



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

A report on

**Trehopcyn Primary School
Plymouth Road
Hopkinstown
Pontypridd
RCT
CF37 2RH**

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by

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

About Trehopcyn Primary School

Trehopcyn Primary School is on the outskirts of Pontypridd, in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority.

There are 101 pupils on roll, including three part-time and 11 full-time nursery pupils. There are four mixed age classes.

The three-year rolling average of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is around 23%, which is above the Wales average of 18%. The school identifies around 22% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is just above the Wales average of 21%. All pupils are white British and no pupils speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher took up the post in 2007. Estyn last inspected the school in September 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

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress in their learning and achieve well. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most are confident to participate in a range of activities. Most pupils show a positive attitude towards their work, persevere with their tasks and concentrate for extended periods. There is an effective team spirit in the school and all staff collaborate well to share their knowledge and understanding for the benefit of the pupils.

The school has robust systems to track pupils' progress and wellbeing, which ensure that nearly all pupils make the expected progress and attain their targets. Arrangements for identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with additional learning needs are rigorous. The headteacher has established a clear vision that he shares effectively with the whole school community. All staff understand their specific roles and carry out their responsibilities purposefully. The governing body plays a key role in supporting the school.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure consistency in good teaching across the whole school
- R2 Ensure effective links between self-evaluation and improvement planning to identify and address areas for improvement robustly
- R3 Improve pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R4 Improve pupils' writing and presentation, especially in key stage 2

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress in their learning and achieve well.

In Years 1 and 2, most pupils develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. They take turns and listen to each other with interest. A few pupils feed back their answers confidently to the class and extend their answers successfully with longer sentences when prompted by the teacher to 'tell me more'. As pupils move through the school, they continue to develop their speaking and listening skills well. In key stage 2, most pupils speak confidently. They express their ideas clearly and enjoy talking about their work and the life of the school to visitors.

Nearly all pupils in foundation phase read familiar texts with fluency and understanding. A few are beginning to read with expression well. Most self-correct and look for cues in the pictures to help them if they are stuck. They enjoy talking about their reading books and show a good understanding of what they have read.

At the start of key stage 2, nearly all pupils are confident readers and enjoy reading. More able pupils are fluent and make reasoned choices of why they choose certain books. By Year 6, pupils' reading is at least good, with the more able readers able to use inference and deduction effectively to support their understanding. Many pupils have well-developed skills of skimming and scanning for key information. They give clear summaries of the book's plot and make sensible predictions as to how the story might end. They understand why being a good reader is important for their life ahead.

In the foundation phase, pupils begin to write for a range of purposes and they develop their knowledge of sentence structures well. Pupils write at length and expand their ideas creatively. They present their work neatly and take pride in their books. Across the school, many pupils make solid progress in developing their spelling skills. However, in key stage 2, pupils' progress in improving their writing skills in English lessons and across the curriculum is inconsistent and their writing is often untidy. There are few examples of pupils writing at length. A majority of older pupils make effective use of redrafting and editing techniques to improve their pieces of work. They add interesting vocabulary for effect, for example, 'the queen's army emerged triumphantly from the depths of the forest'. Most pupils apply their writing skills to a similar standard in other areas of the curriculum.

Across the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in mathematics. By the end of the phase many pupils work confidently with number and perform age-appropriate calculations using both practical and written methods. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils have secure number skills and work well when exploring the relationship between multiplication and division. Many use mathematical language well and show they can link their numeracy skills with real-life situations such as calculating discounts on sale items by using percentages. However, a minority of pupils do not apply their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum well enough and, as a result, pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of.

Most pupils develop appropriate skills in many areas of ICT. Foundation phase pupils use tablet devices well to take photographs and program mobile floor machines accurately when experimenting with right and left. Older pupils use the internet successfully to research their topic on dinosaurs. In key stage 2, pupils search for information from a variety of sources and present their findings appropriately. They use suitable applications to communicate and share information in text and picture form with one another and with their parents, through the use of a well-known social media package. However, pupils' use of databases and spreadsheets to collect, store and manipulate data is underdeveloped.

