



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

A report on

Fleur-De-Lys Primary School

**School Street
Fleur-De-Lys
Blackwood
NP12 3UX**

Date of inspection: February 2023

by

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

About Fleur-De-Lys Primary School

Name of provider	Fleur-De-Lys Primary School
Local authority	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	N/A
Number of pupils on roll	113
Pupils of statutory school age	102
Number in nursery classes	11
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%)	7.1%
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%)	6.9%
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	01/09/2013
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/10/2018
Start date of inspection	06/02/2023

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

Fleur-De-Lys Primary School is part of the Fleur-De-Lys and Pengam Federation. It is a vibrant and nurturing school where pupils feel valued and supported by staff. As a result, nearly all pupils approach school life with enthusiasm and show positive attitudes towards their learning, each other, and their school community.

During their time at the school, most pupils make good progress from their starting points, including those pupils with additional learning needs. Pupils of all ages are becoming confident mathematicians and their digital skills are developing well across the school. While pupils' writing skills are developing suitably, they do not always write well enough at length particularly across the curriculum. Pupils use of the Welsh language is strong across the school, and in a few instances teachers seize opportunities to further develop these skills alongside other curriculum experiences, for example when learning British Sign Language. Overall, pupils benefit from an engaging curriculum that encourages an interest in their local area and the diverse nature of Wales.

Staff know their children well. They work diligently to support the needs of all pupils, including those who require additional help. Occasionally, staff are too eager to intervene and over-direct pupils' learning. As a result, pupils become less independent as they are not always challenged well enough to develop their own thinking or reflect carefully enough on their learning.

Pupils have many opportunities to take on leadership roles and pupil voice groups work closely with governors and the federation. These groups ensure that pupils have a strong voice in the school, for example where super ambassadors work effectively to raise awareness of the rights of the child across the school.

Leaders have developed a strong culture of mutual support and collaboration across the school and the federation. Staff work with dedication to ensure that pupils experience a wide range of learning opportunities in the classroom and outdoors. The extensive range of after-school clubs provided by staff further inspire pupils to develop new interests. As a result, nearly all pupils are happy and proud to attend Fleur-De-Lys Primary School.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve teaching and assessment to ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately and that learning activities meet their developmental needs
- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and effectiveness as learners
- R3 Improve pupils' speaking and extended writing skills
- R4 Strengthen school improvement processes to ensure that leaders provide suitable challenge for staff on the impact their teaching makes on pupils' progress

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils begin school with skills and understanding similar to those expected for their age. Overall, from their individual starting points, many pupils make secure progress in many areas of learning. This includes pupils that are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) progress well towards their individual targets and goals.

Many pupils develop their speaking and listening skills quickly after beginning school. In nursery and in reception, many pupils talk freely about things from their experience, such as talking about a model house they have made. Most listen to adults carefully so that they know what activities they are to undertake and follow instructions carefully. By Year 2, most pupils listen to adults and to each other well. For instance, when discussing in small groups they share ideas about how to create tally charts. The majority of older pupils speak suitably, but a minority do not express their thoughts and ideas clearly and in sufficient detail, particularly when responding to adults' questions.

Many pupils develop their early reading skills well. In nursery and reception, most pupils learn to recognise letters and their associated sounds quickly. In Year 1, many pupils read simple words and phrases confidently. More able pupils read longer sentences confidently, such as when reading the three little pigs. By Year 3, many pupils discuss suitably the stories they are reading and talk about the characters and events that they like. More able pupils are beginning to recognise punctuation in texts and note how it affects the way they should read, for instance using speech marks to identify when they should say things in a different voice. Many older pupils read texts aloud with fluency. However, a minority do not have a good enough understanding of what they read and have not developed important skills such as the ability to infer meaning from text.

In reception, a majority of pupils are beginning to hold writing implements well and develop finger control to form letters that are mostly clear. In Year 1, many write words, phrases and simple sentences suitably, for example in response to a colourful picture. By Year 3, many pupils understand how to structure different forms of writing, for example letters and recounts. Most write sequences of sentences logically, such as when explaining their ideas or what they did over a holiday. A majority spell suitably and many use capital letters and full stops accurately. By Year 6, many pupils structure their writing suitably for a range of purposes. For example, they write a news bulletin following a clear chronological timeline, and structure complaining letters with a range of useful points and a conclusion. However, in general, a majority of older pupils still write too simply, and do not have enough opportunities to improve their work independently. When given suitable opportunities, most pupils apply their writing skills at a similar level across the curriculum.

