A report on

**Howardian Primary School
Hammond Way
Cardiff
CF23 9NB**

**Date of inspection:  July 2019**


**by**


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

## About Howardian Primary School

Howardian Primary School is in the Penylan area of Cardiff.  There are 312 pupils at the school, including 88 who attend nursery on a part-time basis.  The school has nine, single-age classes.  The school opened in September 2015 and is intended to grow year-on-year to provide eventually for pupils of the full primary age range.  The school currently has no pupils above Year 3.

The average of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 9%.  This is below the national average of 18%.  The school identifies 7% of pupils as having additional learning needs.  This figure is below the national average of 21%.  Around 29% of pupils have English as an additional language.  No pupils come from Welsh speaking homes.

The school has not previously been inspected.  The headteacher took up post in April 2017.

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

Nearly all pupils make good progress in developing their skills as they move through the school. Around half achieve better than expected standards by the end of the foundation phase. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress towards their individual goals and targets. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress overall and in their communication skills.

The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership, particularly in relation to establishing the new school successfully. All stakeholders, including pupils, feel a strong sense of pride and ownership in their school. There is a strong team ethos. All members of staff feel valued and work together well. There are worthwhile opportunities for parents to visit the school and to become aware of their children's learning.

Nearly all pupils behave very well. Teachers provide interesting lessons and most pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to learning. Nearly all pupils have a very positive attitude to school and learning. They are keen to participate in the wide range of activities the school provides. Most develop their personal and social skills to a good standard and show respect and concern for others.

The school has effective systems to evaluate its own performance, to make improvements and to raise standards. Governors understand and support the school well.

| 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 that there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to lead their own learning in the foundation phase

R2  Distribute leadership effectively to cover and secure the quality of the full range of the school's work

R3  Improve the standards of presentation of pupils' written work

## What happens next

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

## Main findings

**Standards: Good**

As they move through the foundation phase, nearly all pupils make expected progress in their language and communication skills and mathematical development. Around half achieve better than expected standards by the end of Year 2.

Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress towards their individual goals and targets. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress overall and in their communication skills.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop good speaking skills. They listen attentively to adults and respond appropriately to questions. For example, in the nursery, pupils join in well with adults and each other when 'making ice cream' in the role-play area. In Year 2, most pupils describe well the challenge tasks they are doing. For example, they explain clearly how they have built a lighthouse of blocks and are attempting to use string to transfer a basket of food up to the lighthouse keeper. In key stage 2, most pupils use their speaking and listening skills well to support their learning. Most readily develop new vocabulary. For example, Year 3 pupils have a good understanding of predators in their science topic. They correctly use scientific terms such as 'apex predators' and most pupils understand and describe accurately, with examples and accurate terminology, the behaviour of different types of herbivorous and carnivorous animals.

In Year 1 classes, most pupils develop a useful understanding of letter blends and sounds and make good progress in reading simple instructions and questions in their tasks. As they move through foundation phase, most pupils develop their reading skills well and learn to tackle unfamiliar words effectively. In Year 2, most pupils have a good understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and their different uses. They know how to use a contents list to help find information. More able pupils read fluently, discuss characters and predict what might happen next in their books. Most Year 3 pupils use their reading skills well in lessons to read instructions from a variety of texts or from screens and wall displays. More able pupils read with fluency and good expression and speak with enthusiasm of the type of fiction books and writers they like.

Most pupils develop their early mark-making skills effectively. In the reception and Year 1 classes, many begin to write short sentences independently using the beginning and end sounds of words well. Most learn to print with letters that are correctly orientated and many begin to develop their spelling skills appropriately. By Year 2, many pupils write in a wide range of formats such as lists of facts about mini-beasts, instructions on how to care for pets, diary entries and stories. Most Year 3 pupils continue to write for a variety of purposes, such as describing how pizzas are made after visiting the kitchen of an Italian restaurant as part of their study of food. They present work for different purposes using different layouts effectively such as when setting out accounts of science experiments to show how a fair test has been made. Most pupils make good progress developing their joined handwriting by the end of Year 3. However, presentation across the range of different workbooks in Year 2 and in key stage 2 is, in too many instances, untidy.

