



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

A report on

Llanfoist Fawr Primary School

**Llanfoist Primary School
School Way
Abergavenny
NP7 9LS**

Date of inspection: January 2023

by

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

About Llanfoist Fawr Primary School

Name of provider	Llanfoist Fawr Primary School
Local authority	Monmouthshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	202
Pupils of statutory school age	172
Number in nursery classes	0
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 23.0%)	15.0%
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 16.1%)	8.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	07/09/2015
Start date of inspection	23/01/2023

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

The headteacher demonstrates strong leadership and along with other school leaders works well together towards fulfilling their vision to provide a caring, thoughtful, happy and secure environment for pupils. This culture enables most pupils to develop their confidence and self-assurance effectively. They are supported successfully by keen teachers and helpful support staff, who encourage pupils to develop a range of skills appropriately. While most pupils make effective progress in many areas of learning by Year 6, their progress through the school is not strong in all classes.

Llanfoist Primary is a happy school where nearly all pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with politeness and respect. Their behaviour is exceptional and most are eager to undertake their tasks enthusiastically. Staff have a good understanding of pupils' needs and, through joint planning, they prepare interesting activities that engage pupils' interests. However, at times, provision does not always allow pupils to develop their independent learning skills. Most younger pupils make good progress in their language, mathematics and digital skills. They talk confidently to adults about their work and enjoy taking part in a variety of learning experiences. As they travel through the school, most older pupils become very articulate and read well for pleasure and research. Most continue to make sound progress in a range of skills. However, across the school, many pupils do not make the best possible progress in their Welsh speaking skills.

Llanfoist Primary federated with another nearby primary school, Llanfihangel Primary. They share the same governing body and the same headteacher, who splits his time between both sites. The governing body discharges its duties diligently, for example by conducting site visits, and governors have a suitable understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. As a federation, leaders ensure that there are many opportunities for all staff to collaborate. For example, by working together they are well on their way to implementing a curriculum that is real and reflects the needs of both communities. Overall, leaders keep the work of the school under review appropriately. They evaluate lessons and the pupils' learning in books across both schools. Looking ahead, leaders and staff recognise that by refining their approaches to this work they can focus more sharply on evaluating the difference that teaching makes to pupils' progress and discover what important areas of the school's work need to improve.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve self-evaluation processes across the federation
- R2 Ensure that teaching is consistently good across the federation of schools
- R3 Improve provision to support pupils to become independent learners
- R4 Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Many pupils enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are at or above those expected for their age and stage of development. While most pupils make effective progress in many areas of learning by Year 6, their progress through the school is not strong in all classes. Many pupils identified as having additional learning needs make purposeful progress towards their individual goals.

Most of the youngest pupils listen attentively in class and follow instructions well. By Year 2, nearly all pupils speak well. For example, they explain their ideas and their understanding of maths concepts clearly. Most older pupils listen to adults and to each other carefully. For example, in Year 3, pupils explain their task effectively and use appropriate vocabulary when discussing the life of Nelson Mandela. By Year 6, most are articulate and speak well and confidently on a range of subjects. Most share thoughtful ideas sensitively, for instance on how they and the school could support families who may not be able to afford a school trip.

Most pupils in reception and Year 1 develop their early reading skills quickly. They begin to understand well the relationship between letters and sounds, and by Year 1 read simple texts confidently within the classroom to support their writing. As they progress beyond Year 3, many pupils begin to read with more fluency and expression. In Year 6, most pupils use a good range of strategies, such as breaking down a word phonetically or in syllables to help them make sense of texts. Many such techniques as scanning when researching on the internet, and this helps them to find relevant information skilfully.

Most younger pupils develop their letter formation skills well and begin to write confidently in their play activities. As they progress through their early years, most pupils write interesting texts that make sense to the reader. However, on occasions a minority do not write sentences that follow on logically. Older pupils develop their writing skills well. By Year 5, many produce different forms of writing effectively, such as character description, diary entries and biographies. In Year 6, many pupils write extended pieces, such as diary entries, varying sentence structure to create dramatic effect. They use an imaginative vocabulary well and select appropriate information to engage the reader.

