



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

A report on

Crymlyn Primary School

**School Road
Jersey Marine
Neath
SA10 6JJ**

Date of inspection: March 2024

by

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

About Crymlyn Primary School

Name of provider	Crymlyn Primary School
Local authority	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	114
Pupils of statutory school age	80
Number in nursery classes	17
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 23.7%)	21.9%
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 13.2%)	10.0%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	6.3%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	6.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	07/03/2016
Start date of inspection	11/03/2024

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

Crymlyn Primary School is a friendly and caring school that supports its pupils and families to feel welcome and valued. Because of this, nearly all pupils enjoy their time in the school and show a sense of pride in the contribution they make within school and in the wider community. Nearly all pupils behave well and show good focus in lessons. As a result, most pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Although the school is beginning to develop its curriculum to reflect the principles of Curriculum for Wales, the school's curriculum does not offer opportunities for pupils to develop and use their skills, in particular writing, in a cohesive and progressive manner. The development of a broad and balanced curriculum to meet all pupils' needs is at an early stage.

The school provides strong support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). Staff meet pupils' social and emotional needs well. They deal with pupils' concerns thoughtfully, appropriately and in a timely manner.

The headteacher provides strong and caring leadership and knows the school well. All staff form an effective, successful team. The team works purposefully alongside a supportive governing body to secure improvements for the school. Together, they understand the school's strengths and areas for development. However, the governing body's strategic role needs to be strengthened.

Recommendations

- R1 Develop the school curriculum to include relevant and authentic learning experiences that meet the needs of learners
- R2 Provide opportunities for all pupils to develop and apply their writing skills fully
- R3 Strengthen the strategic role of the governing body

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils enter school with skills and knowledge at or above expectations. As they move through the school, most pupils including those with ALN make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Pupils in the youngest classes express their ideas readily and older pupils offer their opinions confidently when expressing their views, for example giving considered responses to the question, 'Is it a good idea to take a pet on holiday?' Nearly all pupils across the school listen well to each other and to staff and visitors.

Most pupils enjoy reading and become competent readers. Younger pupils listen enthusiastically to stories and show excitement in the sharing of books. By the time they reach Year 2, most read familiar words fluently and use a range of strategies to effectively decode unknown words. Most older pupils read with fluency and expression. They respond appropriately to texts, for example to recall events in stories, to predict what may happen next and to express their opinions.

Many younger pupils begin to record their ideas through mark making, forming letters and shapes and develop a correct pencil grip. As they progress, they begin to recognise and write familiar letters and sounds and use this knowledge to blend letters to make words and write simple sentences. They spell familiar vocabulary with increasing accuracy and use simple punctuation when writing sentences. However, across the school handwriting is poor. As a result, presentation in books is variable and expectations are not clear across the classes. Most older pupils write purposefully. They begin to consider their use of vocabulary, for example when writing a balanced argument on whether exotic animals should be kept in zoos. However, due to a lack of opportunity pupils do not write across the curriculum in a wide enough range of genres.

Overall, most pupils develop their Welsh language skills well. Most younger pupils enjoy greeting each other at the start of the session in Welsh. They join and sing Welsh songs and rhymes enthusiastically. As they move through the school, most pupils use simple phrases to have basic conversations with their friends and, by Year 6, they use connectives effectively to extend their sentences.

Most pupils develop their mathematical skills suitably. Younger pupils have appropriate opportunities to problem solve in practical experiences in their play. They develop a good understanding of number and place value, recognise and name numerals, count to 10 and explore number bonds. By Year 3, most pupils show a good recall of the four operations of number and partition numbers up to 1000. Most older pupils accurately calculate fractions of amounts and convert them into decimals and calculate perimeter of given shapes. However, across the school pupils do not apply their numeracy skills in other areas of learning frequently enough.

Most pupils develop a suitable range of digital skills to support them in their learning. Younger pupils use digital devices to take photos and access online programmes. Older pupils log into digital devices safely and independently. They use an online

platform to access, create and store their work. They demonstrate appropriate levels of digital competency, for example when coding instructions to create a step counter.

Most pupils develop their creative skills appropriately. For example, younger pupils enjoy constructing models out of a range of materials and older pupils enjoy creating chalk paintings of the Northern Lights. Most pupils make good progress in developing their physical skills through the regular opportunities provided for outdoor learning. The youngest pupils move confidently around the indoor and outdoor areas, developing good co-ordination and balance. Most older pupils enjoy participating in physical activity during lessons and develop a progressively broader range of skills.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are proud of their school. They feel safe and secure within its positive and caring environment, confident that staff will listen to their concerns and deal with any problems that arise. Nearly all pupils work and play well together. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They are polite, courteous, and respectful towards each other, staff and visitors. Pupils move through the school quietly and calmly and manage transitions within the school day well.

