A report on

Ogmore Vale Primary
Aber Road
Ogmore Vale
Bridgend
CF32 7AJ

Date of inspection: October 2017

by

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

About Ogmore Vale Primary

Ogmore Vale Primary School is in the village of Ogmore Vale in the county borough of Bridgend. The school serves Ogmore Vale and the surrounding area.

There are 368 pupils on role, aged between 3 and 11 years, including 31 full-time nursery pupils. The school has 13 mainstream classes, five of which are mixed-age. There are also two local authority learning resource bases. One is a foundation phase observation class and the other caters for pupils with a wide range of moderate learning difficulties. Both include pupils from outside the school's catchment area.

Around 30% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average of 19%. The school identifies 21% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is the same as the national average. Nearly all pupils are white British and a very few speak Welsh at home. A very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds or have English as an additional language. A very few are looked after by a local authority.

The headteacher took up her in post in January 2015. The school's last inspection was in January 2011.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en

Summary

In Ogmore Vale Primary School, most pupils are polite and happy, and enjoy coming to school. When interesting topics and stimulating teaching motivate pupils, they respond well and make at least appropriate progress. All staff care for their pupils well and develop positive working relationships with them. This helps many pupils to flourish and gain in confidence.

The school has many suitably skilled and experienced teachers, support staff and leaders. However, instability in staffing and leadership over the past few years has led to inconsistencies in teaching and assessment that has left gaps in pupils' learning. The introduction of too many changes and initiatives in a short space of time and a lack of robust monitoring and evaluation systems mean that accurate self-evaluation is difficult and school improvement is slow.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	**Adequate and needs improvement**
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	**Adequate and needs improvement**
Teaching and learning experiences	**Adequate and needs improvement**
Care, support and guidance	**Adequate and needs improvement**
Leadership and management	**Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement**

Recommendations

R1 Improve strategic planning systems and communication to involve all staff and enable the school to make and sustain improvements

R2 Monitor the school's work rigorously so that leaders can evaluate strengths and weaknesses accurately, identify priorities precisely and challenge underperformance

R3 Improve the quality of teaching and assessment across the school

R4 Raise standards of reading and spelling

R5 Analyse the progress of specific groups of pupils to target and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

R6 Increase opportunities for pupils to contribute purposefully to the life and work of the school

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress about 12 months after the publication of this report.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

On entry to the nursery, pupils' skills vary considerably. While a very few listen and speak well for their age and have strong personal skills, many do not communicate effectively when they start school. These pupils are not used to responding to instructions and following routines. Nonetheless, most settle well and, during their time in the nursery class, they make suitable progress in developing their early communication, numeracy and personal skills. By the end of their time in the school, many pupils make expected progress from their starting points. However, the rate of pupils' progress varies too much from class to class. This means that a minority of pupils have gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding and struggle to catch up.

Most pupils in the learning resource classes make good progress towards their individual targets and in relation to their starting points across all subjects and areas of the curriculum. Those with communication difficulties learn effective methods of making themselves understood, and make good progress in developing self-control. However, the progress of specific groups of pupils in mainstream classes, including those with additional learning needs, more able and talented pupils and those eligible for free school meals, is not as good as it should be. These pupils often do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.

Many pupils listen attentively and communicate effectively with one another and with adults. As they move through the school and study interesting topics, many develop an appropriate vocabulary that enables them to discuss their work confidently. For example, reception pupils talk enthusiastically about constellations in the night sky, while key stage 2 pupils describe the properties of three dimensional shapes accurately. Many pupils respond appropriately to questioning and contribute usefully to class discussions. However, in a few classes, where teaching fails to engage pupils well enough, pupils do not listen carefully. This means that they do not always understand what they need to do and do not follow instructions accurately. This slows their progress and limits their achievement.

The standard of reading of many pupils enables them to access the curriculum at an appropriate level. In the foundation phase, many pupils enjoy listening to stories related to their topic, such as "The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark", and take part enthusiastically in a range of reading activities. Many sequence a story correctly and explain their decisions as they work. However, pupils do not always develop a secure knowledge of phonics and other reading strategies as they move through the school. This means that a minority of pupils across the school struggle to build unfamiliar words and this spoils their reading fluency and understanding of texts. A few more able Year 6 pupils read complex texts with confidence, expression and understanding.

Many pupils write across a wide range of genres at a level appropriate to their age and ability. For example, foundation phase pupils recognise the features of a letter, and use these correctly in their own writing. By the end of Year 2, many write in sentences and use full stops and capital letter correctly. Most key stage 2 pupils

write competently. They create interesting stories with appropriate structure, and write purposeful factual pieces in a logical sequence. By Year 6, a very few more able pupils use an extensive vocabulary to express how they feel when listening to a piece of music, for instance. The majority of pupils of all ages transfer their writing skills successfully into other subjects of the curriculum. Many pupils spell familiar words correctly, but their knowledge of letter sounds and patterns is not secure enough to enable them to spell unfamiliar words accurately. The quality of handwriting and presentation varies considerably across the school and this has a negative impact on the appearance of pupils' work across all areas of the curriculum.