Throughout the school most pupils have a basic understanding and recall of a few Welsh words and phrases. However, they use them hesitantly and often struggle when spoken to in Welsh outside of Welsh sessions. By Year 2, a majority use a suitable range of simple sentences. For example, they can greet others and ask them how they are feeling. A majority know a few useful words and concepts, such as the names of colours and how to count to 20. By Year 5 and Year 6, many pupils greet each other confidently using basic Welsh skills. They speak with a little more fluency, although most lack confidence and are often unsure of pronunciation.

Throughout the school, many pupils develop effective number skills. In reception, they count accurately beyond 10, for instance when counting how many pupils are in the class each morning. They transfer their maths skills to their play activities

confidently, such as when counting the candles in a playdough birthday cake. By Year 2, many pupils are confident and enthusiastic about their maths work. They have a firm grasp of a few multiplication tables and use these to multiply by 5 and 10. In Year 3 and Year 4, most pupils make appropriate progress, and can convert centimetres to metres and grammes to kilogrammes confidently. They make sensible estimates about length, height and weight, for example of a variety of animals found in Africa. Most older pupils choose appropriate units for measurement, such as when comparing best methods for measuring different items, like the length of the school outdoor learning area. However, in general, pupils do not have regular opportunities to develop the wider range of maths skills or to apply these skills in their work across the curriculum.

In reception and in Year 1, many pupils use their digital skills to support their learning appropriately. For example, in Year 1, pupils play spelling games on a tablet computer confidently to help them to learn letters and sounds. They readily film each other undertaking tasks, such as building a house for the three little pigs. In Year 3, many pupils use QR codes effectively, for instance to link to a video that enhances their understanding of cultural diversity. By Year 6, many pupils use a wide range of digital skills beneficially. They use online classrooms and the Welsh Government's hwb site confidently. Many recognise that they can choose between different programmes that do similar jobs. For example, they use different presentation apps to record their work on countries they studied during the World Cup. Overall, pupils use the digital skills that they have very well to support their learning. However, pupils do not have a secure understanding of how to use or create spreadsheets or databases.

Many pupils develop strong creative skills. In reception, many pupils paint their impressions of a local mountain showing a good awareness of colour and shape. Many develop appropriate thinking and problem-solving skills. In Year 5, pupils use their thinking skills well to design a school with all the areas that they think it would need. In Year 6 pupils use their problem-solving skills effectively to work out the difference between distances that foods have travelled to get to their plate.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are proud members of Llanfoist Primary School and feel safe and secure within its nurturing environment. In classes and around the school, nearly all pupils behave very well and are extremely polite and respectful towards each other, staff, and visitors. Most pupils take pleasure in celebrating one another's achievements. For example, the school council members share awards for their peers in celebration assembly.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. For example, they are aware of how to make healthy eating choices and can talk about the benefits of healthy snack. Most pupils enjoy participating in physical activities. They undertake the daily mile challenge on a regular basis alongside physical education sessions. Older pupils use a range of techniques to help them regulate their emotions, stay calm and engage positively with learning.

Most pupils understand and follow school rules. They share their understanding that these help to keep them safe and prepare them for life in society. Most pupils have a

good awareness of how to keep themselves safe online. For example, they know not to share their passwords.

Most pupils develop an understanding of the importance of being moral citizens. They share strong views about anti-bullying. For example, older pupils created an effective infographic on anti-bullying and racism, which led to a performance in assembly to share the message with the rest of the school.

Most older pupils enjoy engaging in after-school clubs such as netball, rugby, football and theatre club. These encourage pupils to develop worthwhile skills and experiences and to share their talents outside their classroom environments.

Most pupils understand the importance of maintaining positive attitudes to their work. They fully engage in work and when given the opportunity complete tasks well. Most pupils collaborate successfully and provide encouragement sensitively when discussing each other's work. For example, older pupils listen carefully to other points of view and collectively agree on a way forward for a presentation on organs within the body. Younger pupils also have collaborative play activities such as working in the forest school area to find appropriate natural resources to create a group floor picture of a bird.