In the nursery, most pupils make a very good start in speaking Welsh.  Older pupils in the foundation phase and key stage 2 have a very positive and enthusiastic attitude towards using Welsh.  They speak it often using it in a confident manner during and outside of Welsh lessons and with visitors when opportunities arise.  They show good progression in using correct language patterns and in acquiring vocabulary.  Many pupils are competent in holding a sustained conversation about themselves, their likes and dislikes.  These pupils show good standards.  By Year 3, nearly all pupils are developing their Welsh reading and writing skills well.

Throughout the school, most pupils develop their mathematical skills well.  In the foundation phase, most learn to count correctly and start to apply their skills to tasks.  For example, Year 1 pupils count confidently in sets of ten, identify missing numbers in a sequence and double single-digit numbers correctly.  In Year 2, most pupils understand place value.  They use numbers up to 100 well and rapidly recognise odd and even numbers.  They add and subtract two-digit numbers confidently.  Most apply their numbers skills well in other areas of work such as when using tally sheets and simple block graphs to show findings.  Most Year 3 pupils make good progress in developing use of number to solve problems.  They apply their skills well in different activities and understand that different units are used to weigh and measure.  For example, many pupils in Years 2 and 3 use thermometers well to measure results in degrees Celsius when making solar panel devices to record how effectively they retain heat.

Most pupils develop their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) well.  They begin to use art and picture collage programs to experiment with colour confidently.  As they move through the foundation phase, they readily access tablet computers to record activities with photographs and media files and improve their skills progressively.  Most pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 are confident when using their class QR code to access their individual files to look back at work they have recorded such as pictures, presentations or messages to classmates.  They develop a suitable awareness of how to save their work.  They access the national Hwb digital system effectively to use various applications to make charts and graphs.  More able pupils use early coding applications to begin to develop sequences of instructions.  Many pupils know how to search for information using the school's computers.  Nearly all pupils develop an appropriate knowledge of how to stay safe online and are aware of dangers to avoid when using ICT.

**Wellbeing and attitudes to learning:  Good**

Nearly all pupils have a very positive attitude and clear enthusiasm for learning.  This is a strength of the school.  In classes and in all areas where learning takes place, nearly all pupils are attentive to their teachers and eager to succeed.  In Year 2 and in key stage 2, most pupils work maturely and effectively in unsupervised pairs, or in groups directed to carry out numeracy and literacy tasks. For example, Year 2 pupils collaborate well in a group.  With one pupil acting as a leader, they use their large class screen to cooperate successfully, reading and answering questions about different animal poems.

Standards of pupils' behaviour are consistently high throughout the school.  When moving around the school and at other times, nearly all pupils share spaces and equipment well.  They are very keen to be outside to play together and join in with

their friends. Pupils play together happily and responsibly. Most pupils are sensitive and fair to each other and are welcoming, respectful and confident when speaking to visitors. Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school and they are confident that adults will listen to their concerns and deal with any problems that arise.

Nearly all pupils have a secure understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise. Year 3 pupils help prepare the fruit snacks available during break times. Most pupils talk sensibly about why it is better for them to have fruit and avoid sweets or drinks containing lots of sugar. Pupils in key stage 2 talk knowledgeably about what makes a balanced diet and what to put in a healthy lunch box. Pupils in the breakfast club talk knowledgably about the food available to them and about how they make healthy choices.

Most nursery and younger foundation phase pupils develop their physical skills through their enthusiastic use of trikes and scooters on the tracks laid out around the school. Across the age range pupils make good use of the variety of sports and climbing or play apparatus available at break times. Most pupils speak enthusiastically about the physical activities such as football, gymnastics, and dance in their physical education lessons or school extra-curricular or other sports clubs they attend.