Many pupils develop suitable skills in number, shape and data handling and use their numeracy skills appropriately in a few areas of the curriculum, particularly science. For example, nursery pupils develop a sound understanding of the passing of time through their topic work about day and night. By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils identify odd and even numbers, double single digit numbers and add two digit numbers correctly. By the end of key stage 2, average and more able pupils use the four rules of number confidently to solve problems and explain their reasoning articulately, for example when solving simple algebraic equations. However, too many pupils reach Year 6 with important gaps in their mathematical understanding and need support to catch up.

As pupils move through the school, they gain appropriate skills in information and communication technology (ICT). For example, foundation phase pupils use a digital camera confidently to take pictures of the outdoor environment. Many key stage 2 pupils use ICT competently to present their work, using text, pictures, and simple graphs. They are beginning to interrogate and create simple databases and spreadsheets, but their skills in these areas are generally underdeveloped.

In specific Welsh activities in class, many pupils throughout the school learn an appropriate range of Welsh sentence patterns and vocabulary related to the topic they are studying. For instance, pupils in Year 5 and 6 speak, read and write about their pastimes, extending their sentences to include interesting details. However, very few pupils use Welsh outside their Welsh lessons or around the school.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement

Most pupils feel happy and safe at school and know what to do if they have any worries or concerns. They understand the importance of keeping safe on the internet and apply this knowledge well, for example when creating safe internet passwords. Most pupils understand how important it is to eat healthily and take regular exercise. They enjoy their physical education lessons and the opportunities they have to run around, play games and use the climbing frame at playtime and lunchtimes.

Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy challenge in their lessons and enjoy sharing and discussing their work with adults. Most listen to their teachers and friends courteously, collaborate purposefully and support one another well. In many classes, particularly those with stable staffing, pupils feel confident to take risks when answering questions, and often work independently or in small groups without seeking reassurance from an adult. In a few classes, however, pupils find it difficult to settle to work and concentrate for any length of time. This means that they do not make good enough progress and they disturb the learning of others. On the

playground, a few key stage 2 pupils do not recognise that their boisterous play in restricted areas might harm the wellbeing of others. They push the boundaries of behaviour and do not always respond respectfully to supervisors' guidance.

Many pupils are keen to contribute to the life of the school and want to take on roles and responsibilities, such as becoming play leaders or members of one of the pupil committees. These pupils have good ideas about how they want to improve aspects of school life, for example by buying new play equipment and leading games in the yard at playtime. Despite their enthusiasm, pupils do not have a strong enough voice in decision-making in the school. The school council and eco committee do not meet regularly and, as a result, they have little influence over developments in the school that affect pupils.

Attendance overall has improved steadily over the past four years from a very low base and is now above average when compared with levels in similar schools. Nevertheless, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has not improved at the same rate and remains too low.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Many teachers plan stimulating activities that develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding successfully. The school's thematic approach to planning the curriculum supports staff to provide pupils with good opportunities and interesting experiences across all subjects and areas of learning. This includes purposeful trips to places linked to their curriculum topics, such as local castles and shops, which bring their studies to life. This means that all pupils, including those in the learning resource classes, access a broad, balanced curriculum.

Overall, the quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. In many classes, where teaching is good, teachers and support staff use a range of approaches and strategies to engage pupils. In these classes, lessons are often lively, practical and meet the needs of many pupils well. The teaching of science, for example, is a strength and pupils enjoy the investigative nature of their studies. However, there is too much variability in the quality of teaching across the school. This is due to frequent staff absence, inconsistent application of agreed approaches in a few classes and too few opportunities for teachers to share good practice and identify areas for development. This means that the experience of pupils as they move through the school varies too much from class to class. Many teachers are beginning to respond well to recent initiatives to bring about more consistency to all aspects of teaching and learning. However, a few teachers do not take enough responsibility for their own professional learning and do not understand their accountability in relation to pupil progress in their class and across the school.

Many teachers and support staff use questioning well to develop pupils' understanding and skills. They encourage pupils to extend their thinking and evaluate their own work and that of their peers constructively. This is particularly effective in classes where purposeful displays help pupils to take responsibility for their learning. In these classes, pupils think suitably about the strategies they can use to take the next step in their learning.

Many staff offer pupils useful verbal or written feedback to help them improve their work. In a few classes, pupils use this well to improve aspects of their work, particularly in writing. However, there is no policy or shared approach for providing effective feedback to pupils and staff rarely share good practice in formative assessment. Most teachers are not routinely involved in the standardisation and moderation of pupils' work across the school, so they do not have a secure understanding of how to assess where their pupils are and identify the next steps in their learning. As a result, they do not always know their pupils' abilities well enough to provide work that challenges them enough. This is particularly the case for pupils who are more able.

