



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

A report on

Severn Primary School

**Severn Primary School
Severn Road,
Canton,
Cardiff,
CF11 9DZ**

Date of inspection: October 2023

by

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

About Severn Primary School

Name of provider	Severn Primary School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	472
Pupils of statutory school age	327
Number in nursery classes	91
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%)	28.3%
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%)	10.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	53.2%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/05/2016
Start date of inspection	02/10/2023

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

Pupils at Severn Primary enjoy coming to their school. They feel safe and cared for in an environment that supports equality and inclusion for all. Here, pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that prepare them to become adults active in today's society.

The headteacher leads with professionalism and compassion. Governors support leaders well. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They manage spending diligently and strive to maintain a robust culture of safeguarding. They are working with school leaders to develop their understanding of school improvement. A team of senior leaders ably assist the headteacher and together they monitor the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching and learning appropriately. However, they do not always address important areas in need of development such as the quality and impact of feedback or supporting pupils to become independent learners. Leaders and staff develop good relationships with parents, who value the care and guidance the school provides for their children.

Staff know pupils well and create warm and supportive working relationships with pupils. As a result, nearly all pupils behave well in classrooms and at breaktimes, settling quickly into their lessons. Staff use effective questioning in their teaching and many teachers plan stimulating lessons with clear learning objectives. These lessons enable pupils to make good progress in their learning from their various starting points, particularly in literacy and mathematics. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy knowledge and skills across the curriculum or to develop their digital skills.

Staff at the school are beginning to develop a curriculum for their pupils that reflects the local community, the wider history and culture of Wales and addresses global issues. Many pupils develop skills well over time and benefit from the support they receive from staff. Pupils enjoy the wide range of visits that enhance their curriculum and they value the extra-curricular activities staff provide. They have suitable opportunities to make decisions that influence the wider life of the school, particularly around children's rights.

Recommendations

- R1 Address the health and safety issue identified by the team during the inspection
- R2 Develop the effective use of feedback to support pupils to make progress and develop as independent learners
- R3 Improve opportunities for pupils to apply their digital and numeracy skills across the curriculum

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 make good progress in most areas of learning, often from starting points that are below the level expected for their age. Most pupils with English as an additional language, and those with additional learning needs (ALN), progress well in relation to their individual starting points.

Around a half of pupils enter Reception with communication skills well below the level expected for their age. During their time in school, most pupils progress well and communicate effectively with each other, staff, and visitors. In Year 2, many pupils listen carefully to stories both in English and their home language. As they move through the school, most pupils become increasingly articulate. In Year 5, for example, when presenting their research pupils speak confidently using more sophisticated and technical language.

Most pupils develop suitable reading skills during their time in school. Nursery and Reception pupils enjoy listening to stories and retelling them to their friends and staff. By Year 2, most pupils have a sound understanding of letter sounds and read confidently in groups. As pupils move through the school, most make rapid progress in their reading, and by the time they reach Year 6, most are fluent and confident, independent readers who enjoy reading a range of texts.

Across the school, most pupils develop effectively as writers. As they progress through the school, pupils develop a good understanding of the characteristics of different genres and demonstrate their ability to adapt their writing to different forms. They write for a wide range of purposes, using engaging vocabulary. Pupils in Year 6 for example, use a range of figurative language when writing descriptions of a haunted house.

Most pupils develop their Welsh skills suitably as they progress through the school. Most younger pupils respond appropriately to instructions and, by Year 2, many pupils use simple greetings in their talk. Many older pupils offer basic responses during discussions with teachers and each other, for example when sharing personal information, such as where they live.

Many pupils develop their mathematical skills well and enjoy using these in challenges. Younger pupils count and add numbers to ten. They count in 2s and recognise whether a number is odd or even. Older pupils use doubling and partitioning confidently when solving number. The oldest pupils use a wide range of calculation methods precisely to solve problems involving area and percentages.

However, across the school, pupils do not apply their mathematical knowledge to solving problems across the curriculum at a similar level of challenge.

Pupils make suitable progress when developing the creative aspects of their digital skills. Younger pupils, for example they create stop-start animations successfully and present facts about centipedes and millipedes. Many older pupils create digital content successfully, for example when making a video about the stone age. However, important aspects such as pupils' use of spreadsheets and databases are underdeveloped and across the school pupils do not develop their digital skills well enough.

