



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

A report on

Casllwchwr Primary School

**Castle Street
Loughor
SA4 6TU**

Date of inspection: February 2023

by

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

About Casllwchwr Primary School

Name of provider	Casllwchwr Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	214
Pupils of statutory school age	161
Number in nursery classes	24
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%)	15.1%
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%)	14.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.32%
Date of headteacher appointment	04/03/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/10/2014
Start date of inspection	13/02/2023

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

Casllwchwr Primary is a caring and nurturing school with the local community at the heart of its activities. Pupils are confident learners that play an active role in the school and its community. All pupils feel that they have a voice through their participation in different learner groups. They are encouraged to look out for each other to ensure that they are 'ready to learn', 'respectful of one another' and feel 'safe'. This motto permeates through the whole school community.

Leaders are passionate about the local community and engagement with their locality is a strength within the curriculum provision. Pupils feel proud of their local and Welsh heritage and have a secure grasp of the Welsh language. Throughout the school, teachers incorporate the Welsh language into their lessons to a high standard. Over time, most pupils develop strong Welsh language skills and are confident and proud to be Welsh speakers.

The curriculum is planned purposefully to ensure that topics are engaging and relevant to the pupils. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and are developing well as independent learners. However, at times, teachers across the school tend to over-direct the learning, which inhibits the pupils' ability to apply and develop their skills independently across the curriculum.

Many pupils make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. They develop these skills in authentic learning experiences across the curriculum. Many pupils develop their writing and numeracy skills appropriately throughout the school. However, a minority of pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts is less developed. Most pupils are articulate and confident speakers.

The school is an inclusive and welcoming community. Leaders have high aspirations for all and collaborate and communicate highly effectively with partners to enhance the pupils' learning experiences. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is exemplary.

Recommendations

R1 Develop pupils' mathematical skills

R2 Ensure that all teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time at school, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals, make good progress from their individual starting points. As they move through the school, many pupils deepen their understanding and acquire knowledge skilfully in an interesting range of learning contexts.

Younger pupils talk confidently about their work and listen exceptionally well to other pupils and their teachers. Nearly all respond well to their peers, ask appropriate questions and express their opinions showing respect for others. As pupils move through the school, they continue to develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. Most pupils communicate thoughtfully and sensitively with their friends and share their ideas confidently. Most pupils are articulate, and confident speaking to visitors and peers alike.

Many pupils' reading skills are developing well. The youngest pupils use an appropriate range of phonic strategies to read familiar and unfamiliar words. Many older pupils read accurately in various contexts. They vary their tone of voice and use punctuation correctly to show their understanding. As they move through the school, most pupils use their reading skills independently to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum successfully. Most pupils across the school read confidently and many of the older pupils are competent readers.

Many pupils develop their writing skills appropriately as they gain confidence in their work. Many reception pupils begin to record their ideas through mark making, forming legible letters and writing simple words. By Year 2, most pupils write in a range of different forms, choosing vocabulary carefully and using capital letters and full stops accurately on the whole. As their skills develop, a majority of pupils use adjectives, different sentence structures and appropriate punctuation to enhance their work. However, a minority of pupils' spelling and advanced punctuation are less well developed. Older pupils effectively use their writing skills across the curriculum for different purposes, for example whilst writing a report on The Tudor period or the Maasai. However, there are fewer opportunities for them to develop their extended writing skills frequently and, as a result, pupils do not develop sufficiently their skills in writing at length. Throughout the school, the quality of handwriting and the presentation of written work are inconsistent.

Nearly all pupils make strong progress in developing their use of spoken Welsh and show enjoyment in learning the language. Younger pupils often use Welsh in their daily routines, including in songs and rhymes, and quickly become familiar with a good range of words and sentence patterns, for instance to describe their feelings and the weather. As they move through the school, most pupils speak confidently and begin using their growing knowledge more conversationally.

Many younger pupils are beginning to develop their mathematical skills appropriately. For example, in the reception class many pupils count accurately to 10 and beyond in their play activities whilst counting magic beans in pots and finding the corresponding

number accurately. By Year 2, many pupils have good recall of simple multiplication tables, such as 2, 5 and 10. They add and subtract numbers below 20 confidently. They use tally charts appropriately to record data, such as people's favourite pets, and interpret information from simple graphs. As pupils move through the school, a majority develop their number skills appropriately. However, a minority of pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts, such as measurement, is less developed. Across the school, most pupils use their numeracy skills effectively in other aspects of their learning.

