



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

**A report on**

**Hywel Dda Primary School**

**Cambria Road  
Ely  
Cardiff  
CF5 4PD**

**Date of inspection: February 2024**

**by**

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

## About Hywel Dda Primary School

Name of provider	Hywel Dda Primary School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	454
Pupils of statutory school age	346
Number in nursery classes	58
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%)	65.6%
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%)	14.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	8.4%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	08/01/2016
Start date of inspection	19/02/2024

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](https://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

Staff at Hywel Dda Primary create a caring and supportive school. School leaders ensure that pupils' well-being is a priority and, as a result, nearly all pupils thrive. They are enthusiastic and develop positive attitudes to learning. Throughout the school, most pupils behave well in lessons. They consider others' views and support one another well. Most pupils develop respectful relationships with staff and peers.

The school has created a broad and inclusive curriculum, with beneficial opportunities for pupils to immerse themselves in learning experiences that develop their understanding of Wales and our diverse world. The strong Welsh ethos enables many pupils to develop as confident and enthusiastic Welsh speakers.

Most teachers plan exciting opportunities for pupils to build on their literacy, numeracy and digital skills and nearly all pupils make good progress as they move through the school. A notable strength is the positive reading culture and the progress that pupils make with their reading skills. However, where teachers over-direct learning, especially for older learners, they do not always develop sufficiently as independent, creative thinkers and learners.

The strong leadership team, supported by effective governors, address school priorities rigorously. Governors provide valuable support to school leaders to identify strengths and priorities for development accurately. Staff develop a holistic understanding of individual pupils' needs and support them effectively to reach their potential. The school provides an effective range of interventions for pupils with emotional and well-being needs, which has a positive impact on their engagement in lessons. However, the number of fixed-term exclusions remains too high.

The school has a sound safeguarding ethos, and all staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for keeping learners safe. Senior leaders recognise that the high volume of traffic at the start and end of the day poses a risk to the safety of pupils, and they communicate regularly with the local authority about this.

The school provides extensive support for families. They use external agencies well to provide valuable information, and to direct parents to family services available in the community. The 'coffee, cake and cuddles' morning, provides a good opportunity for parents to engage in their child's learning journey.

## Recommendations

R1 Continue to work in partnership with the local authority to manage the safe arrival and departure of pupils

R2 Reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions

R3 Develop pupils as independent learners

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Most pupils start school with literacy, numeracy and social skills below those expected for their age. As they move through the school, most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, make good progress from their starting points. Most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make strong progress over time against their individual targets.

Most younger pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well and by Year 2, most pupils talk with staff and visitors confidently when describing what they are doing. Most older pupils become increasingly articulate and listen purposefully. For example, pupils in Year 6 listen carefully to the contributions of others and reflect thoughtfully before responding, when discussing social dilemma scenarios in groups.

Over time, nearly all pupils develop strong reading skills. Most younger pupils develop a secure knowledge of letters and sounds quickly. By Year 2, most pupils read aloud confidently and predict what might happen next in a story. Most pupils in Year 4 read unfamiliar words successfully and re-read sentences to check for meaning. Many older pupils infer meaning well, for example when describing how a character is feeling based on their actions and body language. They skim and scan texts for information skilfully and make effective use of a range of non-fiction texts to learn more about their class topic.

Nearly all pupils develop their writing skills successfully. The youngest pupils develop their early writing skills well when using paintbrushes to trace letters and shapes in glitter. By Year 2, most pupils use basic punctuation correctly. Their spelling of simple words is generally accurate, and many pupils use connectives of time accurately when writing instructions. Most older pupils write successfully for a range of purposes such as play-scripts, reports, recounts and biographies. Most older pupils assess their writing maturely, thinking about what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Most pupils develop their literacy skills well, for example, when writing a detailed biography of a pilot in the Second World War.

Most pupils develop strong mathematical skills. The youngest pupils use mathematical vocabulary appropriately when comparing the size of different toy dinosaurs. By Year 2, most pupils develop a good understanding of number and confidently recall multiples of 2, 5 and 10 to solve mathematical problems. Most older pupils work well with the four rules of number and develop an appropriate knowledge of shape, space and measure, for example when measuring their World War 2 model aircraft. Older pupils use their numeracy skills to support their work across the curriculum. For example, in Year 5 most pupils record local weather data in graphs

and charts skilfully. However, not all pupils across the school have the opportunity to use their numeracy skills in authentic contexts.

Pupils develop their digital skills across all areas of learning well. By Year 2, most pupils access learning platforms independently and share their work electronically with the class teacher confidently. Most older pupils navigate websites to research information and create presentations competently. For example, pupils in Year 4 research famous Welsh people to complete a timeline of their life. Many older pupils use coding software skilfully to create interactive games and animations.

Throughout their time in school, most pupils develop as confident Welsh speakers. Most of the youngest pupils use Welsh vocabulary as part of their daily routines and respond to commands and greetings appropriately. From Year 4 onwards, most pupils answer basic questions about themselves confidently and a few pupils use the past tense accurately. Nearly all pupils are eager to talk to visitors using their Welsh language skills.