Most pupils demonstrate a high level of perseverance in their work and effectively use scaffolds within the classroom to support them. For example, in Year 1, when retelling the story of the three little pigs, pupils show where they use words from around the classroom in their work. When given the opportunity, pupils use feedback to move their learning forward appropriately. However, arrangements to provide feedback to pupils are variable and do not always have the impact that they could.

Most pupils are becoming ethically informed and are showing a developing awareness of fairness. For example, Year 4 pupils understand well the idea of fair trade and can explain how it makes the world a better place. Most are aware of safer working conditions and know about the concept of fair pay. A majority of pupils are developing an awareness of children's rights. For example, older pupils share information about the right of the month, which they take from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The well-being ambassadors share a quote of the week such as 'believe and can and you are halfway there', which helps to motivate pupils to develop their resilience.

Most pupils develop their understanding of sustainability through a variety of activities such as when they recycle following a litter pick. They develop their entrepreneurial skills and make valued contributions to their community. For example, they design, produce and sell products such as keyrings and plant pots to support a local charity.

Most pupils engage purposefully with new, unfamiliar experiences and ideas and are not afraid to admit when they feel challenged. They begin to develop appropriate aspirations for the future. This is supported through parental visits to schools where parents showcase their occupations. Most pupils feel that their views are listened to, for example when pupils share their animation expertise to enhance the learning of others. Whilst there are pupil voice groups across the school, their opportunities to have an influence in the wider school life are at an early stage of development.

Teaching and learning experiences

There is a shared vision for the curriculum across the federation, which takes appropriate account of the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. Systematic professional learning and collaboration between federation staff and stakeholders support the development of the school's curriculum appropriately. This is an ongoing process and staff continue to refine their planning to improve their curriculum provision. Across the school, teachers plan a range of suitable lessons around a central theme. This provides an appropriate vehicle for the development of skills, knowledge and understanding well.

Teachers are beginning to use the school's progression planning documents such as the 'pillars of learning' suitably to ensure continuity and appropriate development of pupil skills. They are beginning to work together to develop a shared understanding of what progress in skills and learning looks like as pupils move through the school.

Opportunities for pupils to choose how and what they learn are appropriate. Teachers use pupils' ideas and questions at the beginning of class topics to steer and guide planned learning. As a result, nearly all pupils are engaged in their learning.

There is a systematic approach to the development of literacy and number skills across the school. Teachers provide good opportunities to develop pupils' oral and written skills and, as a result, most pupils make good progress in these areas. The provision for developing pupils' oracy skills in English is a particular strength. A range of experiences and activities ensure that pupils build on their confidence as they progress through the school. Whilst provision for the development of pupils' numeracy skills builds appropriately in focused maths sessions, opportunities for pupils to apply these skills across the curriculum are less well developed.

Staff plan and organise a good range of trips and visits to support pupils' learning. These are successful in widening pupils' experiences, for example when taking part in residential trips. The school uses a range of outside providers well to enhance the curriculum. This successfully develops pupils' skills in music, for example. However, on occasions, the school does not always consider carefully enough the impact that the cost of these events can have on family budgets.

Staff establish highly positive working relationships with pupils. This creates a calm, hardworking environment and allows pupils to feel confident that they can ask questions and request help with their learning. Teachers promote positive behaviour well in lessons and nearly all pupils are attentive and respectful. Support staff provide beneficial support across the federation. They deliver worthwhile individual, group and in-class support including specific work to address individual pupils' learning needs.

Most teachers use the indoor classroom effectively to enhance the curriculum and create engaging environments for pupils. However, in many instances, teachers do not plan to use the outdoor environment purposefully enough to extend pupils' learning and to stimulate their curiosity. This also contributes to a loss of opportunity to develop pupils' independence in their learning.