Most pupils develop a wide range of digital skills to support their learning and to help them communicate digitally purposefully. For example, younger pupils use simple programs effectively to move a floor robot over a map showing the castles of Wales. As pupils progress through the school, they develop their data handling and coding skills effectively. Most older pupils display high levels of digital competence. They have very strong understanding of terminology and apply it confidently, for example whilst designing and making an animation of a Welsh legend.

Many pupils' creative skills are well developed and they use them in a beneficial range of activities across the curriculum, for example through various performances, such as playing musical instruments and participating enthusiastically in Welsh folk dancing.

Nearly all pupils' physical skills are developing soundly through a variety of stimulating experiences and activities. In the younger classes, most pupils develop their physical and co-ordination skills effectively when stacking and balancing large wooden blocks to create a bridge or recreate local castles.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Across the school, pupils have strong relationships with adults and with each other. This contributes notably to pupils' confidence and their positive attitude to school. Nearly all feel happy and safe in school and know that adults will listen to any concerns they have, support them and take appropriate action if required. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is exemplary, and nearly all play and work together happily and supportively.

Nearly all pupils have an effective understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Younger pupils recognise well the need to clean their teeth regularly, while pupils in Year 4 speak thoughtfully about the importance of a healthy diet that does not include too much fast-food. Most pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay safe online and when using electronic devices. They understand the need to not engage with strangers online and recognise the importance of reporting immediately any concerns that they have.

Nearly all pupils display a positive attitude to learning. They engage enthusiastically in most tasks, especially when they have an opportunity to guide their own learning and work independently. Many understand and demonstrate important attributes, such as persistence and resilience. For example, in the outdoor estuary learning session, even in cold weather with heavy rain, many pupils engage enthusiastically in building a waterproof den.

Across the school, pupils respond positively to the verbal feedback they receive during their learning. When challenged to improve, they listen to suggestions and make beneficial improvements to their work. For example, pupils in Year 5 consider more effective ways of using formulae to analyse spreadsheet data when asked to reconsider their approach. When asked to evaluate the quality of other's learning, pupils do so thoughtfully and maturely. However, pupils make less effective use of written feedback, which is not always so helpful.

Many pupils are developing well as ethical, informed citizens, who show empathy and compassion for others and recognise the importance of their rights, and the rights of others. They talk knowledgeably about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and how this affects their home and school life. For example, they talk positively about how their work in school supports Right 29, for them to be the best they can be. Pupils understand the importance of treating all others equally and respect the diverse nature of pupils and adults that make up the school. For instance, pupils in Year 4 identify the important messages shared during 'odd socks day' and that that it reminds them that everyone is unique in their own special way.

Through the extensive range of pupil groups, all pupils from Year 1 onwards take on leadership roles and influence the life and work of the school confidently. They take part enthusiastically in groups, such as the curriculum committee, the charity and community group and the podcast team. They share their ideas and opinions confidently, knowing that adults will listen to their ideas. These groups have a real impact on school life. For example, the charity and community group raise funds for local charities and their work contributes helpfully to a local foodbank. Groups, like the podcast group, allow pupils to develop as enterprising and creative contributors to their communities. For example, their broadcasts share useful school news and give families important and helpful information, such as charities they may contact if they need support.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff have collaborated highly effectively to develop an engaging curriculum that ensures pupils have a range of authentic learning experiences inspired by the local environment. For example, Welly Wednesday, Forest Friday and the Estuary Education project support pupils' well-being and develop pupils' enthusiasm for the outdoors. These learning experiences are planned purposefully as they develop their bespoke curriculum. For example, the younger pupils learn about how microplastics get into the food chain and how it relates to where we live and the older pupils use Carroll diagrams effectively to sort different types of animals found by the river.

Teachers plan whole-school termly themes that integrate learning across the curriculum purposefully. They effectively engage the pupils in their learning through lessons that involve pupils planning what and how they will learn during 'open your eyes week'. These projects use pupils' ideas as a basis for investigations that develop their numeracy, literacy, creative and thinking skills. For example, following their discussions on the flooding of 'Cantre'r Gwaelod' in the book 'The Iron Dam', pupils investigated further the effect of dam building on the communities in Lesotho.

