



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

A report on

Rhiwbeina Primary School

**Lon Uchaf
Rhiwbeina
CF14 6HL**

Date of inspection: September 2023

by

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

About Rhiwbeina Primary School

Name of provider	Rhiwbeina Primary School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	683
Pupils of statutory school age	537
Number in nursery classes	79
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%)	2.1%
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%)	2.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1.1%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/1987
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	04/05/2015
Start date of inspection	25/09/2023

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

Rhiwbeina Primary School is a vibrant school where staff encourage all pupils to achieve the best they can. As a result of this and effective teaching, nearly all pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points.

Teachers plan an exciting curriculum, which takes good account of the views of pupils and makes worthwhile use of the local community. They provide a beneficial range of stimulating activities which ensure that pupils fully engage in their learning. The school's use of drama and other creative approaches are noteworthy and effective. These help to bring history and other curriculum areas alive for pupils and support them to empathise with others whilst improving their communication and social skills. As a result, standards of literacy across the school are high.

The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn about Welsh heritage and culture and to gain an understanding of equality and diversity. However, provision for improving pupils' Welsh language skills does not focus sufficiently on developing pupils' Welsh speaking skills and, as a result, most pupils make limited progress in this area.

Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of national reform such as the development of the curriculum and changes to additional learning needs (ALN) provision. The headteacher carefully monitors pupil progress and teaching across the school and works with governors to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are appropriate. However, processes for self-evaluation and school improvement do not sufficiently involve all stakeholders to ensure that they play a positive role in influencing and shaping school development.

Across the school, teaching is generally strong. Teachers and support staff receive appropriate professional development to support them with their work. However, the school provides limited opportunities for staff to collaborate and share best practice.

Governors work closely with the headteacher to monitor and manage the school's budget effectively. They have a clear understanding of spending plans and support the headteacher to secure appropriate resources for teaching and learning.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve strategic planning to involve all stakeholders and further improve the quality of teaching and learning
- R2 Improve professional learning to ensure that all staff have opportunity to collaborate and share best practice
- R3 Improve pupils' spoken Welsh

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to how the school uses creative approaches such as drama to improve pupils' learning, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils enter the school with literacy, numeracy and social skills above those expected for their age. During their time at Rhiwbeina Primary School, nearly all pupils make strong progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding across most areas of the curriculum. Most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make effective progress against their individual learning targets.

Overall, most pupils make very strong progress in their literacy skills. Younger pupils develop their speaking skills effectively. They are confident when talking to adults, and each other. As pupils move through the school, nearly all continue to make strong progress, develop high standards of oracy and use a wide range of vocabulary. They readily suggest their own ideas and opinions and articulate their thoughts with a sophisticated use of language. For example, when role playing life in Ty Hafod mine, most pupils express ways in which they could improve their drama performance using mature vocabulary.

From an early age, nearly all pupils develop their reading skills effectively. They improve their understanding of letters and sounds and use these to build unfamiliar words. By Year 2 they develop good levels of fluency and enjoy sharing their reading with others. As they move through the school, most pupils read with confidence and understanding. Older pupils read with good pace and increasing fluency and accuracy. They show good awareness of their audience, altering their tone of voice to convey meaning. They identify key information in texts and confidently make predictions, summarise and infer meaning.

Nearly all pupils develop highly effective writing skills. From an early age they mark make in play activities and develop their understanding of how writing conveys meaning effectively. By the end of reception, many pupils write short sentences that convey messages or meaning well. For example, when writing a letter to cheer up Elmer the Elephant they use an appropriate tone and style. As they move through the school, nearly all pupils write with increasing accuracy. They write for a broad range of audiences and purposes including letters, and imaginative, well-structured stories linked to their class topics. By Year 6, most pupils write freely and creatively. For example, when persuading their audience to shop and live in Rhiwbeina, they demonstrate imaginative ideas and use a wide-ranging persuasive vocabulary. A particular strength is the care nearly all pupils take when presenting their work. This

includes high standards of handwriting, with most pupils from Year 2 onwards writing in a very neat, cursive style.