Throughout the school, most pupils make good progress in developing their skills in Welsh. In the foundation phase, pupils are experience a lot of Welsh and respond appropriately to a good range of instructions. They ask and answer simple questions confidently. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils sustain a short conversation in Welsh, extending their answers appropriately. They read simple texts with understanding and write short paragraphs about the weather that contain suitable detail.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Pupils enjoy coming to school and most confidently participate in a range of activities. The warmth and strength of the working relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils feel safe in school and know what to do if they are worried or anxious.

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are extremely polite and well mannered, always greeting people and holding doors open for others. Nearly all pupils show respect towards one another in class and value the contributions of others to discussions. They are polite to visitors and considerate to one another. Overall, most pupils have a good understanding of fairness, equality and tolerance.

Most pupils understand the need to eat and drink healthily and to take regular exercise. They make good use of the fruit and bottled water on offer in the tuck shop at break time. Many make healthy choices about what they eat at lunchtime. Many pupils improve their fitness by participating in extra-curricular activities, such as netball and sports clubs.

Many pupils show a positive attitude towards their work. They persevere with their tasks and concentrate for extended periods successfully. They work well in groups and pairs and many understand how to avoid distractions in order to complete the task in hand.

Pupils take pride in the roles they take in the life of the school. For example, members of different pupil councils represent their peers maturely and keep other pupils informed. The eco-council, for example, has championed topical issues such as 'Showing Racism the Red Card'.

There is a strong emphasis in the school on encouraging fairness, equality and tolerance of others and nearly all pupils respond positively to this. For example, as a result of special assemblies on the rights of the child, many pupils discuss important values such as respect.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

One of the school's strengths is a successful working relationship between pupils, teachers and additional practitioners. This leads to effective co-operation and develops pupils' enthusiasm towards their learning. Nearly all staff are effective language role models for both Welsh and English.

Teachers use a suitable range of teaching strategies, including opportunities for pupils to work as a whole class, in small groups and pairs. In many instances, teachers adapt work well to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities.

In many classes, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and build systematically on what pupils know. Nearly all teachers have high expectations of pupils and manage their behaviour effectively. As a result, nearly all pupils remain on task. However, where teaching is not as strong, activities do not challenge all pupils at an appropriate level. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are low and activities are dominated by the teacher. As a result, pupils lose concentration and do not make expected progress in their learning.

A team of skilful additional practitioners provide highly effective pastoral and learning support. They contribute enthusiastically to the experiences of pupils in lessons, through extra-curricular provision and in meeting the particular needs of groups of pupils.

Across the school, the quality of teachers' questioning and verbal feedback to pupils as they carry out tasks in formal and informal situations is good and sometimes very good. However, the quality of teachers' written comments and pupils' responses to them varies too much from class to class. For example, in many instances comments about writing are often limited to identifying basic punctuation and spelling errors and do not concentrate enough on how pupils can improve their writing.

Teachers consider the national literacy and numeracy framework appropriately when planning pupils' learning. Recent improvements in literacy planning are helping to ensure that the curriculum builds more systematically on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school. For example, pupils in upper key stage 2 write formal letters thanking the Welsh Government for getting rid of the toll charges on the Prince of Wales Bridge. However, teachers' planning for numeracy across the curriculum is inconsistent and they do not always make the most of opportunities to develop pupils' skills in purposeful, real-life contexts.

The school's curriculum, after school activities and a broad range of trips enrich pupils' learning experiences successfully. Residential visits for older key stage 2 pupils develop their social skills and self-confidence well. Regular Welsh lessons help pupils of all ages to understand the importance of learning Welsh. Teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to visit places of interest around Wales as part of their topic work. Trips to Caerphilly Castle, the Royal Mint in Llantrisant and the Sennedd in Cardiff promote pupils' understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales suitably.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has robust systems to track pupils' progress and wellbeing, which ensure that almost all pupils make expected progress, and attain their targets. Regular

progress reviews between teachers and senior leaders ensure that staff identify pupils at risk of under achieving at an early stage and put support in place quickly.