In many classes, teachers deliver lessons at an appropriate pace. They share the lesson aim clearly and use a suitable range of interesting resources to engage pupils' interest. In the most successful lessons, teachers plan highly engaging activities set in real-life contexts for learning. For example, in Year 5, pupils enjoy acting (working as) as 'architects' to design their own safari park. In these lessons, teaching is well-paced and matched successfully to pupils' needs including more able learners and pupils with additional needs.

Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and generally plan activities that meet their needs well. However, in a few lessons, the pace of learning is too slow, or the teacher over directs learning. As a result, a few pupils occasionally lose focus or become disengaged in their learning.

Across the school, most teachers use questioning effectively to check pupil understanding and to move learning forward. They provide appropriate opportunities to review and discuss learning at different points during lessons. As a result, pupils have good opportunities to share ideas and solutions to problems and they are confident to ask for help. A majority of teachers use these opportunities well to support any pupils who may have developed misconceptions. However, across the school, the quality of teachers' oral and written responses to pupils' work is inconsistent. As a result, not all pupils improve their work following feedback. Overall, evaluation of pupils' learning relies too heavily on summative assessment, rather than on teachers' ongoing evaluations of pupil progress in lessons and over time. As a result, teachers do not always have a clear enough picture of the strengths and areas for development for individual pupils.

Teachers provide an appropriate range of opportunities for pupils to consider Welsh culture and diversity, and to understand modern Welsh society. For example, younger pupils enjoy role play in 'Y Caffi Cwtch' and older pupils study the work of famous Welsh people who have raised people's understanding of tolerance. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their oracy skills in Welsh in lessons and across the school are limited.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring community and this contributes to the happy and nurturing ethos pupils experience across the school. Teaching staff manage pupils well and, as a result, they are well behaved, polite and respectful. Support staff make a highly effective contribution to pupil well-being. For example, the staff that provide emotional literacy support give thoughtful care and guidance to individual pupils. Pupils and the wider community are very proud of the school and all pupils feel safe and secure.

Through the range of pupil voice groups, the school provides ample opportunities for all pupils to be involved in the life of the school and to participate in decision-making. For example, school council members are involved with monitoring pupils' well-being in classes alongside the headteacher. They report their findings back to individual classes and display them in the main hall for all to see. However, the work of other groups is not always shared effectively with pupils across the school.

Across the federation, the additional learning needs co-ordinators work closely in partnership to ensure consistency in additional learning needs systems. Early training has provided staff with a basic understanding of the additional learning needs reform, but this is not yet embedded across the school. Teaching assistants and outside agencies provide effective support for learners with additional learning needs and those who may need extra help in other areas. Whilst the school is providing an appropriate range of universal support for pupils, it does not always carefully monitor the impact on individual interventions on pupils' progress.

Leaders and staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This is enhanced by the school's charter that focuses on being respectful, kind, understanding each other, having ambition and being confident. Work in class helps pupils to understand important issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion and the values of empathy and compassion. For example, Year 4 pupils learn about what makes the world a better place by looking at how Fairtrade affects the people in Africa.

The shared and regularly discussed rights of the child such as article 27, 'be the best you can', remind pupils to strive to achieve. In addition, the regular mindfulness inputs enable pupils to be calm and reflect upon their feelings and emotions. There are regular opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual and moral development through daily assemblies and comparisons of different faiths and beliefs taught in class. For example, older pupils compare the beliefs of Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths and enjoy discussing the differences. The school encourages pupils to help others less fortunate than themselves by contributing to local and national charities.

The school curriculum helps pupils to develop an understanding of their identity, heritage and culture, and how they relate to the wider world. As part of the topic on the Victorians, older pupils learn about the impact of the Blaenavon pit on their local community and the role of children in the mining industry during the Victorian era. Younger pupils used their creative and digital skills well to take photographs and paint pictures of the Bloreng mountain close to the school, to give them a perspective of the area in which they live.

Pupils benefit from the good partnerships developed with the local community. Older pupils are involved with a local retirement home and conduct visits to work alongside residents in an intergenerational project. This helps to develop them as ethical citizens. Local building companies provide support for the school to complete the daily mile path. They also provide curriculum support in class by teaching older pupils about buildings and structures.

