



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

A report on

Llanyrafon Primary School

**Llanyrafon Way
Llanyrafon
Cwmbran
Torfaen
NP44 8HW**

Date of inspection: January 2023

by

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

About Llanyrafon Primary School

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| Name of provider | Llanyrafon Primary School |
| Local authority | Torfaen County Borough Council |
| Language of the provider | English |
| Type of school | Primary |
| Religious character | * |
| Number of pupils on roll | 407 |
| Pupils of statutory school age | 356 |
| Number in nursery classes | * |
| 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%) | 10 |
| 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%) | 12 |
| Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home | 0.0% |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language | 0.0% |
| Date of headteacher appointment | 09/01/2021 |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable) | |
| 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

Llanyrafon Primary is a happy and nurturing school. The headteacher has a clear vision for improving well-being and learning for all pupils and leads a team of enthusiastic teachers and teaching assistants. Leaders, teachers and support staff contribute to a strong sense of belonging and maintain positive relationships across the whole school community.

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and speak appreciatively of the opportunities they have to learn and play. The school's approach to well-being is a significant strength and, in particular, all pupils, staff and families know they will get the emotional support they need. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they generally engage well with their learning. As a result, they make good progress in many aspects of their learning. Occasionally, lessons are overly structured and pupils do not have opportunities to make decisions about their learning often enough. This hampers their ability to be creative thinkers and independent learners. Teachers plan learning that enables most pupils to listen, speak and write confidently across the curriculum. They are often highly articulate and especially enjoy reading for enjoyment and for research.

Across the school, pupils develop their mathematical skills well. However, they are less confident in using digital devices to support their work and, overall, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical and digital knowledge often enough in their work across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy working outdoors and teachers plan purposeful activities in the school's extensive grounds for them to explore nature. Pupils recognise the positive impact these learning opportunities have on their health. The school ensures that pupils have plentiful opportunities to be physically active, not only in lessons but through clubs, visits and playtime games.

Nearly all pupils influence the life and work of the school when they take on leadership roles and responsibilities. They confidently make suggestions and plan actions that improve the school day and support the local community. Teachers work with their pupils to plan learning experiences that capture their interests and older pupils in particular are beginning to make suggestions about how they learn and how they record their work.

Teachers use a range of approaches to help pupils with their work. They ask questions that help extend learning and provide immediate feedback to support pupils' understanding and their next steps in learning. Many teachers plan lessons that build on previous learning to enable progress for each pupil. They reflect on their lessons to consider how to improve their practice but do not focus their evaluations closely enough on the impact of their teaching on pupil outcomes in all aspects of the curriculum.

Leaders and teachers establish a strong culture of safeguarding. During the inspection, a minor safeguarding issue was brought to the school's attention.

Recommendations

- R1 Focus self-evaluation and improvement processes to focus more specifically on the impact of teaching on learning across the school.
- R2 Continue to develop the school's curriculum to ensure that it provides breadth and depth of learning across the full range of learning and experience of the Curriculum for Wales
- R3 Improve opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their digital skills
- R4 Address the safeguarding issue identified during the inspection

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

The majority of pupils start school with skills in literacy and numeracy at or above those expected for their age. Most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress in their literacy and numeracy skills across the school.

Most pupils are confident, articulate speakers and listen well to each other and adults. Pupils in reception listen attentively to their teacher and respond well to class stories. They speak with growing confidence about their ideas, for example when discussing which materials may be waterproof. Older pupils communicate freely and articulately with adults and talk animatedly about school and the topics that interest them.

Younger pupils develop their reading skills well. They enjoy reading and use a range of strategies effectively when encountering unfamiliar words. Many pupils recognise familiar words related to their work and use this effectively to support their learning across the curriculum. For example, they read the names of a wide range of birds confidently. Many older pupils read with fluency and understanding. Pupils in Year 5, for instance, identify and extract information about a well-known environmentalist to create interesting fact sheets. Across the school, teachers use a range of useful approaches to strengthen the culture of reading and, as a result, many pupils are keen to develop their skills and look forward to their next reading challenge.

Pupils' writing is developing well across the school. Many younger pupils are beginning to write well-constructed sentences, with clarity and purpose, for example when sharing their ideas for their 'Our World' class topic. Older pupils write at length and for different audiences. Pupils in Year 3, for example, write creatively about their invention designs. As pupils move through the school, they become more confident writers and use a good range of engaging vocabulary to add interest to their work. The oldest pupils write convincingly across the curriculum for a wide range of purposes, for example when drafting letters to the local council requesting improvements to the nearby boating lake. More able pupils write skilfully, for example when making predictions in science or explaining their results. Most younger pupils write legibly and present their work neatly. However, a minority of older pupils do not develop their handwriting well enough or spell familiar words accurately enough.