During their time in school, most pupils' mathematical skills develop effectively. In the youngest classes they develop their understanding in practical contexts well. For example, they use non-standard measures such as pawprints to measure Kipper the dog's height. As they move through the school, most pupils use Venn diagrams accurately to sort data and older pupils use fractions to solve word problems successfully. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils are able mathematicians. However, whilst most pupils apply their skills in interesting contexts across the curriculum effectively, they do not always apply these skills at a suitably high level.

Most pupils make limited progress in developing their spoken Welsh language skills. Younger pupils enjoy singing songs and rhymes and they respond positively to Welsh spoken in the classroom. However, as they move through the school, pupils use a limited range of language patterns when asking or answering questions in Welsh. Most older pupils lack the confidence and the knowledge to extend their vocabulary to hold more than a very simple conversation.

As they move through the school, most pupils' digital skills develop successfully. Younger pupils programme digital toys confidently and use other devices to record their learning experiences, both for themselves and to show others. As they progress through the school, most pupils devise simple formulae in spreadsheets successfully. Most older pupils apply their digital skills well across the curriculum, such as when they create a stop motion animation based on a script they have produced.

Across the school, most pupils develop their thinking skills well and work independently or with a team to solve problems. Most pupils are resilient in their learning and apply problem-solving strategies confidently. For example, when pupils in Year 3 work hard to refine their paper structure designs, they reflect carefully on what they have built.

Most pupils develop their creative skills effectively. As they move through the school, pupils become skilful and confident in creating their own dances and short plays in response to their topics.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school. They know what to do if they have any concerns and confidently discuss how they can raise issues with school staff. They feel that they are treated fairly, listened to and respected by their teachers. Most pupils know how to stay safe online. For instance, they recognise the importance of not sharing their passwords.

Nearly all pupils display positive attitudes towards their learning. Younger pupils have high levels of curiosity and explore the indoor and outdoor classroom environments confidently. As they move through the school, most pupils engage readily and with enthusiasm in a wide range of creative learning experiences. For instance, they particularly enjoy and benefit from drama to enhance their history work.

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and as a result, attendance rates are high. They value the range of visits and visitors they have and appreciate how this enhances their learning. As a result of clear rules and high expectations by staff, nearly all pupils behave extremely well in a wide variety of contexts. Most pupils demonstrate high levels of independence, working effectively on their own and with their peers both in and outside the classroom.

Most pupils feel able to make suggestions about improving the life and work of the school. They feel that their opinions and ideas are valued. Pupils undertaking leadership roles, such as the school council and School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG), are proud of the positive difference they make to school life. For example, the SNAG group take assemblies and influence pupils' healthy choices effectively across the school.

Most pupils understand what enables them to be healthy individuals. They engage readily in a wide range of physical activity during lessons and after-school clubs. During break time, they frequently use the gym equipment on each of their playgrounds to improve their physical fitness.

Nearly all pupils have a strong understanding of fairness and equality. For instance, older pupils inform their understanding about the plight of refugees by using information from charities and The United Nations Conventions on The Rights of the Child. They use their knowledge well to teach their own lessons about the rights of the child to their peers.

Nearly all pupils work well with others, supporting one another effectively during partner work or when working in small groups. They show high levels of respect for one another and are overwhelmingly kind and courteous to their peers, adults and visitors to the school. Nursery pupils share and take turns effectively during outdoor activities, such as when baking in the outdoor mud kitchen. As pupils move through the school, they continue to use well-developed collaborative skills and apply them successfully to a wide range of learning experiences. When given sufficient opportunity, many pupils respond effectively to feedback from teachers, other adults and their peers.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff develop strong working relationships with pupils and use a wide range of teaching strategies to engage them in their learning and spark their curiosity. The school's curriculum successfully cultivates pupils' enthusiasm for learning and an understanding of the world around them. Classrooms are productive environments where pupils collaborate and support each other with enthusiasm and respect. Staff manage pupil behaviour effectively, reinforcing positive attitudes towards learning and maintaining clear expectations.

Teachers plan well to develop pupils' knowledge and skills for individual year groups. They are beginning to develop a clearer understanding of how pupils make progress across the school and this supports their ability to plan activities at the right level for pupils. They incorporate the local area and educational visits into the curriculum effectively to enrich pupils' learning. For instance, pupils visit local shops and embark on train journeys to foster empathy and understanding of the challenges faced by

refugees. Leaders and staff are beginning to develop further opportunities for pupils to explore the diverse nature of Cardiff and Wales.