Pupils throughout the school take on roles of responsibility readily. Many know about and speak enthusiastically of the leadership roles available. These include school council members who are elected by their peers. There is also the 'Criw Cymraeg' and digital leaders. Many pupils have a good awareness and understanding that these groups are in place and make decisions about what goes on in their school. For example, they know that their 'active journeys' team helps promote sustainable, active travel to school and that they encourage more pupils to walk or cycle to school.

**Teaching and learning experiences:  Good**

The school delivers a broad range of learning experiences based around interesting termly themes, such as 'Rio de Vida' or 'Predators', that interest nearly all pupils successfully. The school has created an engaging foundation phase learning environment utilising indoor and outside spaces to offer a range of learning opportunities. These include a forest school area, trike tracks, wooden play apparatus and a large-scale sand play area.

Teachers provide many opportunities for foundation phase pupils to work independently. These are effective to help them develop numeracy and literacy skills. There is a range of additional 'cool challenges' that enable pupils to undertake set tasks and make choices related to their current topic. However, overall the learning is too tightly directed by adults and there are too few opportunities for pupils to lead and develop their own learning.

Nearly all teaching in classes proceeds at a good pace and engages pupils successfully. Throughout the school, teachers have a secure command of topics and skills they teach. They incorporate the national literacy and numeracy frameworks effectively in their teaching. This supports nearly all to make good progress in developing and applying communication and number skills across various areas of learning. Nearly all teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to develop their ICT skills in their learning.

Nearly all staff make good use of questions and use classroom discussion well to promote pupils' thinking and remind them of previous learning.  Teachers deliver purposeful plenary sessions in many lessons.  For example, they focus on the difficulties shared by learners and address them directly and immediately to move learning forward.  As a result, staff encourage pupils successfully not to worry about making mistakes, but to learn from them.  Teachers' classroom management is good.  Throughout the school, teachers deploy learning support assistants successfully.  All staff work together well to provide high quality support for target groups and individuals.

Teachers know their pupils and their differing abilities well and plan lessons appropriately to meet their needs. Teachers nearly always explain the learning objectives carefully in lessons so that pupils are clear what they need to do to succeed.  They provide opportunities for pupils to self-assess and to evaluate the work of their classmates.  Many pupils are developing a useful understanding of this approach and use it beneficially.

Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills is successful.  Teachers continually reinforce use of the language and this has developed the confidence and skills of nearly all pupils.  Most teachers and teaching assistants are good language models and incorporate everyday Welsh in classrooms and around the school purposefully.  Daily 'Helpwr Heddiw' sessions are effective and complement the Welsh language acquisition of pupils throughout the school.

The school supplements learning experiences well with input from visitors.  For example, an expert visits school bringing reptiles for pupils to experience and handle.  Trips out to the theatre, castles or a nature reserve further enrich the curriculum.  There is a good range of after school clubs such as sports, choir, or language clubs for Spanish and French.

**Care, support and guidance:  Good**

Senior leaders monitor the progress of all groups of learners, including those with additional learning needs, effectively.  They work with teachers to use the school's tracking system well to set aspirational targets for all pupils.  Staff review these targets termly and where progress is below that expected, they identify pupils who might benefit from additional support.  The school plans and delivers beneficial interventions for pupils who need extra help, for example, through language and reading catch-up programmes.  As a result, most pupils who receive additional support make good progress.

Arrangements to monitor and improve pupils' wellbeing are successful.  For example, teachers use a pupil survey tool to help monitor pupils' social and emotional skills and identify pupils in need of additional support in this area of development.  The school provides strong interventions for these pupils, for example through regular, individualised one to one support sessions.  As a result, their behaviour, confidence and social skills improve as pupils learn to recognise and manage their emotions more effectively.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is effective. The school works appropriately with external agencies to develop staff knowledge and expertise.  As a

result, teachers and support staff provide good quality, small intervention groups for pupils at risk of underachieving.  This leads to a consistent approach that has a positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

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

The school establishes productive partnerships with parents.  This helps parents take an active role in their children's learning and development.  The school welcomes parents to see their children's work in events such as class assemblies and open evenings.  Parents value specific workshops, for example about the school's approach to sex and relationships education.