Younger pupils develop a good range of mathematical skills. Pupils in Year 1 are beginning to understand time and read 'o'clock' and 'half past' on analogue clocks accurately. Pupils in Year 2 carry out suitable calculations, solve simple problems and collect and present information based on their class topics successfully. Many older pupils are developing as confident mathematicians and sometimes use their skills well to support their learning across other areas of the curriculum, for example when drawing accurate line graphs to analyse temperature differences across the world. In general, most pupils develop secure numeracy skills as they progress through the school. However, they do not always apply these skills at a sufficiently challenging level across the curriculum to extend or deepen their learning.

Many pupils are making suitable progress in using and understanding Welsh. Younger pupils ask and respond to questions with growing confidence and older pupils are beginning to extend their responses. The majority of pupils use classroom resources well to support them in using the language. In a very few cases, pupils use Welsh independently, for instance to hold a basic conversation about where they live. Pupils enjoy using Welsh when taking part in Welsh assemblies, singing Welsh songs and responding to stories. In a few classes, pupils are less confident with their Welsh skills.

Across the school, pupils are beginning to use digital skills, but in general these skills are underdeveloped. Many older pupils create basic presentations to share their work and, in a few instances, include and edit videos. However, pupils' wider digital skills are limited, for example in using spreadsheets, databases or developing their coding skills.

Most pupils develop their creative and physical skills very well and make good progress in using these skills across the curriculum. Pupils in Year 1 use the forest school areas energetically. They make masks from natural resources depicting animals associated with Chinese New Year. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 concentrate and persevere to produce impressive artwork such as observational drawings, and pupils in Year 6 create detailed art based on the work of Welsh artists. Pupils in Year 5 use physical expression and imagination in their choreography when engaging enthusiastically in high quality dance sessions.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

During their time at school, pupils develop strong, nurturing relationships with staff and respectful friendships with each other. They feel safe at all times, cared for and listened to, and nearly all are courteous and polite to staff, visitors and their peers. They benefit greatly from the school's exemplary approach to securing positive behaviour and demonstrate this in classrooms and around the school, at play and lunchtimes. Staff set clear boundaries that support pupils to make the most of their learning.

Across the school, most pupils enjoy learning and engage, listen and participate well in lessons. They often set themselves high standards, showing resilience and perseverance when working on the tasks they are given to complete. They work well in pairs and groups, share resources willingly and happily take turns. Most pupils listen attentively and answer questions appropriately. They discuss their work with others to help them formulate ideas and solve problems. When given opportunities to talk about their learning with adults at the school, they develop their understanding further. Younger pupils talk confidently about which materials will help teddy remain dry in the rain and older pupils use a range of pertinent questions when interviewing players from a local professional rugby team. Whilst most pupils remain engaged in their learning during lessons, when teachers provide too much support and direction a few pupils lose interest.

Most pupils value the timely feedback they receive from teachers during lessons. Older pupils contribute well to opportunities to reflect on their own and others' work and understand how this helps them to learn, improve their work and identify their

next steps in learning. They use success criteria effectively, for example when writing at length, to identify what they need to do to improve.

Many pupils take on leadership roles and responsibilities confidently. They play a full part in the life and work of the school and influence decision-making and organisation. The school council, for example, make sure that there are outdoor activities during break and lunch times and the Eco Committee designed and built a garden to grow vegetables to use in the school kitchen. Nearly all pupils contribute their ideas about what they want to learn in their topics and older pupils also offer their ideas regularly on how they would like to learn during lessons.

Pupils learn how to become healthy and confident, and understand how diet, physical activity, and mental health impact on their quality of life. Nearly all pupils enjoy opportunities to be active at playtime and during physical activities such as football, netball and dance. They develop a sound understanding of how to stay safe online, keeping their personal details private and talking to a trusted adult if issues arise. Pupils knowledgably explain how learning outdoors is good for their well-being and concentration. However, a minority of pupils continue to eat unhealthy snacks such as chocolate and crisps at breaktime.

Teaching and learning experiences

Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants build strong working relationships with pupils. They create calm, productive environments where pupils interact thoughtfully with each other and show resilience and determination in their learning. Teaching assistants work effectively with pupils, including those with ALN, to ensure that they make good progress and achieve well.

