



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

A report on

**Perthcelyn Community Primary School
Glamorgan Street
Perthcelyn
Mountain Ash
RCT
CF45 3RJ**

Date of inspection: April 2018

by

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

About Perthcelyn Community Primary School

Perthcelyn Community Primary School is in Mountain Ash, in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. Currently, there are 125 pupils on roll, aged from three to eleven years, including 15 nursery pupils who attend on a part-time basis. There are six classes in total at the school, five of which are mixed-age, including a learning support class for eight foundation phase pupils with autistic disorder spectrum from across the authority.

About 58% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average of 19%. The school identifies around 56% of pupils as having additional educational learning needs. This is notably higher than the national average. Around 10% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Nearly all pupils are from a white British background. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home. The local authority cares for a few pupils.

The headteacher took up post in September 2010. The school's last inspection was in November 2010.

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

Most pupils at Perthcelyn Community Primary School make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills as they move through the school.

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and are very proud of their school. Pupils' standards of wellbeing and behaviour are excellent. Teachers provide interesting activities that engage and meet the needs of pupils successfully. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is effective.

The headteacher is a good role model and leads a committed team of teachers and support staff who are dedicated to pupils' wellbeing and progress. All staff work together successfully to ensure that pupils develop to their full potential and take pride in their school and their community. Governors provide good support and are developing their roles well.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' standards of Welsh

R2 Improve parents' involvement with the school

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils enter the school with literacy and numeracy skills that are well below those expected for their age. During their time in school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those that attend the learning support class, make good progress from their starting points. Most pupils who are more able progress well over time.

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils listen attentively to adults and to their peers and follow instructions effectively. In the foundation phase, many pupils talk purposefully to each other when discussing their work. In key stage 2, nearly all pupils listen respectfully to each other during class discussions and express themselves clearly and articulately in group work. More able pupils use an extended range of vocabulary and present their views in an engaging manner, for example when describing their work on energy or talking about their favourite subjects.

In the foundation phase, many pupils make good progress in recognising an appropriate range of letters and their associated sounds. They use this knowledge well to read simple texts and apply a wide range of strategies when faced with unfamiliar words. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils are confident readers and enjoy reading both fiction and non-fiction texts. They express their preferences for different authors and types of books confidently. In Year 6, many pupils have very positive attitudes towards reading and regularly read a wide range of novels.

Most pupils write well for a comprehensive range of purposes in the foundation phase. In Year 2, many pupils use a wide range of vocabulary to make their writing interesting, for example when they produce poems on autumn, write simple instructions on how to make a rabbit puppet and compose a diary entry about elves. In key stage 2, most pupils write confidently and have an increasingly secure understanding of how to structure different types of writing. For example, in Year 4, many pupils produce effective pieces of writing on mythical beasts and the history of ice cream, while pupils in Year 6 produce interesting biographies on C S Lewis. Most pupils spell accurately and use punctuation correctly. Nearly all pupils develop a cursive handwriting style and present their work with care. Most pupils use their literacy skills confidently in other subjects across the curriculum.

Most pupils develop effective mathematical skills. Many younger pupils in the foundation phase count successfully to 10 and beyond and write simple number sentences using addition. By Year 2, most pupils use their measuring skills well to weigh in grams and kilograms. Most apply their reasoning skills successfully when they calculate the change from a shopping list. Many pupils apply their numeracy skills confidently across all areas of the curriculum, for example when they sort sources of light using a Carol Diagram. In key stage 2, most pupils develop a strong understanding of number values and apply a wide range of strategies to solve problems effectively. By Year 6, most pupils use their numeracy skills purposefully in various contexts. For example, they successfully calculate the population trends in the USA over a five-year period.

Many pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their basic skills in Welsh. By Year 2, many use simple phrases and basic vocabulary, but they lack confidence when reading simple texts. By Year 6, most pupils use basic vocabulary to respond to simple questions. The more able pupils are beginning to form their own questions to ask others. However, most pupils throughout the school lack the confidence to engage in Welsh conversations outside of designated Welsh lessons.

Nearly all pupils in the foundation phase develop their ICT skills purposefully and use these confidently across the areas of learning. Most pupils in key stage 2 develop their internet research skills appropriately and they present the information well. For example, older pupils confidently choose appropriate ICT software to present their project work on Mods and Rockers. Many use spreadsheets effectively to support their science work and they present their results carefully using a variety of graphs.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils are very enthusiastic learners who greatly enjoy their time in school. Nearly all pupils' attitudes towards learning are exceptionally positive and this contributes very successfully to the good progress they make as they move through the school. Most older pupils sustain concentration over lengthy periods of time and take pride in producing work, which demonstrates their highest standards. For example, pupils in one intervention group practise challenging word-spelling activities in a variety of ways until they are confident of success.