Many pupils develop their Welsh language skills well. In reception, a majority of pupils greet others confidently and ask other how they are independently. By Year 2, many pupils recall and use a good range of sentences in Welsh. They ask and answer questions about their age, where they live, and describe themselves simply.

Older pupils often extend their sentences easily and, by Year 6, many pupils know a broad and useful range of phrases and sentences. They ask and tell others what they like or do not like, and a majority are developing a useful understanding of how to talk about events in the past tense.

Many pupils develop their number skills effectively. In nursery, many pupils count objects to ten accurately, such as counting blocks in the building area. In reception, many pupils count in 2s to 20 confidently and pay for toys with pennies accurately. By Year 2, most pupils double 2-digit numbers successfully, and recall and use 2 and 10 multiplication tables confidently. Many older pupils use different strategies for addition and subtraction and multiply and divide numbers by 10, 100 and 1000 correctly. By Year 6, many pupils have secure skills. They use their understanding of decimals to add and subtract amounts of money, and round decimals accurately. Many pupils transfer their mathematical skills suitably to other contexts.

Most pupils develop and use digital skills effectively. Younger pupils record videos confidently and access apps independently, such as word processing apps to write stories. By Year 6, many pupils have a good range of digital skills. They use presentation software, adding their voice to presentations, for instance to share what they think the world to be like. They use apps, such as charts to make simple databases and charts and use this information to create graphs, such as those on diversity.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They are welcoming and polite towards visitors and each other. Most behave well in classrooms, during breaks and lunchtime and when moving around the school. Many pupils allow others to share their ideas and demonstrate respect when others have a different view from their own.

Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in the school and know who to talk to when they have a problem. Nearly all enjoy their weekly lessons on well-being and, as a result, know how to regulate their emotions and understand different ways to deal with conflict. For example, older pupils investigate ways to keep calm, such as taking a deep breathe before reacting. Digital leaders play an important role in ensuring that pupils are aware of how to stay safe online. They present in school assemblies and go to classes to share important messages with pupils. As a result, pupils know the importance of protecting passwords and not talking to strangers online.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. Pupils are fully aware of the benefit of physical exercise on their health and well-being, for example taking part in the daily mile. They talk with enthusiasm about their outdoor learning and embrace the opportunity to face challenges. Older pupils, for instance, develop their numeracy skills effectively when creating human bar charts on the yard, while younger pupils attempt to measure the girth of a tree.

Many pupils are keen to engage in the extensive range of after school clubs, such as rugby, choir and the digital club where they construct fairground rides and create basic algorithms to control them. They develop enterprising skills successfully through designing, marketing and making products out of recycled materials to sell at a Christmas Fayre.

Many pupils make good use of opportunities to develop their leadership skills through an extensive range of well-established pupil voice groups. These include the school council, the eco council, and digital leaders. Many talk enthusiastically about their role and explain how their work has made a difference. For example, the eco-council encourage pupils to tidy up the litter in the local community and carry out a litter pick alongside the local river. These groups also develop action plans and child-friendly policies, and present their work in assemblies. Pupils in these leadership roles often work closely together across the schools in the federation on joint projects. In a very few instances, pupil groups are beginning to engage more regularly with their peers so that a wider range of pupils have sufficient opportunity to influence the life of the school.

Nearly all pupils treat others with respect and are positive about diversity and its role in society. Younger pupils consider whether toys are gender specific, while older pupils speak passionately about issues around racism. Older pupils, for instance, create dramatic performances in response to the story of Rosa Parks. Most pupils develop a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. The super ambassadors have recently met with the Children's Commissioner for Wales and work to promote an understanding of children's rights across the school.

From an early age, most pupils have a positive attitude to learning and to school and show an interest in their work. On the whole, most pupils demonstrate sustained engagement in lessons, although when the pace of the lesson is too slow a few pupils can lose focus and become distracted. A minority of pupils are too reliant on their teachers for support and, as a result, they do not always develop well enough as effective learners. These pupils do not develop their own thinking well enough or reflect carefully enough on their own work to make meaningful improvements.

In general, rates of attendance are good across the school, including for those pupils eligible for free school meals.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has established a clear vision for the curriculum to provide authentic and engaging learning opportunities for all pupils.

A range of relevant topics capture pupils' interest well. For example, pupils in Year 6 speak with understanding and empathy about a 'diversity' topic and the opportunities it is giving them to develop their understanding of difficult subjects such as racism.

The school has worked with pupils to help them understand the four purposes of the curriculum and is beginning to support them in contributing towards what and how they learn. For example, pupils in Year 4 decide they want to observe the birds in the outdoor area and then make birdfeeders to encourage more birds to the area.

