



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

A report on

**Tonnau Primary
School Road
Tonna
Neath
SA11 3EJ**

Date of inspection: October 2017

by

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

About Tonnau Primary

Tonnau Primary Community School is in the village of Tonna, near Neath in Neath Port Talbot Local Authority. Nearly all pupils live locally with a few pupils coming from the surrounding area. Around 13% of pupils are eligible free school meals. This is below the national average of 19%.

There are currently 169 pupils on roll, including 16 part-time nursery pupils. There are eight classes, including the nursery. The school admits pupils to the nursery from the age of three.

The school identifies that around 18% of pupils have additional learning needs. This is just below the national average for primary schools, which is 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A very few pupils are looked after by the local authority. Nearly all pupils speak English as a first language at home.

At the time of the inspection, the school was led by the deputy headteacher in the capacity of acting headteacher. There is an acting deputy headteacher, seconded from another school. This is because the substantive headteacher is seconded to a post with the local authority for two years.

The school's last inspection was in 2012.

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

This is a school at the heart of the local community. Nearly all pupils are eager to learn and they behave very well. Teaching is good and pupils enjoy their learning very much. Adults know and care for their pupils effectively. As a result, many pupils, especially those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, make good progress during their time at the school. However, pupils who are more able do not always make the progress they should. The focus of the school's monitoring and improvement planning is not sharp enough to ensure that all pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement, or develop their skills progressively and systematically.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Develop systematic and cohesive provision for pupils to develop their numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- R2 Ensure that higher ability pupils make the progress they should over time
- R3 Involve a wider range of stakeholders in the monitoring and self-evaluation process
- R4 Improve attendance
- R5 Address the minor safeguarding issues identified during the inspection

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Good

A majority of pupils join the school's nursery or reception classes with skills at or above those normally found. Nearly all pupils leave achieving standards at least at the expected level for their age.

Many pupils have very well developed skills in oracy and, by the end of their time at Tonnau, they are confident and articulate speakers. For example, in the reception class, nearly all pupils engage enthusiastically with 'show and tell' time, listening respectfully to their peers. Throughout the school, nearly all pupils listen carefully to their teachers and classmates, and many give well-reasoned thoughts and opinions, for example when contributing to class discussions and debates.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make a good start in learning to write their sounds and letters. Many pupils in the reception class spell simple words appropriately. They hold a pencil correctly and form their letters accurately. By Year 2, many pupils write short stories independently, with mainly accurate spelling and punctuation.

In key stage 2, many pupils use their good oracy skills to support their writing effectively. For example, in Year 3, pupils invent an imaginary character for their 'rags to riches' story. They work well collaboratively to support their peers, thinking of adjectives and imaginative vocabulary that bring the characters to life. By Year 6, more able pupils construct a well-reasoned discussion text, for example exploring whether Macbeth or Lady Macbeth is the stronger character. By the end of the key stage, most pupils punctuate their writing accurately and spell familiar words correctly. They present their work neatly, using a joined legible script. However, across the school, pupils do not always write to the same standards in other areas of learning.

Most pupils enjoy talking about the texts that they read. Pupils in the foundation phase use their oracy skills effectively to make predictions about what might happen next in a story. They make good use of their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to read simple texts. By Year 4, many pupils suggest sensible reasons why an author might select particular words and phrases. Pupils in Year 6 have a growing knowledge of familiar authors and enjoy discussing their favourite books. They infer and deduce information effectively from a text.

Most pupils develop age-appropriate skills in Welsh. They speak confidently, using good standards of pronunciation and intonation. By the end of Year 6, most pupils use a range of extended sentence structures in the present tense competently. Many pupils write simple texts in Welsh independently, spelling accurately. Most pupils read suitable texts in Welsh confidently.

Most pupils develop good mathematical skills and use numbers effectively to perform accurate, age-appropriate calculations. From the foundation phase, pupils use their oracy and thinking skills well to reason during mathematics lessons. For example, in Year 2, pupils use mathematical language correctly to estimate and then measure

the mass of rice in a range of containers. They enjoy measuring and mixing different quantities of fruit juices to create a new variety of 'George's Marvellous Medicine'. In Year 6, pupils engage in enthusiastic mathematical debate, for example to order the average December daytime temperatures recorded at each of Donald Trump's golf courses. However, pupils do not use their numeracy skills to the same standard in other areas of the curriculum.