Most pupils' physical skills develop well through a range of activities and experiences. For example, the youngest pupils develop their fine motor skills to successfully thread pasta onto pipe cleaners. Older pupils develop control and accuracy as they practise throwing foam javelins during athletics activities. Most pupils develop their creative skills effectively, for example when designing and making Welsh love spoons.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Most pupils are proud of their school and feel safe and happy there. Nearly all pupils know who to go to if they have a concern and appreciate the way staff help them whenever needed.

Most pupils embody the school's values of respect, honesty, happiness, tolerance, courage, and trust. They are kind and considerate towards each other, staff, and visitors. They forge positive relationships and often support their peers when they are in need. Most pupils develop empathy and respect the rights of others. They demonstrate a clear understanding of right and wrong. They value the school's diverse community and enjoy learning about and celebrating the variety of cultures. As a result, most pupils develop well as informed and ethical citizens with a sound understanding of fairness and equality.

When given the opportunity, a majority become independent, resourceful learners who collaborate well in groups, often showing resilience when tackling problems and challenges. Older pupils draw upon their previous learning and use this effectively to navigate new experiences. For example, pupils in Year 6 effectively use their knowledge of grid references when using a map of the UK to illustrate air raid targets during the second world war. Most pupils value the feedback they receive from adults during lessons. However, a minority of pupils lack the self-help skills and confidence to help them overcome any difficulties. A minority of pupils do not address mistakes and misconceptions in their work and as a result they lack the self-help skills and confidence to help them overcome any difficulties.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate good behaviour during lessons and as they move around the school. They are ready to learn and settle quickly to learning activities. Overall, most pupils engage well and ignore any distractions. They persevere, resolve disagreements, and consider the ideas of others when working on tasks in collaboration.

Nearly all pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep their bodies and minds healthy. They know the importance of a healthy diet and describe beneficial foods to eat and those to avoid, frequently making healthy snack choices at break time. Most pupils enthusiastically engage in physical activity during lessons, play time and during after school clubs. Many pupils value and enjoy the range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer to them and attend clubs enthusiastically, appreciating the positive impact this has on developing their skills as well as supporting their well-being.

Teaching and learning experiences

Across the school, staff form positive working relationships with pupils built on respect and equality. They share a calm and consistent approach to promoting positive behaviour and, as a result, most pupils are ready to learn at all times.

Most teachers have a good knowledge of the curriculum. They set suitably high expectations and provide clear explanations and instructions. Teachers share clear objectives for learning and successfully deploy support staff to support pupils' progress. Many teachers and teaching assistants are good language role models. They use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to deepen their understanding of key concepts.

Many teachers use a range of suitable approaches and resources to engage learners through the rich learning opportunities they provide. For example, older pupils engage well when using a fun and interesting range of materials and liquids to build a replica of the digestive system, consolidating their understanding of the scientific concepts they have learned about. However, in a few cases where teaching is less effective, staff over-direct the learning. As a result, a minority of pupils do not make the progress they are capable of. In these classes pupils do not develop their independent learning skills sufficiently.

All teachers make effective use of a range of assessment information. For example, during termly learning forum meetings teachers analyse the progress of individual pupils effectively, identifying the areas where support is needed. A majority of teachers provide purposeful feedback to pupils. Where this feedback is most effective, it provides pupils with a clear understanding of their strengths and where they need to improve. However, in a minority of classes pupils do not have regular enough opportunities to reflect on the progress they make in learning with staff or with their peers. This hampers pupils' understanding of how to improve their work.

The school is beginning to develop its curriculum in collaboration with local schools. Teachers plan beneficial learning experiences that reflect the school's context well and support pupils to make progress in developing knowledge and skills suitably as they move through the school. When designing their curriculum, leaders and staff work closely with their families and governors to support their understanding of the Curriculum for Wales.

Teachers skilfully plan opportunities for pupils to learn about and understand diversity. For example, younger pupils study the inspirational life of footballer Safia Middleton-Patel and consider challenges they need to overcome to achieve their goals. The school provides a wide range of beneficial opportunities for pupils to

develop their knowledge of the culture and heritage of their local community and Wales. During the school's Cynefin Carnival week pupils proudly showcase their own heritage and culture to families and governors.

Overall, the school develops pupils' literacy, creative and physical skills effectively. Younger pupils successfully demonstrate these skills when learning about the diverse cultures that make up the school community, for example when making chapatis, exploring traditional dance and creating Phool Patti truck art. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy and digital skills are underdeveloped.

Many staff use simple Welsh phrases in the classroom, for example when giving instructions to their pupils. However, teachers do not always make the most of opportunities to encourage pupils to ask and answer questions in Welsh.