Regular visitors to the school enhance the curriculum effectively. In Year 5, local police community support officers work with pupils to design posters aimed at keeping local elderly and vulnerable members of the community safe. This supports pupils to empathise with others and successfully develops a sense of belonging and community.

The school is developing a range of opportunities for outdoor learning that support the curriculum suitably. For example, older pupils explore the diversity of plants within the outdoor area. A few imaginative lessons provide the opportunity for pupils to apply their mathematics skills across the curriculum, such as when Year 4 and 5 learn how to estimate the age of trees in the forest school area.

The school celebrates Welsh culture effectively throughout the year. This includes special events such as 'Welsh fortnight' when a storyteller visits each class to share a variety of traditional Welsh stories. During a 'Wales Through the Window' topic, younger pupils enjoy recognising features of the local environment when using a mapping application to explore their journey to school.

The school's provision to develop numeracy, Welsh language and digital skills is effective. The teaching of literacy is suitable overall, although staff do not always provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply and extend their oracy and writing skills in a wider range of contexts across the curriculum.

Most staff across the school develop strong professional relationships with pupils. They show care and kindness and manage pupils' behaviour positively. However, they regularly provide too much support for pupils. For example, when pupils experience a difficulty in their work or play, adults choose to intervene too quickly and often provide the solution before pupils have had the opportunity to think for themselves. This limits opportunities for pupils to develop as confident, independent learners.

Teachers have clear learning intentions for lessons and provide effective explanations to help pupils make progress. In the majority of classes, the pace of learning is effective and supports pupils to maintain interest. In many lessons, staff model positive approaches to learning and provide useful resources. For example, in the reception and Year 1 class, the teacher provides a tablet computer and puppets, which enables pupils to video their friends retelling a story. This supports their oracy and digital skills well.

Teaching in a majority of lessons includes the use of effective questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and check for understanding. For example, in the Year 2/3 class, pupils are asked to consider headings for their tally chart and to justify their answers. However, in a minority of cases, questioning does not provide enough challenge for pupils. For instance, staff accept short answers or do not prompt pupils to develop their responses. This limits opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and deepen their understanding.

Staff provide a wide range of play provision for younger pupils that provide opportunities designed to develop their skills across the curriculum. However, staff interactions do not always support pupils to access this provision purposefully and as a result many pupils move from one activity to another without developing or applying their skills successfully.

In most cases, teachers and support staff know their pupils' strengths and areas for improvement well. They encourage pupils and praise them for their achievements. A few staff are beginning to use day-to-day assessment strategies to help pupils reflect on and improve their work successfully. However, this is at an early stage and is not

currently having a significant impact on accelerating pupils' learning across the school.

Care, support and guidance

The school has a friendly and welcoming ethos with positive and supportive relationships between pupils, staff and families. Well-being is a priority for the school and, as a result, pupils feel safe, valued and listened to. Staff know their pupils well and there is a consistent approach to supporting positive behaviour. As a result, pupils understand adults' expectations and nearly all behave well.

The school has good processes to identify and provide support for pupils with ALN. Staff communicate effectively with parents of pupils with ALN and work with them to create and share individual targets and support programmes. Teachers and support staff deliver an appropriate range of intervention programmes to address pupils' social, emotional and learning needs. They review pupils' progress regularly and as a result most pupils with ALN make suitable progress towards their targets. Staff collaborate well with external agencies and partners to meet the identified needs of learners where specialist support is needed. Overall, the school is making good progress towards ALN reform. For example, staff work well together to ensure that their classrooms are inclusive with resources and that support is accessible to all pupils who require it.

Leaders and staff provide a good range of opportunities for pupil voice groups to influence decision-making in the school. The school enables pupils in these groups to bring about meaningful change. For example, super ambassadors have raised pupils' understanding of their rights and responsibilities. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to work with the wider community, for example through the Heddlu Bach (young police).

The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their moral and spiritual awareness. Assemblies allow pupils to reflect on shared values such as love and friendship. In addition, well-being ambassadors deliver a monthly assembly as part of their work on the Rights of a Child. These activities support pupils to develop socially and morally, and to build mutual respect and kindness.

Staff carry out helpful weekly well-being sessions with pupils. These sessions focus on 'heart, mind, body and soul' to enable pupils to understand how all these aspects work together to create a sense of well-being. They focus on a range of topical issues to challenge stereotypes, such as racism and ageism, and this successfully enables pupils to speak openly about their own feelings, build relationships and celebrate differences.