One of the outstanding strengths of the school is the very mature way in which pupils of all abilities evaluate their efforts and improve their work with increasing independence. Nearly all pupils have an accurate and balanced awareness of their personal abilities and they know how they can develop and improve their skills. For example, pupils in Year 6 successfully display their independent learning skills when working on their investigative challenges and during ICT activities. Older pupils are extremely resilient and demonstrate a determination to succeed and achieve in their educational experiences. As they move through the school, pupils become increasingly adept at suggesting and planning meaningful learning activities that link to the topics and requirements of the national curriculum.

Standards of behaviour are exemplary throughout the school. Nearly all pupils show high levels of courtesy and care towards each other, staff and visitors. This creates a positive and friendly atmosphere across the school. Nearly all pupils show respect for the contributions of others. For example, pupils in lower key stage 2 collaborate very effectively in learning groups to ensure that each member of the group has an opportunity to make valuable contributions. Nearly all pupils share the school's values of inclusion, equality, acceptance and kindness. They co-operate very well with each other and support those with additional learning needs in the learning support class actively. Nearly all pupils in the learning support class relate well to others and are keen to participate in activities with other pupils. Nearly all pupils throughout the school display outstanding levels of confidence, for example when greeting visitors and explaining aspects of the school's work.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of making healthy choices relating to their diet and physical activity. For example, through their project on 'How my Body Works', pupils in key stage 2 understand the risks to their health that can arise from a

poor diet or lack of exercise. Most participate successfully in physical activity and engage in the wide range of extra-curricular activities that the school offers. Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school and are proud to be part of its community. Most pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet.

Pupils have an exceptionally strong voice in the school, notably through their involvement in the school council and eco committee, and as helpwyr heddiw. Pupils from all groups take their responsibilities very seriously and flourish as a result of the trust placed in them. Older pupils ensure the safety and enjoyment of the younger pupils during breaktimes through their work as playground buddies. They carry out their duties with great maturity and confidence and contribute very successfully to the caring and nurturing ethos of the school. In addition, the leadership groups make a very positive contribution to the continued development of the school. For example, pupils' constructive suggestions have resulted in further improvements to the school's target-setting practices.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Nearly all teachers use their subject knowledge purposefully to provide a stimulating range of lessons that engage nearly all pupils effectively. Teachers share learning objectives clearly with pupils and expect all pupils to achieve well. They organise pupil groups, sequence activities and adapt work skilfully to meet the different needs and abilities of pupils. Teachers vary the way in which pupils are grouped suitably and this helps pupils to make good progress across the curriculum. For example, in key stage 2, teachers arrange pupils into ability groups for mathematics. This contributes effectively to the provision for more able pupils. Staff in the learning support class create a supportive and engaging learning environment. They provide a wide range of resources that supports the specific needs of pupils effectively.

Nearly all lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers use probing questions successfully to help pupils to recall previous learning and to extend their understanding. There is a very positive working relationship between teachers, support staff and pupils in all classes. This encourages courtesy, trust and respect throughout the school. As a result, nearly all pupils respond with maturity in their lessons. Support staff have good subject knowledge and teaching skills and they use these very well to make a strong contribution to the standards that pupils achieve. Across the school, nearly all teachers provide pupils with regular and purposeful verbal feedback during lessons. Consequently, pupils develop a firm understanding of what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work. There are appropriate procedures in place to provide opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others.

The school structures its curriculum well so as to engage pupils fully. As a result, nearly all pupils respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment to the learning experiences offered to them. Teachers plan successfully to deliver the statutory requirements of the curriculum. Communication, numeracy and ICT skills are given a clear focus in plans, and this has a strong influence on raising standards. Teachers plan jointly in detail to ensure that the requirements of the literacy and numeracy framework are integrated skilfully in the classes' schemes of work. This is reflected clearly in pupils' ability to develop their skills constructively and effectively as they move through the

school. Foundation phase teachers provide appropriate focused and continuous activities, which include opportunities for pupils to investigate, role-play and practise their physical and creative skills. In key stage 2, purposeful activities provide stimulating experiences that engage pupils' interest well. For example, topics such as energy, the Second World War and the Victorians successfully promote the development of pupils' investigative and independent skills and ensure a good balance of experiences in the humanities, arts and sciences. Across the school, teachers' planning responds positively to pupils' ideas and interests.

Provision for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills during designated Welsh lessons is appropriate. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their language skills outside of Welsh lessons in other situations during the school day. The school ensures that pupils have good opportunities to learn about their locality and to enhance their understanding of the history, geography and culture of Wales. Pupils visit many local places of interest, such as Llancaiach Fawr and Caerphilly Castle.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has a caring, inclusive and supportive ethos that permeates its life and work. Members of staff know the circumstances and needs of individual pupils well. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Stimulating topic work, purposeful visits to places of interest and meaningful acts of collective worship provide invaluable opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as rugby, choir, netball, French, Welsh and History Hunters, enrich pupils' educational experiences. Older pupils regularly visit a local activity centre to develop their physical skills.