The school's staff work hard to enhance a difficult learning environment with engaging displays that brighten up learning areas and support teaching and learning purposefully. The school enriches its curriculum well with a wide range of worthwhile visits. For example, trips to Barry Island, Sophia Gardens, Rhondda Heritage Park, and a local mosque all enrich pupils' experiences of heritage and culture. Whilst most pupils have access to outdoor learning, planning for the use of these areas to develop pupils' independence is limited.

Care, support and guidance

The school is highly inclusive and places a strong emphasis on ensuring all pupils and staff experience a sense of belonging. This includes the way the school celebrates its rich diversity. The school's curriculum supports this work well with opportunities that develop pupils' strong understanding of equity and tolerance, language, and culture in modern day Wales. Teachers ensure that pupils understand their rights as children through lessons, assemblies and the work of the school's Rights Respecting group. This group contributes positively to whole-school life, encouraging pupils and parents to work closely on developing the school's values.

The quality of care, support and guidance for pupils and their families is a strength of the school. Leaders use a caring approach with families and pupils, providing them with the helpful advice they need. The school communicates effectively with parents to ensure that they know what their child is learning and how they can support this at home. As a result of this nurturing approach, nearly all pupils feel safe and supported in school.

Staff form strong relationships with pupils and their families. As a result, they have a deep understanding of pupils' personal qualities, needs and circumstances. A dedicated team of staff provide high-quality, bespoke support for pupils to ensure their emotional and well-being needs are met.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) efficiently organises and manages valuable support for pupils with ALN. There are clear structures and procedures in place to identify, support and monitor the progress of these pupils. The school works well with external agencies to ensure support for pupils meets their individual learning needs and enables them to make good progress.

The school provides good opportunities to develop pupils' physical fitness and promotes the importance of exercise. Many pupils attend a variety of extra-curricular clubs, such as rugby and netball. Staff promote healthy eating and drinking effectively through the school curriculum and encourage pupils to have a healthy snack at break time. The school uses the local community and its resources well, for example by enabling pupils to play cricket at Sophia Gardens with the cricket team and becoming mascots during matches.

The school has a robust approach to safeguarding pupils and staff understand their role in enabling the school's sound culture of safeguarding. Staff and governors work hard to establish the safety and security of the school site. Staff work hard to create and maintain a pleasant learning environment. However, this work is hampered by ongoing maintenance issues in an aging building.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads by example, promoting high expectations for all staff and pupils. Over time, leaders have worked with the school community to develop a clear vision for the school underpinned by its shared values. Staff work effectively together, and with other local schools, to establish a curriculum that contributes to the sense of equality and inclusion that permeates the work of the school. They carefully consider parents views on aspects of the curriculum and work with them closely develop their understanding.

Leaders maintain a strong and effective culture of safeguarding and adults know their roles and responsibilities well. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe. The school forges good relationships with parents, who value the care and support their children receive.

The school uses a range of effective monitoring strategies to regularly evaluate and reflect on the quality of its work. Leaders analyse the information they gather to compile a worthwhile picture of the progress the school is making towards improving the aspects identified in its improvement plans. As a result, leaders have a sound awareness of the school's strengths, such as the progress pupils make in literacy. However, leaders do not always focus sharply enough on important areas of teaching in need of improvement, such as the effective use of feedback to support pupils to make progress and develop as independent learners.

There are robust systems in place to manage staff performance. Leaders provide opportunities for staff to further develop their understanding of how pupils make progress as well as to pursue their own educational interests. As a result, nearly all staff benefit from their professional learning opportunities. However, opportunities to work with other staff in the school or with a wide range of schools to share effective practice are limited.

The school promotes the benefits of frequent attendance and its procedures for ensuring pupils attend school punctually are robust. The school's work and communication with families to develop their understanding of aspects of the Curriculum for Wales has had a positive impact on improving attendance and engagement. Leaders and governors keep a sharp focus on the school's finances

and carefully consider spending, including the use of the pupil development grant to ensure all pupils can access the curriculum on offer, including visits.

Governors are developing their knowledge of the school's performance and the impact leadership and teaching has on learning. They are keen to support the school, for example by participating in learning walks and supporting leaders and staff as they develop the curriculum. Here they provide strong support and act as the school's critical friend. However, governors are at an early stage in challenging leaders on the impact of provision on pupil progress. They uphold their statutory duties, for example by ensuring that pupils have access to healthy food and drink while at school.

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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