



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

**A report on**

**Llanishen Fach Primary School**

**Heol Uchaf  
Rhiwbina  
CF14 6SS**

**Date of inspection: January 2023**

**by**

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

## About Llanishen Fach Primary School

Name of provider	Llanishen Fach Primary School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	511
Pupils of statutory school age	373
Number in nursery classes	79
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 23.0%)	8.0%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 16.1%)	10.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	4.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2009
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/04/2014
Start date of inspection	30/01/2023

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: [mylocalschool.gov.wales](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

## Overview

The executive headteacher and senior leaders at Llanishen Fach Primary School provide strong and effective leadership for the school. They encourage staff to experiment with their lessons and try new approaches. They provide them with the freedom and confidence to be imaginative with their teaching. Staff know their pupils well, involve them in planning their learning and make sure that pupils find their lessons and learning activities interesting and engaging. Alongside this, all staff pay close attention to the progress that pupils make in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. They use their assessments very well to plan future learning. The school's focus on innovation and impact leads to enjoyable and highly beneficial learning experiences for pupils. This ensures that most pupils make strong progress during their time at the school.

The school provides a diverse and interesting curriculum. Many of the activities that staff plan involve 'authentic' learning experiences that allow pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy, creative and other skills in real-life situations. Often, these activities link well with people and organisations in the community, such as the local church and businesses. Staff are very good at providing pupils with experiences that combine many areas of the curriculum and improve their sense of well-being at the same time.

Pupils are positive about school life and develop strong skills as learners. They think carefully about how well they have completed their work and develop the ability to make their own decisions about what they need to improve. The high quality of teaching, alongside pupils' self-motivation, means that they make good progress in many areas, such as writing, reading, numeracy and with their creative skills. They make less progress in the development of their Welsh language skills, however. Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. Pupils show real care for each other and have a strong awareness of issues facing people in their community and the wider world. The school is highly inclusive, and pupils learn to respect and celebrate differences between people and their lives.

## Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' Welsh language skills

## What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare two case studies for dissemination on Estyn's website. These are in relation to the school's work on:

- Making the most of the skills and knowledge of staff to deliver engaging learning experiences
- Creating a culture of low stakes accountability to drive innovation and improvement

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Most pupils begin school with literacy, numeracy and social skills at a stage of development at or above those expected for their age. Most pupils, including those in the Specialist Resource Base, make strong progress in a wide range of skills. They learn to apply these in their work across the curriculum very effectively.

Across the school, pupils develop very strong oracy skills. Nearly all pupils listen well and pay close attention to what adults and their peers have to say. They ask thoughtful questions based on what they have heard and make effective contributions that take other pupils' views into account. Older pupils understand the need to compromise when working in a group and discuss their roles within a team maturely. Pupils express themselves clearly from an early age and talk enthusiastically about their work. By Year 6, most pupils are articulate and confident speakers. They moderate their tone, expression and language depending on the audience and construct conversations well.

Younger pupils build good phonic knowledge and apply this effectively in their reading. Most nursery pupils read their own names and quickly begin to recognise the sounds that letters make. A few show an enjoyment of books by pretending to read a book while retelling a familiar story. Nearly all pupils develop effective reading skills and, by the end of Year 2, they read a range of suitable texts accurately, fluently and with good comprehension. Many older pupils become confident readers with a good grasp of a wide range of genres. They understand the meaning of increasingly challenging vocabulary, think maturely about what they have read and make thoughtful inferences and deductions. For example, pupils in Year 4 discuss the reasons why they think the teacher in a novel has given pupils particular nicknames.

Most pupils make excellent progress in their development as writers and become enthusiastic and competent authors. They write successfully for a range of authentic purposes in literacy lessons and across the curriculum. They take great care to present their written work with pride. Younger pupils develop their early writing skills quickly and effectively through play and mark making in a variety of mediums. As they progress through the school, most pupils develop and embed a clear approach to writing that uses a range of techniques, including planning, drafting and improving. This frequently results in high quality output, such as poems, stories and recounts. For example, pupils write powerful poems using different techniques to convey their hopes for the future following the pandemic.