Most pupils learn worthwhile skills in ICT. In the foundation phase, pupils log in to their personal accounts and navigate menus to access specific programmes to complete their work. In key stage 2, older pupils construct their own databases and make good use of an online platform to complete homework. They contribute to class forum discussions about aspects of their work that they find interesting or challenging. They are beginning to develop their coding skills appropriately to control the actions of characters in a virtual environment. Most pupils recognise the importance of e-safety and show an age-appropriate understanding of how to share and exchange information safely online.

Most pupils who are eligible for free school meals make good progress from their starting points and attain well in relation to other pupils. Most pupils with additional needs make particularly good progress from their starting points. However, not all pupils who are more able make as much progress as they should.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Pupils take great pride in their school. Nearly all are very friendly, greeting adults and their friends confidently and respectfully. They are eager to share their enthusiasm for learning and to show visitors examples of their successes. Nearly all pupils are very courteous and polite and behave very well. Most pupils are developing into moral and ethical citizens. For example, they consider their peers' views as well as their own, when deciding the rules for their games at lunchtimes.

Nearly all pupils work well in lessons and show good levels of engagement and collaborative skills. They settle down to work quickly. They work purposefully when they carry out tasks individually, in pairs or in groups. Many pupils are developing the skills to learn independently, for instance in the foundation phase, where pupils select an activity of their choice and concentrate on this for a suitable period.

Nearly all pupils feel safe, valued and well cared for. They have a clear understanding of whom they can ask for help with work or any other issues which may arise. They demonstrate kindness and respect for each other, both in the classroom and outside at playtimes and lunchtimes. They listen carefully to what their teachers and friends say in order to respond appropriately.

Most pupils enjoy physical activity and are aware of the need to keep fit through exercise and healthy eating. For example, they organise and run a fruit tuckshop each day, which helps them to understand that fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet.

Most pupils attend school regularly and understand why this is important. However, a few pupils who are eligible for free school meals do not attend as well as other pupils and this affects the school's overall rate of attendance adversely. Most pupils arrive on time for lessons in the mornings.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

The school has very recently introduced a new, invigorated curriculum. This uses a thematic approach in order to support pupils to make links in their learning across the different areas of the curriculum. Teachers now devise exciting activities to engage pupils and make their lessons more enjoyable.

There is early evidence that the new curriculum provides suitable opportunities for pupils to make choices, for example about what they learn and how they present their work. However, work in pupils' books shows that, until very recently, teachers relied heavily on using worksheets. This constrained the opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills freely and at length in work across the curriculum. In addition, pupils' work shows that full coverage of statutory requirements, for example in religious education or music, is recent. Planning for the new curriculum currently meets the statutory requirements, although leaders' monitoring of the coverage is at an early stage of development.

Leaders are beginning to co-ordinate teachers' planning to develop pupils' skills progressively across the school. There is a suitable whole school plan to ensure that pupils apply their literacy skills purposefully and progressively across the curriculum. In numeracy and ICT, however, plans for this are at a very early stage of development. Teachers provide occasional appropriate opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy and ICT skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in key stage 2, pupils investigate the properties of shapes in geometric wallpaper from the 1950s and 1960s. However, these opportunities are not co-ordinated well enough to ensure that all pupils develop their skills progressively.

Tonnau is proud of its Welsh heritage. All teachers make purposeful use of the Welsh language, for example to give instructions to the class. Teachers promote pupils' understanding of the history, geography and culture of Wales well. There is a comprehensive scheme, which enables pupils to develop their skills appropriately as learners of the Welsh language.

Teachers implement the foundation phase principles well. For example, they provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to make choices in their learning. They balance more formal learning activities appropriately with opportunities for pupils to follow their own interests and explore things that interest them. Despite the constraints of the building, teachers provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to make good use of the outdoors, for example to collect and sort autumn leaves and fruits.

Across the school, the quality of teaching is good. In every classroom, there are positive relationships, which nurture pupils and help them to learn. Teachers and teaching assistants manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and, as a result, pupils engage well and make good progress. Nearly all teachers provide valuable, efficient feedback to pupils about how they could improve their work.

Many adults use a wide range of questions to encourage pupils to think more deeply about their learning. Most adults know when to intervene to support, and when to stand back to allow pupils to work things out for themselves. This enables pupils to learn effectively through trial and error, or collaboratively through discussion.

Teachers often match the work well to pupils' starting points, for example in deploying teaching assistants to support pupils who find it difficult to write. However, in a few classes, although the activities match suitably to the needs of less able and average ability pupils, they do not challenge more able pupils to achieve as highly as they could.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring and supportive community, which nurtures pupils' social and personal skills effectively.