Most pupils have a good understanding of children's rights and reflect on why there is a need for rules and rights in school and in their community. Pupils are developing their awareness of global issues well through a range of activities. For example, pupils monitor recycling with an adult and present the weekly wheelie bin award. Many pupils, including those with ALN, are keen to undertake leadership roles. They participate in a range of pupil voice groups and committees. For example, Well-being Champions are planning to develop quiet zones in the busy playground. However, overall, the pupils' leadership roles across the school are at an early stage of development.

Nearly all pupils settle to activities quickly when they arrive in school. They draw on strategies to support their own emotional well-being effectively, understanding the need to identify their feelings, and to be ready to learn at the start of each day. In a few instances, pupils rise to the challenge of learning independently and focus effectively on their tasks. For example, older pupils use helpful feedback from teachers to move their learning forward.

Pupils are beginning to demonstrate increasing levels of perseverance, for example they use the 'ask a friend' strategy to encourage resilience and self-help when learning. They collaborate successfully together, demonstrating consideration for the way in which others work and respect for their thoughts and ideas when completing activities.

Most pupils know what they need to do to be healthy. They understand that what they eat and drink and their level of activity can influence their health and how they feel, such as how well they are able to concentrate in class. Nearly all pupils enjoy opportunities to be active at playtime, during lessons and through participating in regular physical activities such as the after-school dance club. Nearly all pupils show an appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe online, for instance by keeping their personal details private and talking to a trusted adult about any concerns they have.

Most pupils display a good understanding of inclusion and diversity. For example, older pupils recognise the challenges that people sometimes face. Pupils confidently use British Sign language to retell stories such as 'We're going on a bear hunt' and 'The Rainbow Fish'. They proudly celebrate their own cultures, languages and background.

Pupils including those eligible for free school meals understand the importance of attending school regularly. Nearly all arrive happily and punctually every morning.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school is beginning to develop its curriculum to align with the principles of Curriculum for Wales and its own vision for pupils' learning and well-being. Teachers focus learning around 'concepts' and are beginning to consider the ways in which areas of learning and experiences will contribute to the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. However, the experiences and tasks provided by teachers are not always purposeful or authentic to the needs and context of the school, its pupils and their community. In addition, teachers have not considered well enough the links between areas of learning. Teachers plan well for the direct teaching of pupils reading and mathematical skills. However, they do not plan well enough for the application and progression of pupils' writing and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Teachers plan worthwhile opportunities for pupils to use the outdoors to enhance their learning. For example, older pupils measure the playground in maths lessons and go for walks around their local area as a stimulus for their poetry work.

The school provides suitable opportunities to learn about the culture and lives of others. For example, older pupils send letters to Welsh communities across the world to share information about Welsh customs and traditions. Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to learn Welsh and practise their Welsh oracy skills through their 'drillio' sessions. Many staff greet and praise pupils in Welsh and use a range of simple instructions regularly, and this helps pupils to become familiar with basic everyday Welsh.

Teachers consider pupils' personal and social development well. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to consider their values, what is important to them and ways to support their own sense of well-being. Staff develop a positive culture of reading throughout the school. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to share books with each other, their teachers and at home.

All staff have warm and caring working relationships with pupils. Staff effectively model an ethos of respect throughout the. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and foster respectful and trusting relationships where pupils feel valued. Classrooms are calm, productive environments where pupils interact calmly and thoughtfully with each other and show resilience and determination in their work. This creates a good atmosphere for learning and, as a result, nearly all pupils settle quickly to their work and behave well in lessons.

Most teachers explain tasks clearly to pupils to help them understand what to do and how to do it. They share learning goals with the pupils during lessons, are clear about

their expectations and provide useful prompts for pupils to follow that help them improve their work. Staff provide timely feedback that helps pupils to address misconceptions and mistakes in their learning. As a result, most pupils understand what they are doing well and how they can improve.

Support staff are allocated thoughtfully across the school, are effective in their roles and work skilfully with pupils to support their progress. Teachers of younger pupils use the learning environment suitably to develop pupils' skills. However, in a few cases learning experiences are not always sufficiently challenging and do not consolidate pupils' previous learning to extend their skills well enough.

The school has developed an appropriate on entry assessment that gives teachers a clear understanding of pupils' starting points. Teachers use observations of pupils' play to inform their planning of the next steps in pupils' learning appropriately. Staff use a suitable range of assessments to monitor pupils' progress and identify those who may need additional support, particularly in their reading and mathematical skills. Pupils requiring additional support are supported, monitored, and evaluated closely to ensure that they make appropriate progress.

Reports to parents and carers are informative. They give useful information about their child's progress along with improvement targets for the future.

Care, support and guidance

Crymlyn Primary is a friendly and caring school that supports pupils' academic and social development effectively. Staff create an inclusive atmosphere that helps pupils and families to feel welcome and nurtured. As a result, all members of the school's community show high levels of respect for one another and work well together as a team.