The school has effectively enhanced its outdoor provision for the youngest pupils to support learning through play. Staff regularly identify opportunities to enrich the

curriculum, for example through educational trips, inviting visitors to the school and input from experts.

On the whole, leaders ensure that the curriculum builds systematically and coherently on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences. As a result, pupils build well on previous learning and develop their skills progressively.

A strength of the school curriculum is its comprehensive provision for the promotion of the diverse cultural and linguistic nature of Wales and its heritage, and the enthusiasm this helps to instil in pupils. Staff have high aspirations for pupils to speak Welsh regularly and this has a positive impact on pupils' oracy skills.

Staff work skilfully to forge a caring and purposeful working relationship with all pupils. They encourage pupils to enjoy and be confident in their learning. For example, when Year 2 pupils perform a script in the outside classroom they collaborate well and interact confidently with peers. As a result, many pupils make sound progress in a supported and inclusive learning environment.

Many teachers explain new concepts well and provide clear guidance that enables pupils to undertake their work appropriately. In the best practice, teachers give clear aims for learning activities and guide pupils well in their learning. They engage pupils' interest successfully and adapt the activities to best meet the needs of learners. Overall, the pace of lessons is appropriate to pupils' stage of development, which supports their engagement and perseverance in their learning. However, on occasion, teachers across the school tend to over-direct the learning, which inhibits pupils' ability to apply and develop their skills independently across the curriculum.

In most cases, teachers and support staff use various questioning and probing techniques to help pupils extend their knowledge and skills, and to allow them to explain their understanding of their learning. Opportunities for pupils to assess and reflect on their own progress and that of other pupils are developing successfully. Many teachers use questioning effectively to gauge the understanding of pupils as they undertake tasks. They use this feedback effectively to decide when to intervene, provide additional support or modify activities to ensure that pupils make good progress.

Staff use verbal feedback purposefully to praise and celebrate the successes of pupils and areas for improvement. Many encourage pupils to learn from their mistakes and often successfully guide them to the next steps in their learning. In pupils' workbooks, teachers provide general feedback on the accuracy of their work, and occasionally on the quality of the content. However, written feedback does not always help pupils to understand what and how to improve their work further. At times, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough.

Leaders and teachers share relevant information successfully to support parents with their children's learning, for example about the Estuary Education provision as part of the recent developments to the curriculum through curriculum collaboration evenings. Staff share relevant information with parents about their children's learning experiences, well-being and overall progress through informal conversations, pupil progress meetings and informative annual reports.

Care, support and guidance

The school supports pupils' emotional and social needs highly effectively. This ensures that pupils enjoy coming to school and engage positively with a wide range of learning experiences. Leaders and staff place a particular emphasis on knowing pupils as individuals and building positive relationships with their families. This allows them to provide tailored and beneficial help that supports pupils' well-being effectively. Daily check-ins that allow pupils to share how they are feeling, as well as a purposeful range of screening strategies, ensure that staff recognise quickly when pupils need help. As a result, leaders are able to set in place purposeful focused support, for instance to develop pupils' resilience.

The school supports pupils with ALN effectively. The ALN co-ordinator and teachers monitor the progress of pupils carefully and, supported by specific screening assessments, they identify well when pupils need extra support. There are a broad range of intervention strategies, led by well-trained support staff, that meet most pupils needs effectively. For example, intervention support for pupils' oracy and reading skills helps them progress towards their individual goals successfully. Leaders link with a beneficial range of outside agencies when needed, such as speech and language specialists, and this provides further expertise and help for pupils when required. The school has made efficient progress with national ALN reform and is continuing to identify and support pupils' needs in the classroom appropriately.

The school challenges stereotypes and helps pupils to see everyone as an individual and a valuable member of society. The school's 'Robert the Right's respecting Rainbow' character helps pupils to think about the range of diverse individuals that make up our world and recognise that underneath we are all the same. In reception, pupils learn quickly about the differences that make us all special, and the similarities that make us all humans. For example, pupils draw themselves and someone different to them, but identify thoughtfully the things that make us the same, such as our hearts. This work is supported well by the school's use of specialist weeks, such as Autism Awareness Week. Through thoughtful curriculum planning, teachers help pupils to learn about issues, such as race inequality and how this can affect society. As a result, pupils at the school treat everyone equally and respectfully.