Teaching assistants play an integral role in enhancing pupil participation in learning experiences. This is particularly the case in the younger classes, where they monitor progress and support pupils' next steps effectively. Staff use the outdoor environment well to enhance learning across the curriculum, for example by deepening pupils' understanding of place value using natural materials. The provision for foundation learning, both inside and outside the classroom, is thoughtfully designed and is matched well to pupils' developmental needs.

A notable feature of the curriculum is the opportunity for pupils to influence their own learning experiences. The school places a strong emphasis on valuing pupils' views and ideas, for example using pupil voice boards and the collection of pupil feedback at the end of topics to inform future planning.

The curriculum provides valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. The provision for developing pupils' English literacy skills is a particular strength, with teachers creating rich contexts for pupils to apply their speaking, reading, and writing skills at a high level. This includes creating a strong culture of reading in the school. Teachers often design lessons with a strong creative focus and encourage pupils to collaborate and deepen their skills through drama, music or role play activities. For example, older pupils engage enthusiastically in drama activities whilst reflecting on how people used to live in Wales. However, the school's provision for Welsh language development does not focus sufficiently on developing pupils' spoken language skills. Most teachers plan an effective range of opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their mathematical skills in other areas of learning and in real-life contexts. However, in a few cases, they do not provide frequent enough opportunities for pupils to apply these skills at a sufficiently high level in other areas of learning. Teachers have embedded the development of pupils' digital competence across most classes and this covers a good range of skills, including coding, databases, and the use of spreadsheets.

Most teachers demonstrate a strong understanding of the subjects they are teaching and provide clear explanations. In many lessons, teachers model effective learning approaches and use valuable resources, such as worked examples, vocabulary lists and prompts to support peer feedback. Most lessons are well paced, with teachers revisiting prior learning to focus pupils' thinking well. However, in a very few instances, teachers do not always ensure that more able pupils receive sufficiently high levels of challenge.

Teachers generally model language effectively, asking appropriate questions, and encouraging pupils to explain their thinking and share ideas. Whilst most teachers provide valuable verbal and written feedback to help pupils make progress, they do not provide frequent enough opportunities for pupils to respond and make sustained improvements.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a respectful community where staff prioritise the well-being of pupils. A range of worthwhile strategies, including circle time and shared playground games,

develop pupils' social skills effectively. Staff provide a range of positive interventions for pupils who need additional emotional and social support. The school monitors pupil well-being carefully through a range of daily check ins. When required, this results in additional support for identified pupils. Pupils also self-refer to the specialist well-being staff member whenever they feel in need of support. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) organises provision for pupils with ALN appropriately and trains staff to meet all pupils' individual needs suitably. The school has clear systems in place for the identification and monitoring of pupils needing additional support and is making good progress towards meeting the requirements of the Welsh Government's ALN reforms. Teaching assistants use a range of strategies effectively to improve pupils' skills. They carefully monitor the impact of this work and adjust provision according to the needs of each pupil. The school works well with a range of agencies who provide specialist support for pupils' academic, emotional, health and social needs. As a result, most pupils with ALN make strong progress towards their individual learning goals.

Teachers make good use of the community as a resource to ignite pupils' interest in learning. They arrange visits to the local library to increase pupils' enthusiasm for reading. Across the school, teachers make appropriate use of Welsh artists to enhance the pupils' knowledge of their identity and the place Wales plays in the world. The school embraces diversity and teachers carefully plan useful opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of their identity, heritage and culture. For example, a few pupils readily share information about their home language and culture with their peers. In addition, pupils learn about the importance of equality and diversity through the study of famous people, such as the civil rights activist, Rosa Parks.

Regular acts of collective worship provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to reflect on important moral and social issues. Teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for older pupils to plan and deliver their own assemblies. For example, school councillors ask pupils to consider the importance of recycling and promote the importance of inclusion and equality by learning British sign language.