Most pupils' physical skills develop well. Most of the youngest pupils develop their fine motor skills successfully. For example, in Reception pupils use a knife to spread marmalade and cut bread independently when making sandwiches. From Year 3, most pupils are developing the skills needed to play competitive team games such as rugby and netball.

Most pupils develop their artistic skills well through a range of art, music and drama activities. The youngest pupils use a range of materials in their artwork skilfully, including pasta, sequins and paint. In Year 2, pupils use their creative skills enthusiastically to design and make clay model animals. Most older pupils develop their singing and performance skills confidently during musical workshops led by the Welsh National Opera.

Most pupils use their thinking skills well to investigate and solve problems. For example, in reception, pupils use large construction equipment to make free-standing model castles collaboratively. In Year 5, pupils investigate the advantages and disadvantages of using different trusses and supports when designing and building bridges.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy in school and benefit from the strong working relationships with staff. They feel listened to and have people and places to go to if they are worried or upset, knowing their concerns will be addressed effectively. Most pupils behave well in lessons, showing kindness and respect to each other and welcoming visitors. Most pupils are polite and courteous. They are enthusiastic when sharing their learning with staff and visitors.

Most pupils enjoy their learning experiences and demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning. They are proud of their work and celebrate their achievements. Nearly all pupils work well collaboratively in pairs and small groups and are keen to share their ideas and answer questions. Many pupils show respect as they listen to and consider others' thoughts and opinions.

Many pupils settle to their work purposefully and concentrate well. For example, older pupils work with focus to research information about famous Welsh people using digital devices. They talk confidently and enthusiastically about the information they have gathered. Many pupils show resilience and perseverance in their learning. When working in the school's woodland area, most pupils work independently and make choices about what materials they will use for their den. However, pupils have too few opportunities to develop as independent learners and problem solvers in class.

Many pupils plan and organise fundraising events throughout the year. They use their entrepreneurial skills, to create and sell items they have made at the Christmas Fair. They calculate the profit they anticipate making and make decisions about how the money raised will be spent. Nearly all older pupils engage enthusiastically in pupil leadership groups, such as Criw Cymraeg and the Rights Brigade. These have a positive impact on the life of the school. For example, pupils from the Sporty Party devise games to teach to the younger pupils during playtimes.

Most pupils develop a strong understanding of equality and diversity. They celebrate what makes them special and develop a good understanding of different cultures. Most pupils have a strong sense of justice and equality and demonstrate respect for each other.

Most pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and the value of regular exercise. They make healthy food choices during the school day. They know the importance of staying hydrated throughout the day and enjoy participating in a range of extra-curricular activities to keep fit, such as the netball and football club.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe online. For example, they know not to share their password with others. Older pupils demonstrate their knowledge and maturity when considering the arguments for and against allowing mobile phones in school.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school has created a curriculum which provides learners with an exciting and engaging range of learning experiences that meets the needs and interests of nearly all pupils. The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of educational visits and visitors that provide authentic learning opportunities. For example, pupils enjoy a visit to the local Mandir when learning about Hinduism. This ensures that all pupils, including those impacted by poverty, can relate to the topic, and engage positively in lessons. Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the curriculum.

Staff plan highly beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Staff model language well and introduce pupils to new vocabulary and increasingly sophisticated language enthusiastically. Staff create classrooms that promote a love of reading and, ensure that pupils have regular access to a range of literature. This approach is successful in improving pupils' reading skills. Nearly all teachers ensure that pupils have purposeful opportunities to develop a range of suitable digital skills, and most pupils across the school use digital technology confidently.

Teachers encourage pupils to use Welsh throughout the school day. They provide many beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh oracy skills effectively. This enables most pupils to develop their Welsh language skills appropriately. Teachers plan a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and culture of Wales, for example, a visit to St. Fagan's National Museum of History supports older pupils to understand how daily life in Wales has changed over time.

Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to influence their learning. As a result, many pupils are motivated and engage enthusiastically in their learning. Many lessons are well paced, and teachers revisit prior learning to focus pupils' thinking and structure their lessons effectively. Staff use the outdoor areas well to support learning. In particular, the school makes exceptional use of the woodland area to provide exciting learning experiences that promote independence and develop pupils' awareness of risk. For example, younger pupils work collaboratively with a range of tools to create a pond and build dens. However, throughout the school there are too few opportunities for pupils to make independent choices about their learning.

Many staff use effective questioning to address misconceptions and to develop pupils' understanding of what they need to do to be even more successful in their learning. Across the school, effective verbal and written feedback helps pupils to identify how to improve their work. Teachers regularly identify targets for pupils that help them understand how to achieve the next step in their learning. Most teachers plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own work and that of their peers. In most cases, teachers and support staff know their pupils' strengths and areas for improvement well.

Staff provide stimulating and engaging learning environments which support learning appropriately. For example, wall displays celebrate successful work and staff encourage pupils to 'maggie' these successes to improve their own work.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school provides a nurturing and supportive environment, where all learners are valued and treated equally. Staff develop strong and effective relationships with pupils, and as a result, they feel well supported and cared for. Nearly all staff use a positive approach to managing behaviour. They engage and encourage pupils to participate in a range of learning experiences successfully. Nearly all staff know their pupils well and provide support and guidance in a sensitive and calm manner.