There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping themselves safe and living a healthy lifestyle. These include regular encouragements to eat fruit and take part in outdoor physical activities. Police officers visit the school to teach pupils about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. There is a well-established behaviour policy, which results in very effective relationships across the school.

The school uses a wide range of data effectively to assess and track individual pupils' progress and to identify their particular needs. As a result, staff provide timely and beneficial additional support for individuals and groups of pupils. For example, the school tracks those pupils who are at risk of underachieving so that they receive purposeful additional support to ensure that their needs are met. The headteacher seeks out different approaches to help individuals and groups to improve their skills. This has led to measurable improvements across the school, especially in pupils' language and numeracy skills and in individual pupils' reading skills. A small team of highly skilled staff, who receive regular and robust training, provide successful intervention strategies; for example, one group provides additional guided reading sessions for pupils who have successfully completed their literacy intervention programme. This ensures that pupils are given graduated support whilst developing their independence.

There are thorough arrangements to support pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes and in the learning support class. These include suitable individual education plans that identify appropriate targets and have manageable steps towards achieving these. The school shares the plans successfully with pupils and parents and reviews progress regularly.

An effective personal and social education programme helps to develop pupils' understanding of diversity and the wider world. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 use ICT effectively to investigate the foods and cultures of different countries. The school has established close links with schools in Uganda. These strategies, together with the high expectations and inclusive behaviour modelled by school staff, help pupils to become active citizens and to develop important values such as tolerance, honesty, respect and fairness. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to make decisions and take on responsibilities as members of the school council and other leadership groups. These contribute significantly to pupils' self-esteem and wellbeing.

There is a suitable partnership between the school and the home. Parents receive information about many aspects of school life and they are comfortable to raise any issues or concerns with the school. However, current links with parents are not strong enough and parents are not actively involved in the school. Staff are continuing to seek effective strategies to engage parents regularly in the life of the school.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher is a committed and highly motivated leader who provides a clear strategic direction for the school. The headteacher and his senior team have a clear vision for the school based on an ethos of helping pupils of all abilities to maximise their potential, to respect others and to become confident members of the community. Leaders communicate this vision successfully to all members of staff, pupils and governors.

Teamwork is a strong feature of the school. All members of staff are clear about their roles and carry out their responsibilities diligently. Staff collaborate effectively through regular whole-staff and phase meetings. These meetings focus sharply on pupils' progress and addressing the school's improvement priorities. For example, there is an effective focus on raising the aspirations of vulnerable pupils and improving assessment for learning procedures. As a result, there is a consistent approach to teaching and learning throughout the school. There is an appropriately strong focus on meeting national priorities, including developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. However, standards in Welsh are adequate. The school has a successful track record of improvement. For example, staff identified a need to improve the standard of pupils' reading, reviewed the school's provision and introduced a range of strategies to engage and motivate pupils.

Through regular learning walks, analysis of performance data and meetings with members of staff, governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use their varied expertise well to support different aspects of the school's work and to challenge the school constructively to help it move forward. For example, one governor arranged for a member of the local Adult

Centre to read stories to pupils from a book they had written, and following this each pupil received a copy at the book launch. This initiative supports the school's determination to improve standards in reading.

Leaders carry out a wide range of self-evaluation activities that successfully identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school gathers a wide range of first-hand evidence to evaluate its work and involves staff and pupils effectively in the process. However, at present, the school does not include parents' views well enough. There is a close link between the self-evaluation report's outcomes and priorities in the school development plan. Improvement targets are realistic and include success criteria and specific time scales. As a result, the school can point to regular improvements that impact positively on pupils' standards and wellbeing. These include successful strategies to promote pupils' positive attitudes to learning across the school.

There are thorough performance management procedures for teachers. Targets for improvement meet staff's own professional development needs and the needs of the school as well as addressing national priorities. Leaders seek out relevant opportunities for all staff to develop professionally. These include regular visits to other schools and training opportunities to develop the teaching of investigative skills in science.

The school uses its resources well. The indoor environment provides a stimulating place for pupils to learn and pupils have access to good quality resources, including a well-stocked library, a music suite and studio. The outdoor learning environment is developing well and the school uses it effectively to support pupils' learning. Governors monitor spending carefully to ensure that leaders use finances well to raise standards. Leaders are proactive in seeking out external funding for curricular activities. The school makes good use of the pupil development grant to support the most vulnerable pupils, for example by providing small group teaching to enable these pupils to make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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