There are a broad range of opportunities that contribute well to developing pupils' spiritual and ethical beliefs and helps them to consider the importance of different values, such as respect, responsibility and friendship. Through a comprehensive curriculum offer, pupils explore different religions and beliefs from around the world. Visitors to the school, such as local volunteers, share their values and beliefs and this helps pupils to reflect helpfully on their own values, for example on the need to be kind and caring towards others.

The school provides a suitable variety of visits and trips, both locally and further afield, that support the curriculum, encourage engagement in learning and provide broader learning experiences for pupils. For example, pupils in Year 3 visit places in Cardiff, such as Cardiff Museum, to learn about the history and culture of Wales. Year 5 and 6 undertake a residential trip to experience activities, such as rock hopping orienteering, abseiling and surfing. This helps to develop their independence and their team-building skills. The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils

to take part in performances to develop self-confidence and improve their speaking skills. For example, all pupils take part in Eisteddfodau, plays and concerts, such as Christmas plays.

The school has sound strategies to promote pupil attendance. This includes helpful support from pupils in the attendance group who monitor and set targets for attendance. Staff monitor those whose attendance is low, and leaders ensure that they are challenged and supported appropriately.

The school promotes a culture of safety, empathy, care and support. There is an established system to report safeguarding concerns regarding pupils and the school makes timely referrals to outside agencies when appropriate. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding with clear arrangements for monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads with enthusiasm and a high level of care and consideration for pupils, parents and staff. He provides supportive and effective leadership and engages very well with partners to share the vision of 'Ready to learn, seize the day and achieve your dreams'. The vision supports pupils to have high aspirations and to enjoy their learning. Leaders are fully aware of the impact of poverty on attainment and have effective processes in place to ensure that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds can engage fully with school life.

Leaders promote a strong culture of teamwork and cohesion amongst staff. They have high expectations of all staff to provide pupils with a positive and supportive experience in school. Teachers are committed to developing their knowledge and skills through an inquiry-based learning approach that derives from each class development plan. For example, staff deepen their understanding of how to help pupils to develop their reasoning skills in cross-curricular activities by ensuring real life opportunities for pupils to explore numeracy through role play. Teachers also work in small groups to research aspects of effective classroom practice and present valuable summaries to colleagues to help develop the quality of teaching in the school. Leaders link the professional learning needs of staff and their performance management objectives with school priorities successfully.

Leaders encourage staff to provide useful ongoing comments and feedback on the progress made against school improvement priorities. This is effective in supporting improvements in pupils' learning. For example, staff worked well collaboratively to improve the quality of pupils' creative writing by trialling and developing new approaches over time. Leaders monitor the comments and hold beneficial activities, such as book shows and learning walks, with staff and governors to drive forward improvement. The information collected is discussed and shared with all partners successfully. For example, when designing and planning the new curriculum based on local and national history and culture of Wales, curriculum events were held to create a shared vision for the school curriculum. This consistent collaboration ensures the ongoing development of the quality of the school's provision, which in turn supports pupils to make progress.

Overall, the school's improvement priorities link well to the key messages from the self-evaluation process and include the local, national and international context. For example, leaders recognised the need to improve pupils' Welsh language skills and provided valuable professional learning for staff to attend beneficial Welsh courses. However, leaders do not always focus well enough on specific areas for improvement, such as to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching across the school.

The governing body is well informed and effective in its role in supporting the school. Members use their skills and expertise to ask professional questions and provide valuable guidance to school leaders and staff. They undertake a variety of relevant monitoring and evaluation through their sub-committees' activities and have sound knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They value the work of the whole staff and are particularly proud of the role they play in supporting the needs of the local community. Governors make appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking and support leaders to manage finances effectively in line with the school's priorities. With the support of the headteacher, they monitor the budget prudently and support staff to ensure that they have high quality resources to best meet the needs of learners.

A particular strength of the leadership is the collaboration with partners to enhance pupils' learning experiences. For example, leaders arrange for university staff and students to visit school to teach French to older pupils, support pupils' well-being needs and develop their digital skills. In addition, parents and local residents attend the school regularly to share information about their careers and support pupils with their reading skills.

The school's communication with parents is highly effective, such as when gathering their views and ideas about different aspects of their children's learning. Staff share valuable information with parents about a wide range of ways that they can support their children at home, such as developing pupils' mathematics and entrepreneurial skills. As a result, parents feel well informed about their children's learning and experiences and appreciate the staff's efforts in involving the school in all activities in the local community.

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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