Pupil well-being is a high priority for the school. Staff use a wide range of strategies and interventions successfully to support pupils with their social and emotional needs. In addition, the 'Seren' provides a safe space for pupils to regulate their emotions before returning to class. Staff plan suitable activities to help pupils manage their emotions and make sensible choices.

The school engages exceptionally well with their families and the local community. Regular family and community engagement groups strengthen the relationships between home and school and provide practical support for parents, for example, through cookery classes for parents and workshops for managing a family budget.

Staff ensure that pupils have a good understanding of equality and diversity. For example, older pupils consider what love means to them as part of their positive relationships work. Pupils across the school learn about different faiths and celebrate religious festivals such as Diwali and Eid. The school makes good use of its own community, for example, parents are invited to talk to pupils about their faith and culture, parents cook traditional food for pupils and demonstrate Mendhi art.

The school provides strong and effective support for pupils with ALN. Staff deliver a wide range of interventions to support pupils' learning and emotional needs well. As a result, most pupils make good progress towards their individual targets. The support for younger pupils with specific needs has had a noticeable impact on their progress, for example, in improving pupils' communication skills. The ALNCo (additional learning needs co-ordinator) has developed valuable relationships with a wide range of agencies and professionals, including specialist teachers for autism and an emotional health team.

The school has a sound safeguarding ethos, and all staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for keeping learners safe. All staff use effective strategies to promote and support a culture of anti-bullying. Overall, the school site is safe and secure. However, the high volume of traffic outside the school gates at the start and end of the day poses a risk to the safety of pupils.

The school has robust strategies in place for promoting pupils' attendance and punctuality. Although senior leaders have a strong emphasis on developing positive approaches to managing challenging behaviour, and work effectively with parents and outside agencies to support pupils with social and emotional needs, the number of pupils excluded from school for a fixed period remains very high.

## **Leadership and management**

School leaders have established a clear vision based on equipping the pupils with the skills and well-being to thrive as adults in a diverse world. Leaders set high expectations for managing behaviour using positive approaches. As a result, staff and pupils form respectful relationships, which supports nearly all pupils with their social and emotional difficulties well and enables them to engage in their learning successfully.

Senior leaders involve most staff in a range of effective self-evaluation activities, and the priorities they identify reflect the needs of the school accurately. Many staff have a strong understanding of how they contribute to whole-school improvement through their work in teams linked to the school's curriculum development. The headteacher has a good understanding of individual staff expertise and uses this information to deploy staff to lead areas of development successfully. As a result, the school has a strong track record of making improvements quickly. For example, the literacy leaders have made good progress in developing a culture of reading and improving standards of reading throughout the school.

The headteacher reviews staff performance regularly and sets targets for improvement closely linked to the school's development priorities and the quality of teaching. Staff benefit from visits to observe effective practice in other settings and use their observations to improve their own teaching. For example, links with a

community children's centre have resulted in improved learning environments for the youngest pupils. Senior leaders ensure that professional learning opportunities reflect the school's priorities well. For example, all staff receive regular training on positive behaviour management strategies, and as a result, staff improve pupils' engagement in their learning.

Senior leaders monitor pupils' progress regularly and this information helps all staff to understand the needs and interests of nearly all pupils well. They monitor the progress of pupils with additional learning needs rigorously and review the impact of interventions on their learning and well-being thoroughly to ensure the support that pupils receive is meeting their needs.

Leaders thoughtfully prioritise national and school-based improvements. The school has made good progress with towards ALN reform and senior leaders have worked creatively to develop a curriculum in line with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales.

Governors have a sound understanding of self-evaluation processes and how the outcomes of monitoring influence the school's current priorities for improvement. They regularly visit the school during governor development days to establish a good understanding of how the school operates. The governing body fulfil their statutory responsibilities well, for example when ensuring appropriate arrangements for pupils' healthy eating and drinking. Leaders and governors are aware of their responsibility to safeguard pupils and have systems in place to ensure staff understand and promote the school's safeguarding culture.

School leaders manage finances well. They prioritise raising standards and providing additional support in literacy, numeracy and well-being. Governors understand how funding, including the pupil development grant, is used to provide exciting opportunities for pupils. For example, the school funds an after-school theatre group to provide pupils with the opportunity to learn new skills.

Family engagement is a strength of the school. The school communicates effectively with parents and provides many opportunities for parents to visit school and engage in their child's learning. For example, when attending the 'coffee, cake and cuddles' morning, parents and children listen to a story and engage in fun learning activities together. In addition, the school organises beneficial drop-in sessions for parents to support them with managing family life and their own well-being.

The headteacher develops open, honest and caring relationships with all members of the school community. Senior leaders place a strong emphasis on monitoring well-being and nearly all staff and pupils feel well supported by the senior leadership team.

## 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](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Publication date: 24/04/2024