Teachers know their pupils well and adjust their teaching appropriately to meet their needs. Most use questioning skilfully to check for understanding and address misconceptions. They monitor progress carefully during lessons and provide timely feedback to pupils, which develops their understanding of what they have achieved and how they can improve.

Most teachers ensure that lessons are well paced and use a range of strategies to keep pupils engaged in their learning, including encouraging good quality partner talk and small group activities. They ensure that learning experiences are planned carefully to build on pupils' prior learning. On occasion, lessons are over directed by teachers, which limits the opportunities for pupils to deepen and develop their understanding and to grow as creative thinkers and independent learners. Teachers of the youngest pupils, in particular, do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to decide where and how they choose to learn and play.

The school takes a collaborative approach to designing its curriculum focused on its aim to support all pupils to achieve success through lifelong learning and well-being. Pupils have worthwhile opportunities to influence what they would like to learn at the start of topics and, across the school, teachers plan engaging topics that link to the areas of learning and experience from the Curriculum for Wales. Teachers often focus their planning for learning on aspects of the curriculum that support them to deepen their own understanding of its purposes.

Teachers reflect on what went well at the end of each topic and what could be improved or extended in future lessons. Their evaluations of learning are useful in identifying how well teaching and learning experiences support pupil progress. However, they are not always detailed or focused well enough on progress within and across the areas of learning or in assessing their level of understanding of skills and knowledge in a range of contexts. Teachers generally plan worthwhile opportunities for the development of literacy skills. However, their plans to develop pupils' numeracy and digital skills do not always allow them to apply these skills across the curriculum purposefully enough.

Teachers use resources appropriately to support pupils to learn and use Welsh language skills. They plan suitably for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, younger pupils learn about St Dwynwen and make cards to send to people they love. They utilise the local area well to develop pupils' understanding of the people and places in their locality and their place in the world. They learn about local businesses and make links with organisations such as charities to gain a wider perspective of Wales. However, overall, teachers do not always plan well enough for pupils to engage in authentic opportunities to learn about the diverse range of people that have contributed to the development of Wales both historically and in current times.

The school makes good use of its extensive grounds to provide pupils with a range of activities to support their well-being. Across the school, pupils value the time spent in the forest school area, developing their creative and problem-solving skills. Younger pupils explore the habitat to decide where to place the bird feeders they have made from lollipop sticks. Older pupils take part in orienteering and toast marshmallows on a fire in the log circle. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from visits to outdoor pursuits centres where they experience a range of physical and team building activities such as canoeing and gorge walking. In addition, they enjoy the many and varied clubs they attend after school, which support the development of physical, creative, and social skills.

Staff develop pupils' understanding of healthy living well. As a result, pupils know why it is important to make healthy food choices and stay hydrated. As they move through the school, they learn how to keep themselves safe from harm and stay safe online.

Care, support and guidance

Staff at Llanyrafon Primary School create a caring community for pupils and their families. The nurturing approach to building relationships with parents, staff and pupils is a strength of the school. Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well and respond sensitively to their emotional needs, supporting them to develop confidence and resilience. This warm and supportive ethos helps all pupils to settle easily into school life and contributes to their well-being and happiness. Staff continue to involve parents in the life of the school through events, home-school projects and regular opportunities to discuss their children's learning and progress.

The acting ALN co-ordinator has built on robust systems to identify the most effective support for pupils with ALN. Together with the Headteacher, she monitors the impact of the support and works closely with staff to ensure that their intervention engages

pupils in their learning and motivates them to succeed. As a result, pupils with additional needs often make better than expected progress from their starting points. The school works well with a range of external agencies to plan provision that supports pupils' individual needs. For example, the partnership with a therapy dogs organisation enables pupils to learn in a calming atmosphere, helping them to manage their feelings better, impacting positively on their behaviour and attention in lessons.

Teachers enrich the curriculum well through the considered use of visitors and visits in the local area and further afield. Visits from professional rugby players and trips such as that to Aerospace Bristol raise pupils' aspirations and provide valuable opportunities for them to consider how they may choose to transfer their skills and knowledge to possible career pathways. These rich and authentic learning experiences also enable pupils to transfer what they learn back to the classroom, for example in designing their own rockets as part of their work on inventions. Local artists and actors encourage pupils to use their imagination and creativity through art and dance, and the school's link with the local church supports pupils' spiritual development appropriately. Many pupils take part in sports activities and enjoy the many after-school clubs on offer.