Teachers run a range of extra-curricular activities, including football, netball and button club. They enrich learning by providing a range of school trips and residential visits. The school ensures that finance is not a barrier to any pupil participating in school activities.

As they move through the school, teachers ensure that pupils have worthwhile opportunities to develop their leadership skills through the school council and a range of pupil voice groups. Many of these groups help to make a difference to whole school life and the community. For example, there are improved opportunities for pupils to get fit during outdoor play as a result of the school council's request to create playground areas dedicated to physical activity. Teachers ensure that pupils understand their rights as children. They promote this effectively through planned activities during lessons and whole-school assemblies. For example, Year 6 pupils demonstrate an understanding of their rights as children through their debate work about poverty.

The school provides an attractive, safe, learning environment that is well resourced and well cared for. Teachers ensure that pupils understand how to stay safe online and how to use digital tools responsibly, for example by reporting online bullying and safeguarding their personal information and passwords. Partnership work with outside agencies, such as the school police liaison officer, help to reinforce these important messages. There are robust procedures in place to manage pupil attendance. As a result, pupil attendance at the school is high. Overall, the school promotes a positive culture of safeguarding.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides strong, effective leadership with high expectations for all pupils and staff. She shares her vision clearly with the school community supporting pupils to 'aim high' and to reach their full potential. The headteacher sets clear expectations and ensures that there is consistency in standards of teaching and learning across the school. For example, nearly all pupils' presentation skills and handwriting are of an exceptionally high standard.

Leaders ensure that creativity in the curriculum has a strong focus. They support teachers effectively to use innovative approaches, such as drama, to bring learning to life. For example, most pupils enjoy getting into character and reliving the life of someone from the past. This has a positive impact on nearly all pupils' standards of literacy across the school.

The school has a strong track record of securing pupil progress. The headteacher monitors pupil achievement carefully. Data analysis, work scrutiny and informal learning walks provide her with a clear understanding of pupil progress. The school provides suitable termly parent consultation meetings and annual reports to parents to share information about pupils' learning. Leaders are beginning to review their communication systems with parents to improve their links with families and to ensure that they are clear about the support their children receive. This work is at an early stage.

The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher provide effective support for the strategic management of the school. They work alongside the headteacher to drive school improvement as well as leading on key areas, such as ALN and foundation learning. Whilst there are a few middle leaders who occasionally support senior leaders with school improvement, overall, leadership responsibilities are not sufficiently distributed across the school.

The headteacher leads and carries out most of the school self-evaluation activities. She encourages staff to evaluate their curriculum planning and provides appropriate feedback to improve year group planning. Senior leaders work with the headteacher to evaluate teaching and learning. This is beginning to help the school to identify key areas for improvement. Governors have started to contribute to self-evaluation through regular visits to school. This supports them effectively to gain a better understanding of the school strengths and areas for improvement. However, senior leaders and other staff are not always given sufficient opportunity to be appropriately involved in the self-evaluation process.

The headteacher uses self-evaluation activities suitably to ensure that improvement activities address key areas for school development as well as national priorities. For example, the school's work to develop its curriculum has led to improvements in the provision for pupils' literacy skills. Leaders evaluate school progress at regular intervals through the year. However, improvement actions are not always specific enough to ensure that the impact can be evaluated effectively. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge to the headteacher. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement through head teacher reports and regular visits to the school. They support the headteacher well to promote an appropriate safeguarding culture and ensure healthy eating and drinking across the school. Governors work closely with the headteacher to address any concerns arising from self-evaluation activities, such as through the outcome of parental questionnaires. For example, because of parental feedback, they are beginning to explore improved ways to communicate with parents.

Governors work effectively with the headteacher to monitor and manage school finances. They have a clear understanding of school budget constraints and support the headteacher well to manage any projected surplus or deficit. Together with school leaders, they show due regard to the impact of poverty on attainment through suitable use of grant funding, such as the pupil development grant.

Leaders provide appropriate professional learning for staff based on whole-school priorities and make suitable arrangements for performance management. For example, leaders provided a wide range of professional learning linked to the development of the school's curriculum. As a result, the school's curriculum provision is effective. Overall, however, they do not plan sufficient opportunities for staff to collaborate, to visit other schools and to share best practice to further improve the school's teaching.

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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