The school gives pupils worthwhile opportunities to develop healthy lifestyles through regular physical activities and through participating in events such as a 'Health and Wellbeing' week.  A whole school initiative to encourage pupils to reduce car use to school and enjoy health promoting journeys instead has engaged pupils well.  For example, many pupils proudly report how they now walk, cycle or scoot to school.  Regular opportunities to prepare healthy food in the cookery room strengthens pupils' understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.  For example, pupils in reception classes make magic bean stew during a topic about fairy tales.  The curriculum supports pupils understanding of healthy lifestyles further through topics such as 'Why Can't I Eat Chocolate for Breakfast?'

Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and play a part in the life of their class or school.   For example, pupils across the school take on roles such as Helpwr Heddiw.  Older pupils join groups such as the eco council, school council or become digital leaders.  The school promotes pupils' social and moral development successfully.  For example, it helps pupils to understand their rights and the rights of others by learning about the united Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

An annual event organised by the parent and teacher association enables families to celebrate the rich diversity of cultures and religions within the school very successfully through sharing food, performing dances and wearing traditional dress.  Regular acts of collective worship support pupils' moral and spiritual development well, for example by enabling them to reflect on how they live and work together in school.

The school provides valuable performance opportunities for pupils to develop their self-confidence, ability to express themselves and work as a team.  For example, pupils perform in front of a range of audiences successfully when they enter 'Howardian Come Dancing', take part in the school's Eisteddfod, or sing in the choir for a visiting government minister.

**Leadership and management:  Good**

The headteacher places pupils' achievement and wellbeing at the heart of her vision for the school.  She communicates this effectively to all.  As a result, the school is a caring and inclusive community with strong levels of respect, trust and co-operation between staff, pupils and parents.

The headteacher has led the process of establishing the new school successfully. All stakeholders, including pupils, feel a strong sense of pride and ownership in their school. There is a strong team ethos and all members of staff feel valued. They work together effectively to deliver key priorities for improvement. Teachers and other staff members are in charge of a range of areas of learning and commit to their tasks thoroughly. The headteacher is supported strongly by the deputy headteacher and together operate well as the school's senior leadership team. However, the school has not further distributed leadership responsibilities effectively enough to cover and secure the quality of the full range of its work.

There are good strategies to monitor provision for pupils. These have contributed successfully to help improve pupil outcomes. For example, the introduction of guided group reading to raise standards in literacy has made impact in improving standards across the school. The self-evaluation process informs the school's priorities for improvement clearly and leaders use a wide range of first-hand evidence to evaluate its effectiveness. These include careful analysis of assessment data as well as classroom observations and learning walks. All members of staff are involved in the self-evaluation process. Consequently, they develop a shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

The school focuses clearly on a manageable number of key development priorities. Leaders and managers evaluate the progress towards achieving these targets carefully and include any areas they identify as needing further improvement in future plans.

The headteacher and her deputy have high expectations and ensure other staff receive good challenge and support to improve their performance. The performance management process is sound and staff improvement targets link closely to school priorities and the individual's professional learning needs. All members of staff have access to a range of relevant training opportunities to develop their expertise. Teachers regularly disseminate their professional learning to the whole staff, helping maximise shared understanding and potential impact of staff development. For example, the training provided to improve the reasoning aspect of mathematics has had a beneficial impact on pupils' outcomes.

The governing body supports the school strongly and knows the school and local community very well. Governors receive detailed reports of the work of the school. They attend to participate in learning walks and meet with the school's challenge adviser to discuss standards. As a result, governors have a good understanding of how well the school is performing and know the main areas for improvement.

The school is well resourced with sufficient and well-qualified teachers to deliver all aspects of the curriculum. There are sufficient and well-trained teaching assistants who are deployed effectively to add considerably to the life of the school. They provide valuable support for individuals and groups of pupils. Leaders manage the budget effectively. They make good use of the pupil development funding by supporting pupils eligible for free school meals to ensure their wellbeing and develop 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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