The school has appropriate planning in place for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Most teachers use class topics well to create plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in many subjects and apply their numeracy skills where relevant. A new scheme of work to support the development of ICT helps staff to identify opportunities for pupils to consolidate their skills in many lessons.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

The school collaborates with an appropriate range of organisations to help its pupils to gain the knowledge, skills and understanding that will support their personal development. Visits to various places of worship and from local religious leaders help pupils to think about their spirituality. Older pupils work with a local police officer as 'police rangers' in their community to raise awareness of crime prevention and with health professionals to learn about the dangers of substance misuse. There are suitable opportunities in the curriculum and in the daily life of the school for pupils to develop their understanding of the importance of healthy eating and drinking. This includes Foundation phase pupils learning about the effect of eating too many sweets on their teeth, and older pupils helping to organise the healthy tuck shop.

The school's range of extra-curricular activities is very limited. There are a few sports clubs and residential trips for older key stage 2 pupils and occasional opportunities for pupils to perform in concerts and with a local male voice choir. However, most pupils have too few experiences to improve their physical and creative skills and cultural awareness outside of the curriculum.

The school has efficient systems to identify pupils in mainstream classes who need additional help to develop their skills in reading. To support these pupils, the school has introduced a computer-based intervention programme, which has been successful in raising pupils' reading ages over the past year. There is also an appropriate programme in place to help pupils with poor language skills in the early years to improve their communication skills. All pupils receiving support have appropriate individual education plans that identify suitable targets in reading. However, there is not enough specific support for pupils who have difficulties in other areas.

Provision for pupils in the two learning resource classes is effective. These pupils receive good experiences across the curriculum that suits their needs and interests. The teachers and support staff in these classes are experienced and they provide skilful help to ensure that their pupils make steady progress and acquire relevant skills.

Two experienced additional learning needs coordinators provide some guidance for teachers in mainstream classes, including helping them to prepare individual education plans, but they do not have enough allocated time to do this work thoroughly. For example, the processes for tracking and monitoring pupils with additional learning needs and vulnerable pupils are not systematic. As a result, leaders do not have a comprehensive overview of the progress of these pupils. In most classes, provision for more able and talented pupils is very limited.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements in nearly all areas, but staff have not received training in a specific area of safeguarding and this gives some cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

The headteacher and senior leaders are conscientious and have an ambitious vision for the school and its pupils. They are working hard to develop strong partnerships with all stakeholders to achieve this vision. However, lines of communication in the school are blurred and there are weaknesses in the school's systems and strategic planning processes that make it difficult to make and sustain improvements.

Very recent changes in the roles of the senior leadership and management teams, due to staff absence, are beginning to bring about improvements in school organisation and systems. For example, there is a renewed focus on analysing data to identify underachieving pupils and the sharing of this information appropriately with teachers. However, the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders are not clear, leadership meetings are not regular and agendas do not focus well enough on school improvement. Leaders and other staff do not undertake a suitable range of robust monitoring activities, so it is difficult for them to build up an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The self-evaluation report identifies many areas for improvement, but the process for deciding on priorities for the school improvement plan is not clear and does not involve all staff and other relevant stakeholders. The improvement plan lacks detail and the identified targets are not always the priorities that will make the most difference to the school. This means that teachers and support staff do not fully understand how their roles and responsibilities, including accountability for the standards of pupils in their classes, contribute to whole school improvement. Plans to address priorities are often not completed. For instance, progress towards several of the recommendations from the last inspection has been slow.

Provision for the performance management of staff lacks regularity and consistency in recent years. Teachers do not have purposeful targets and this makes it difficult for leaders to challenge staff to improve their practice. Although teachers and support staff have opportunities to attend courses and whole-school training, leaders do not evaluate the impact of this training on raising standards.

The governing body meets regularly and fulfils its statutory requirements. Recently, seven new members have taken up posts but five vacancies still exist, so most of the governors are relatively inexperienced. They are supportive and receive regular reports from the headteacher. However, governors do not play a significant role in setting the school's strategic direction or contributing to self-evaluation and school improvement planning. Very few have the skills or experience to challenge the school confidently in relation to its performance.

The school uses its budget appropriately overall to support improvements in provision. Senior leaders and governors plan and monitor school expenditure regularly, but they do not evaluate the impact that spending has on whole school priorities and raising standards. The school's plan for the use of the pupil development grant does not target funding specifically enough on meeting the needs of pupils eligible for free school meals. The good work started to enhance family and community engagement lacks continuity and this has hindered progress.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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

Publication date: 04/12/2017