Staff plan rich topics throughout the curriculum, which enable the pupils to learn about their Welsh heritage and culture. For example, the Cynefin topic provides pupils with the opportunity to find out about local historical events such as the Senghenydd mining disaster. Staff develop strong links with the community to provide creative opportunities for performance experiences. For example, the choir is working alongside the Mynyddislwyn Male Voice Choir in readiness for a St David's Day performance. The school encourages pupils' participation in art competitions,

such as Welcome to Earth, to promote pupils as ethical citizens in protecting the planet.

The school provides an extensive range for extra-curricular activities. Pupils can access a good variety of clubs including Welsh, ICT, book club, well-being, gardening, rugby and athletics. These clubs meet children's interests and enable them to develop a range of skills. For example, pupils in ICT club create and programme Lego fairground models.

The school has a suitable 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 and a particular strength is the range of opportunities for pupils to learn about how to stay safe online. The school's procedures for monitoring attendance are appropriate. It works with outside agencies, including the education welfare officer, to support pupils who are causing significant concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is a strong role model who has established a dedicated team of teachers and support staff across the federation. Leaders have worked effectively to develop a shared vision for the federation building upon the common values of both schools. There is a strong culture of mutual support and collaboration across both schools and staff work diligently to nurture, inspire and help pupils achieve.

Leaders ensure that self-evaluation processes are well embedded across the federation. They use a good range of evidence to decide upon the priorities required for the schools to make progress. Leaders work well with staff to establish appropriate priorities for improvement and ensure that all teachers have well-defined leadership roles. Staff collaborate effectively across the schools to set priorities for improvement and to monitor and evaluate progress. In most cases, these priorities identify the strengths and areas for development accurately for both schools in the federation. However, in a few instances, priorities are too broad and do not focus directly enough on the impact of actions on pupils' learning.

Governors are enthusiastic supporters of the federation and are kept well informed by leaders about the progress the school is making. They have a suitable understanding of national priorities, including the curriculum for Wales and ALN reform. They ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking. On a few occasions, they have a direct impact on curriculum development, for example when improving opportunities for pupils to develop their financial literacy.

Pupil leadership groups meet regularly with governors to talk about their work in school. In a few instances, governors work with these groups to improve provision, for example in addressing the concerns around pupils' attendance. They attend professional learning sessions with staff where they have useful opportunities to discuss and challenge curriculum impact plans. Governors are beginning to use some first-hand evidence to support their role as critical friends, for example looking at pupils' work.

Leaders and teachers are developing suitable approaches to monitor the progress of pupils' learning over time. For example, they carry out individual learning reviews with every child at key points throughout the year. They ensure that information about pupil progress is shared suitably between classes, and teachers and support staff work well together to share information about individual pupils' progress and their next steps. Leaders and staff are beginning to understand how to use ongoing formative assessment to check for understanding and make teaching more responsive to the needs of learners.

Leaders regularly evaluate the quality of teaching and are beginning to provide useful opportunities for staff to reflect upon and improve their own practice. For example, staff have recently engaged in a programme of professional learning, where they use video evidence of their own teaching and compare this to good practice. Overall, however, leaders have not always focused sharply enough on those aspects of teaching that have the most impact on pupils' progress. As a result, the quality of teaching across the federation is too variable and improvements are not always made quickly enough.

Overall, arrangements for the professional development of staff are effective and link well to school priorities. Leaders ensure that all staff have meaningful professional learning opportunities to improve aspects of their practice. For example, staff have received effective training to improve teaching in mathematics, which has had a positive impact on pupils' number skills.

Leaders ensure that there are good opportunities for staff to work with other schools. For example, staff engage in a curriculum design project alongside cluster colleagues, which is successful in improving their understanding of curriculum design and pupil progression. Opportunities for collaboration and professional learning across the cluster and more widely are a strength of the school.

Leaders monitor the impact of professional learning on classroom provision suitably and are beginning to identify and share good practice across the school, for example in using digital tools or providing opportunities for outdoor learning. In a few instances, leaders ensure that good practice is shared across the cluster, for example where a member of the support staff team presented their work on improving pupils' well-being.

Leaders and staff develop effective links with parents. They collect their views and use these to improve the provision for pupils across the federation. For instance, leaders use feedback from parents to improve the learning experiences for pupils using external trips and visits. Staff use digital communication to share pupils' achievements and parents meet regularly with class teachers to discuss progress and share next steps. Overall, there is a strong culture of openness and support between school staff and parents.

Leaders and governors use the school's resources effectively. They set appropriate financial priorities and use grants suitably, including the pupil development grant, to support the learning of pupils. They create attractive and inviting learning environments and make the most of the limited outdoor space, which pupils use with energy and enthusiasm.

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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