Parents value the school's openness and appreciate the importance of its role within the community. This helps pupils to develop an awareness of their responsibility to the wider community and to feel a sense of belonging. The school provides parents with useful updates about their child's progress.

Staff use a suitable range of learning experiences, including visits, to enrich pupils' understanding of their Welsh identity. For example, staff provide useful opportunities for the oldest pupils to successfully discuss Welsh customs and share this information with Welsh societies across the world, such as Patagonia and Japan. The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to perform and to participate in creative and sporting activities. For example, pupils take part in a Christmas show in the local secondary school.

Staff encourage pupils to consider other people's views sensitively, and to acknowledge and respect diversity and challenge stereotypes. For example, pupils learn about the black mathematician Katherine Johnson and the civil rights activist Ruby Bridges. This helps to challenge stereotypes and stimulate discussions amongst pupils about the differences and similarities of people and communities.

The school's provision for pupils with ALN is effective. The ALN co-ordinators work proactively with staff to identify when support is needed and to implement a range of

beneficial interventions. For example, highly trained teaching assistants deliver worthwhile literacy, numeracy and well-being programmes that address pupils' individual needs effectively. These have a positive impact on pupils' well-being and on their ability to learn. The school works closely with a variety of external agencies that provide specialist advice and support for pupils where needed. Staff involve parents in constructive discussions to review the progress of pupils with ALN thoroughly and to adjust their support appropriately.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and to lead change, including through the work of the school council, Criw Cymraeg and the Well-being Champions. Staff have supported the school council to effectively raise money for charities such as through the 'school in a box' scheme. However, overall, the role of pupil groups is at an early stage of development and the views and ideas of pupils do not have sufficient impact on school life.

Teachers promote pupils' spiritual and moral development effectively through the study of topics in class and through regular acts of collective worship. They provide worthwhile opportunities for the school's pupil voice committees to organise assemblies, for example through the weekly Criw Cymraeg worship. The school offers a wide range of activities to develop pupils' personal and social skills well. Through visits and presentations by experts at the school, many pupils have a clear understanding of issues relating to substance misuse and the impact of anti-social behaviour.

Leaders promote a positive culture of safeguarding with robust systems and measures in place to ensure the safety and security of all. They promote daily attendance at school effectively and work with a range of agencies to provide beneficial support to families. This has helped to improve the attendance of pupils, particularly those who are eligible for free school meals.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is a strong leader who sets high expectations for themselves and their staff. They have had a considerable impact on the school's improvement in their relatively short time in post. Leaders overall have good working relationships with parents and the community. They have established a highly supportive culture where pupils and staff feel safe, happy and cared for. The school has a strong team ethos that promotes the well-being of all successfully.

The headteacher and governing body monitor the budget carefully and allocate resources effectively to address their identified priorities within the school development plan. This includes making appropriate use of resources and grants to support groups of pupils, such as those eligible for free school meals. They are working closely with the local authority to address a large deficit budget and have an agreed recovery plan.

The school addresses national priorities, such as the reform of provision for pupils with ALN, appropriately. However, the implementation of Curriculum for Wales is still in the early stages and, currently, the school's curriculum does not ensure a broad and balanced range of learning experiences that develop pupils' skills systematically and progressively over time.

Parents value the opportunities that the school provides for their children and are supportive of its work. School staff have highly effective working partnerships with parents and families. Senior leaders and governors take good account of the impact of poverty. They show a keen understanding of the financial pressures on families and implement strategies to mitigate these. For example, they have a uniform re-use scheme, and ensure that costs associated with school trips are minimised.

Performance management targets broadly match the school's identified priorities, and staff development needs. Leaders encourage individuals to enhance their personal learning and interests through a variety of routes, including leadership training and classroom-based research. As a result, all staff engage in effective and worthwhile professional learning. The wide range of professional development for teaching and support staff has impacted positively on school improvement. For example, the Senior School Leadership Programme focusing on personal development and coaching has impacted positively on the school's approach to emotional health and well-being.

The school's processes for self-evaluation are effective. Leaders make beneficial use of data to inform areas for improvement and to monitor pupil progress. Leaders are beginning to develop a sound track record of school improvement. They successfully identify areas for development and implement actions to bring about positive change. For example, the recent introduction of a phonics based reading programming has led to marked improvements in the reading skills of most pupils. Leaders have dealt effectively with the considerable challenges that have impacted on the school, such as rapidly increasing pupil numbers and the constraints of the ageing school building. Recent innovations in the use of the indoor and outdoor learning areas have had a positive impact on the school environment and the quality of learning experiences for pupils.

The governing body is highly supportive of the work of the school. Though governors have a broad awareness of school improvement priorities, they do not participate robustly enough in the school's self-evaluation processes and rely too heavily on the information presented by school leaders to assure quality. As a result, governors do not have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This limits their ability to fulfil their role as a critical friend.

Governors ensure that there are appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. They contribute well to the school's strong safeguarding culture.

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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