There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in extracurricular activities and to represent their school. As a result, older pupils participate in a range of sporting, musical and creative activities. Pupils are proud to represent their school in local events in Abergavenny and Monmouth.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that there are robust policies and procedures in place, which all staff follow to ensure the safety of learners and staff. The school curriculum supports pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including online. This is supported by outside agencies who regularly visit the school. The school robustly monitors attendance, including the

attendance of vulnerable groups. There are well-established procedures in place to promote good levels of attendance. The school has appropriate arrangements in place to promote healthy eating and to encourage children to live healthily. For example, there are ample water fountains around the school for all pupils to use.

Leadership and management

The federation's headteacher has successfully created and implemented a clear vision for the education and well-being of pupils. This supports pupils to feel valued and to receive the encouragement they need to develop a love of learning. In a relatively short period of time and through a pandemic, he has established a caring culture, where pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy being at school. Nearly all staff have a good understanding of the needs of individual pupils and the local community. There is a shared team culture and a shared commitment to doing the best for all pupils. As a result, most pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.

Currently, the headteacher spends half of his time, per week, at Llanfihangel and the other half at Llanfoist. Senior leaders provide strong support to the headteacher and assume responsibility for the day-to-day management of the schools in his absence. The headteacher is keen to develop and build the leadership capacity of all staff in both schools. Those with responsibilities carry out their roles competently and contribute to strengthening the vision and aims of the federation well. They model professional values and behaviour well and contribute to developing the school priorities purposefully across the federation.

The headteacher works diligently to continue to develop the strong and positive culture of collaboration across the federation. For example, when developing the Curriculum for Wales, all teachers worked closely to research and share their knowledge and expertise, enabling teachers to plan and develop appropriate learning experiences for their pupils. Shared professional learning opportunities support the positive well-being of both teachers and support staff. Pupils collaborate effectively too. For example, they contributed to developing a shared vision for the federation and join together for sporting activities. This overall approach to strategic leadership promotes teamwork effectively and supports the drive for equity and consistency.

Leaders undertake a range of self-evaluation activity including learning walks and looking at pupils' books. They involve staff and, at times, pupils in this work. However, there is generally an over-reliance on using information from standardised tests to identify areas for improvement. Leaders and other staff do not currently evaluate the effectiveness of the school's teaching and provision by considering the difference it makes to pupils' progress. As a result, they do not always identify aspects of the school's work that need attention, for example the inconsistencies in teaching across both schools and the progress in pupils' Welsh language skills.

Leaders develop effective relations with parents across the federation and give careful thought to adapting its provision to ensure better engagement, for example by asking and responding to parents' views about the best ways to share information. The school collaborates successfully with several partners, for example when sharing best practice within the region, within their cluster, and when developing worthwhile

transition links with the secondary school. Of note is the school's enduring work as a lead school for initial teacher education.

Leaders address the impact of poverty and track the progress of learners appropriately. For example, staff offer thoughtful support to the most vulnerable pupils through specific well-being sessions and the school provided hardware and free Wi-Fi to families who were financially challenged through the pandemic. Across the federation, the development of pupils' literacy skills is given a high priority and most pupils have developed effective digital skills.

The federation's governing body demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting the schools and their progress. Governors are well informed about the schools' work by the headteacher and other senior leaders. Governors use their expertise well to support the headteacher to improve the school, for example using their knowledge in matters relating to additional learning needs and when prudently managing the financial arrangements of the two schools. Governors visit the schools often and have a suitable understanding of the federation's strengths and areas for development. Governors understand their duty to promote healthy eating and drinking and strive to ensure that the school complies with legislation.

Leaders and governors encourage a positive culture of safeguarding that permeates the work of the school. There are robust policies that underpin this ethos and all staff follow these thoroughly and conscientiously. Staff undergo regular and purposeful performance management and professional learning to support their work. The school's finances are managed prudently and leaders ensure that there are suitable resources to support all pupils' learning. Grant funding is used effectively to provide intervention for pupils in literacy, numeracy and well-being and to support vulnerable pupils.

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2023: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 27/03/2023