The school provides opportunities for all pupils to contribute their views and develop as leaders, making worthwhile contributions to the work of the school and the local community. The Criw Cymraeg promote the Welsh language through assemblies, posters and class visits and the Healthy School committee have established an afternoon 'brain break', time spent outdoors to re-charge. The school's many leadership groups broaden pupils' understanding of the importance of being active citizens.

The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on the values and beliefs of others through lessons and as part of their collective worship. They learn about the culture of Wales and of countries across the World. They learn about faith and cultural celebrations and about people who have shaped society such as Martin Luther King Jr and Betty Campbell. These experiences are beginning to support pupils' understanding of equality and diversity but in general this aspect of the school's curriculum is at an early stage of development.

Teachers ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. The school monitors pupils' attendance closely and works with parents to reduce persistent absenteeism and, overall, the school has a strong safeguarding culture. However, a minor safeguarding issue was brought to the attention of the school during the inspection.

Leadership and management

The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the education and well-being of pupils. In a short time, she has brought a committed team of teachers and support staff together to plan and effect significant improvements to the provision for well-being and learning experiences and ensuring a sense of belonging for the whole school community. This has been especially important due to a variety of recent challenges for families, staff and governors where the school became a place of support, solace and celebration.

A particular strength of the school is its strong partnership with parents, who feel well-informed about their child's progress and equipped to support them. They are especially appreciative of the high levels of communication, and the sensitive and thoughtful care and support they receive. This tailored support enables pupils to engage positively with their learning.

The headteacher purposefully facilitates school improvement, sets high expectations and displays a willingness to challenge underperformance. The emphasis senior leaders place on staff well-being ensures that all staff feel listened to and included in the decision-making process. The headteacher distributes roles and responsibilities effectively and arrangements to support and develop leadership across the school are effective. Although the school is at the beginning of its improvement journey, leaders feel empowered in their roles, creating, reviewing and reflecting on the progress towards the priorities identified. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and the school's agile approach to improvement through rapid action ensures that they remain closely focused on achieving identified goals. The development of successful approaches to mathematical development, planning for science, and developing a positive culture of reading across the school all exemplify the effective way the school turns its strategic plans into action.

The school's professional learning lead guides and advises staff diligently. As a result, they engage purposefully in research and work with partner schools, for example to develop a shared understanding of progression. Leaders recognise the potential for developing all staff and encourage them to develop skills that allow them to take on new roles. A notable example of this is the valuable addition of a trauma informed practitioner who provides bespoke support when needed.

Leaders plan appropriate individual and whole-school professional learning for staff such as developing monitoring and evaluation skills to support the school to refine teaching approaches. They link these plans effectively to performance management arrangements. However, although teachers' evaluations often focus on teaching, they do not evaluate the difference that teaching makes to pupils' progress well enough. In addition, plans to improve teaching and learning do not focus closely enough on refining approaches to better support pupils to become creative thinkers and independent learners.

Leaders have successfully implemented ALN reform across the school, improving provision for pupils. The school's plans to develop the Welsh language are supporting older pupils to grow in confidence when speaking with visitors and their peers. Teachers and leaders are beginning to evaluate their progress towards curriculum reform. However, in general, the school's approach to developing a curriculum that encompasses all aspects of the Curriculum for Wales framework is at an early stage.

Leaders and governors are committed to tackling poverty in the local community and work with local organisations to identify ways to support families. They hold regular clothing and book swaps and are working with external partners to establish a low-cost grocery shop on-site. The school uses grant funding such as the Pupil Development Grant well to support vulnerable pupils with their emotional and learning needs. In addition, the school has embedded a valuable whole-school approach to reading that is especially successful in raising the profile of reading for

interest and pleasure both in school and at home. It has increased family engagement, supported pupils to make progress, improved their access to a wide range of books and created enthusiasm amongst groups of learners. As a result, pupils are developing as confident readers who enjoy choosing books and using them to explore their own interests further.

Governors know the school and the community it serves well. They are enthusiastic advocates for the school and provide valuable support. They understand the school's improvement priorities, working closely with staff to evaluate the quality of learning and well-being. Together with the headteacher, they manage the school's budget well and make appropriate plans for improving the school environment and resources.

Leaders and governors ensure that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping learners safe. Overall, they make appropriate arrangements to ensure that food and drink provided by the school meets requirements. However, leaders do not always ensure that pupils make appropriate snack choices at breaktimes.

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:

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