The school provides strong support to identified pupils to ensure that any emotional barriers to learning are minimised. For example, the opportunity to talk through any concerns with a caring adult at the start of the school day helps vulnerable pupils to participate well in lessons.

Arrangements for identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with additional learning needs are rigorous. The school provides timely in-year literacy and numeracy support for pupils when needed, which has a positive impact on pupils' progress. For example, a small group of pupils makes very good progress in reading and writing letter sounds when working with an additional practitioner each day.

Regular opportunities to visit classrooms are very well attended by parents. They appreciate the chance to see how their children learn in school and to find out how they can better support their child's learning at home. The school also gives parents valuable opportunities to help develop younger children's play and language skills by offering regular morning play sessions.

The school gives an appropriate high priority to online safety and promotes this well. Regular visits by the police liaison officer raise pupils' awareness of the dangers of using the internet, smoking, drugs and alcohol abuse effectively.

The school offers pupils worthwhile opportunities to take on extra responsibilities in representative groups. However, these groups do not always fully exploit opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of active citizenship. For example, they do not always ensure that pupils are fully involved in decision-making about the school community and its environment.

The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development well. Collective worship is very effective in developing pupils' ability to reflect on life's experiences. For example, pupils reflect on how everyone has the capacity to improve.

The school provides particularly successful opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills. Activities with a local potter and artist increased pupils' awareness of the arts. They produced colourful clay tiles in the style of the Celts and vibrant modern day canvasses of the local area and Cardiff Bay.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The school provides a very happy and caring environment where everyone is valued. The headteacher has established a clear vision that is shared effectively with the whole school community. There is a strong culture of teamwork and collaboration within the school, which helps to secure good standards of wellbeing and learning for pupils. All staff understand their specific roles and carry out their responsibilities purposefully.

The governing body plays a key part in supporting the work of the school. Governors make weekly visits to liaise with leaders, undertake monitoring, analyse data, listen to readers, and talk to pupils about their work. As a result, they have a sound understanding of the progress pupils make and how the school is performing in comparison with similar schools.

All staff play a full part in moving the school forward. They are involved in the self-evaluation process and understand their role in bringing about school improvement. The leadership team values their opinions and their ideas have resulted in better outcomes for pupils and families. For example, additional practitioners provide valuable information about the effectiveness of the intervention programmes.

Staff use a wide range of first-hand evidence to evaluate pupils' standards and the school's provision very effectively. Book scrutiny, learning walks and classroom observations by all leaders and teachers provide them with useful information about the school's strengths and areas for development. Senior managers make effective use of the robust monitoring systems to plan for improvement. Leaders track the outcomes of monitoring activities purposefully. All staff are involved suitably in the development process.

The school focuses appropriately on national priorities including the development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy, digital competence and Welsh. However, in a few instances, targets for improvement are not always specific or measurable. As a result, the school's evaluation of how successful initiatives are is not always clear.

The headteacher manages the budget prudently and governors, through their weekly visits, have a sound understanding of the school's financial position. This ensures that they fund improvement priorities adequately, while maintaining a prudent reserve. The school makes effective use of the pupil development grant to enrich the curriculum for vulnerable pupils and to improve outcomes for pupils and families. For example, spending on intervention strategies to improve vulnerable pupils' basic skills and wellbeing has resulted in nearly all pupils achieving their expected levels at the end of the stage. The school is well resourced to deliver most areas of the curriculum successfully.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which leaders provide valuable opportunities for teachers and assistants to develop professionally. All staff have effective opportunities to become leaders within the school and take on responsibilities that empower them to support and challenge colleagues. Performance management procedures for all staff support school improvement well.

The school works very effectively with other schools. This provides valuable opportunities for all members of staff not only to share experiences and good practice with others outside the school but also to lead training. This contributes well to improved provision for pupils. For example, an action research project inspired the introduction of the 'writing shed' in Year 1 and 2, which has made a positive difference to pupils' confidence in writing independently and creatively.

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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