Teachers make good use of the wealth of data gathered from assessing the pupils in their class to identify those who are at risk of falling behind. They provide timely interventions to ensure that these pupils catch up with their peers. More recently, teachers have also begun to identify those more able pupils who are not making the progress that they could, and provide interventions and further challenge to help them to achieve their best. As a result, there is early evidence that teachers and leaders are beginning to provide more challenge and raise their expectations of what the most able can achieve.

There is strong and valuable provision for pupils who need additional support. The school identifies and tracks the needs of these pupils robustly. Knowledgeable support staff know the pupils well and they deliver a worthwhile range of interventions effectively. Staff, pupils and parents review the assessment information and progress of pupils with additional needs regularly. As a result, nearly all targeted pupils make good progress. Parents of pupils with additional needs appreciate the high quality support and guidance that their children receive. The positive partnerships with parents help to build on the progress that these pupils make.

The school values pupils' opinions and supports them to become active citizens, for example through a range of well-established pupil committees. For instance, the eco-committee ensures that the school community uses its resources efficiently, turning off lights and minimising paper waste.

There is a comprehensive scheme of work to teach pupils how to stay safe online and beyond the immediate school environment. For example, the police liaison officer visits school regularly to make pupils aware of how to keep themselves safe on the roads. In addition, the junior road safety officers support safe parking in the local community.

Pupils have worthwhile opportunities to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. For instance, a retired army chaplain supports the school to deliver effective collective worship. Pupils visit local churches throughout the year, for example to perform with the Tonna Male Voice Choir at Christmas. Pupils organise a range of events to support worthwhile charities and others less fortunate than themselves.

Staff communicate effectively with parents. They receive good information about their child's progress and activities through annual reports, parents' evenings and regular newsletters.

A few minor aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures require attention. The team brought these to the attention of the governing body during the inspection. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The recently appointed acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher provide concerted leadership. In the short time that they have been in post, they have fostered a vision for the school, which realises its ambition to create a nurturing and caring community. Leaders model these values effectively and all members of the staff team share this aspiration. All staff show a strong commitment to improving outcomes for pupils. Leaders focus appropriately on national priorities and place a clear emphasis on securing good standards.

Senior leaders use a helpful range of evidence to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This includes the analysis of performance data, observations of teaching and regular scrutiny of pupils' work. The school takes good account of the views of the regional school improvement partner to identify priorities for development. However, current arrangements provide too little opportunity for pupils, parents and curriculum leaders to inform the school's self-evaluation process. As a result, the school's assessment of its performance does not always consider broadly enough all aspects of its provision, or focus specifically on which areas require most improvement.

Leaders use the outcomes of self-evaluation to plan specific actions to secure improvement appropriately. Where this is most effective, they set clear objectives for staff to work towards and this has resulted in notable improvements in teaching. For example, in order to raise standards of pupils' writing across the curriculum, teachers have improved the quality of guidance and feedback provided to pupils about their work. However, the school's procedures for setting targets and monitoring progress against improvement priorities are not rigorous enough. Furthermore, leaders do not always assess or evaluate accurately the success or otherwise of improvement priorities, in order to inform future actions. As a result, improvements are not always secured with the necessary speed and the attainment of more able pupils, in particular, has not risen over time as quickly as it should.

The school has effective arrangements for the professional development of staff. Newly qualified staff benefit from effective mentoring by senior leaders. Regular staff meetings provide purposeful opportunities for collaboration between teachers and for relevant training which matches closely to identified priorities. This supports improvement in aspects of the school's provision well. For example, training and guidance provided to staff have increased their skills and confidence in developing pupils' use of spoken Welsh. This has led to greater use of everyday Welsh by pupils in classes and around the school.

Leaders ensure that learning resources and staffing are appropriate to deliver the curriculum effectively. For instance, they make appropriate use of the pupil development grant to support pupils eligible for free school meals. They use the school's budget strategically to meet long-term needs and improve identified aspects of provision appropriately. For example, the school has recently invested in further resources to develop pupils' ICT skills and this has accelerated pupils' progress in acquiring and applying their skills across the curriculum.

Teachers' skills match well to their areas of responsibility. They respond constructively to expectations for improvement. However, arrangements for the performance management of teachers do not always include suitable objectives for monitoring progress. This means that these arrangements do not always secure the timely implementation of agreed changes to provision.

The governing body supports the work of the school enthusiastically. Governors receive relevant information from the headteacher about pupils' progress and review policies diligently. They show a good understanding of the school's finances and monitor spending decisions carefully, ensuring that the school's devolved budget and grant funding support identified priorities. However, governors are not involved enough in the first-hand evaluation of standards and provision to enable them to gauge accurately the effectiveness of spending or to hold leaders fully to account for the school's performance.

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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