friendly working relationship between pupils and staff is a strength of the school. Staff work together successfully to adapt provision to cater for individual pupil needs and the needs of their families.

Leaders and staff maintain effective systems of support to ensure that pupils thrive at school. Its work to support pupils' emotional well-being through a wide variety of nurturing intervention is highly effective in supporting pupils' progress in learning and well-being.

The school's support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is a strength. There are clear processes to identify pupils' individual needs and highly skilled staff provide support through a wide range of interventions. Staff monitor plans for support regularly and include pupils and parents in evaluating these plans. Early identification of need ensures that pupils receive the necessary support for them to succeed in their work. As a result, most pupils with ALN make good progress from their individual starting points and a few make accelerated progress.

Staff provide purposeful opportunities for all pupils to make decisions within the school. Pupil leadership groups, including the Sports Ambassadors, the Healthy Relationships team and Heddlu Bach meet regularly to discuss how to improve the school, the community and the world we live in. Following a recent audit, the school's Pupil Parliament made recommendations to improve access to physical activities at break times. Staff ensure there are regular occasions for pupils to influence what they learn. In a few classes, contribute to planning authentic contexts for their learning. In these classes, pupils often have a better understanding of the purpose of their learning. However, across the school, pupils do not develop securely as independent learners and do not take enough responsibility for their own learning.

The school's curriculum supports pupils to develop an understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales and their place in the wider world. Pupils celebrate St David's Day, taking part in the school's Eisteddfod. They visit Welsh landmarks such as Cardiff Bay and the Senedd and learn about famous Welsh people past and present. In addition, the school challenges stereotypes, for example in pupils' attitudes, choices and expectations during their work on gender roles.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development successfully. Teachers ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the differences between right and wrong and what it means to be a good citizen during lessons and in school assemblies. Most pupils take part in recreational and sports activities and many take part in team sports, events and tournaments. These experiences help to develop their confidence and self-esteem successfully. Pupils learn about careers and the world of work, for example through a 'Business in the Community' week pupils speak to visitors from a range of industries and explore different professions from doctors to ballerinas. As a result, many older pupils are beginning to understand the direction they want to take in their lives and talk about working hard in school to achieve their ambitions.

Leaders and staff monitor pupils' attendance effectively. Systems to support and challenge low attendance are rigorous and over time have resulted in improved levels of attendance. The school promotes a strong culture of safety, empathy, care and support. There is an established system to report safeguarding concerns regarding pupils and the school makes timely referrals to outside agencies when appropriate.

Leadership and management

Leaders at New Inn Primary School are highly organised, visible and well-respected. Across the school, leaders have high expectations, and share a clear vision focussed on well-being to build an increasingly cohesive school community. Staff at all levels work together to embed trusting and caring relationships in classrooms and, as a result, pupils feel safe and enjoy learning. The school works effectively to raise pupils' aspirations, for example by inviting local people and well-known personalities from a range of backgrounds to share their career and lifestyle choices. These visits inspire pupils to think about the choices they will make in future and how what they do now makes a difference to the path they will take.

Governors work well with the headteacher and staff and provide valuable support. They know the school and community well and allocate funding effectively to support improvement for all. They use the pupil development grant appropriately to tackle poverty and social disadvantage, for example, to support vulnerable pupils with their emotional well-being and to provide equal access to the curriculum. They understand the school's improvement priorities and support leaders to monitor improvement work appropriately. Governors make suitable arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking in school and effectively maintain a robust safeguarding culture.

All staff have clear roles and responsibilities, and arrangements to develop leadership capacity are developing well. Senior leaders consider staff experiences and skills when planning to improve provision, for example to improve teaching approaches to better support pupil progress in mathematical concepts. The

leadership of the school's well-being support results in close relationships with vulnerable families, which has a positive impact on their child's attendance and readiness to engage with learning.

Leaders address national priorities appropriately. They are implementing their curriculum design to reflect the Curriculum for Wales, focussing on learning through the six areas of learning and experience (AoLEs) and developing skills through the planned learning experiences. Leaders ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to use the Welsh language. The school has approached ALN reform successfully, making significant improvements to provision for pupils. As a result, pupils with additional learning needs often make accelerated progress.

Leaders use the outcomes of all evaluation work to decide on improvement priorities and have produced a comprehensive and ambitious plan for the school's development. They monitor the quality of teaching, talk to pupils about their work and use assessment data to identify pupil progress. Staff keep progress towards improvement goals under regular review and leaders are beginning to set aside time to reflect on progress appropriately. They encourage staff to share and reflect on practice and address inconsistencies through supportive professional development and mentoring. All staff receive regular worthwhile professional learning linked to school improvement priorities and performance management, undertake personal professional enquiries and access training to support their career aspirations. They collaborate with other schools appropriately. Teachers with responsibility for developing AoLEs, for example, meet regularly to develop plans for implementing the Curriculum for Wales. However, leaders have not accurately identified and prioritised a few key areas for improvement. As a consequence, improvement priorities are often too broad and self-evaluation processes do not focus closely enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer 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/carers 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' well-being, 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)

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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