Across the school, most pupils achieve strong skills and understanding in mathematics. In all year groups, pupils use their mathematical skills highly competently and confidently in lessons and when applying those skills across the curriculum. Most nursery pupils develop a firm grasp of numbers and their value. In Years 1 and 2, most pupils consolidate their skills effectively in the outdoor areas. For example, they develop their understanding of numbers up to a thousand when weighing a kilogram of soil accurately and estimating and measuring the capacity of different containers. Older pupils apply their mathematical knowledge expertly,

building upon previous learning. For example, they measure the temperature of solar ovens over time and plot the data accurately as line graphs.

Most younger pupils use digital equipment confidently to support their learning. For example, they photograph their peers building a structure and use these pictures as a record to create their own version. A few older pupils create useful video blogs to provide younger pupils with techniques on how to keep calm. Nearly all older pupils support and extend their learning by using digital resources effectively to gather and present information across different areas of learning, for example when classifying endangered species and their rate of decline using a branching database.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their creative skills and many become capable artists. They study the techniques of famous artists and use what they have learnt to influence their own work and develop their skills. For example, Year 4 pupils consider texture effectively when creating their own artwork based on close-up photographs of everyday objects. They explore and enjoy engaging with a wide range of forms of creative expression, for instance when designing, practising and performing a dance routine to music they have composed to show the negative effect of plastic on the ocean.

Most pupils' physical skills develop very well during lessons and over time. Younger pupils improve their skills through a range of purposeful and well-planned play activities, including balancing carefully on wooden planks and confidently riding simple bikes and trikes. As a result of the specific skills, knowledge and expertise of the practitioner leading the lessons, older pupils make excellent progress in building their control, strength and balance during well-planned gym lessons.

Across the school, most pupils' thinking skills develop strongly. From an early age, they consider questions carefully and engage maturely with adults and their peers to consider and solve problems. For example, pupils use their thinking skills well to work together on a science experiment, using a lemon as a battery. Most pupils solve problems effectively. For example, Year 1 pupils co-operate successfully to build a 'marble run', considering gradient and other variables when designing their structure. Older pupils work well together to calculate the volume of a large box using non-standard units and identify how many cylinders it could accommodate.

As a result of a lack of opportunity, most pupils make only limited progress in their Welsh oracy skills throughout the school. Many of the youngest pupils repeat sentences and phrases to ask for things such as milk and water. A few pupils use suitable phrases in everyday situations. Most pupils respond with basic answers during discussions with adults and each other.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

As they progress through the school, nearly all pupils develop highly positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils are confident and resilient, for example in the way they interact with adults and persevere with their work. Because of the way practitioners plan and deliver imaginative, innovative and authentic learning experiences, pupils enjoy and engage well with their learning. Rates of pupil attendance are high because of the school's effective procedures, but also because

pupils enjoy coming to school and do not want to miss out on their learning experiences.

In nearly all cases, pupils are ambitious learners who are willing to challenge themselves to achieve at the best level they can. They take great pride in their work, and this is reflected in the high standards of presentation in pupils' work across the school. Most pupils apply their creative skills effectively to solve problems and find solutions, often in real life, authentic contexts. For instance, pupils in Year 2 develop their sense of community and apply their literacy, numeracy and creative skills well when preparing 'planting packs' to be given to housebound members of the church congregation.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for each other, their school and their community. They show a caring attitude towards others, when in classrooms and around the school. For example, Year 6 Playground Buddies support younger pupils with thought and sensitivity during breaktimes by playing games with them, singing and helping them when needed. As a result of the numerous opportunities the school provides for pupils to discuss their feelings and emotions, most pupils develop the ability to reflect carefully on how they are feeling and self-regulate their emotions. For instance, older pupils discuss the value of friendship and complete a survey to identify the strength of their relationships with their peers.

Nearly all pupils know how to make healthy choices relating to diet, physical activity and emotional well-being. For example, most pupils describe, with appropriate understanding, the importance of maintaining a balanced diet and how exercise helps them to develop physically. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They know the importance of protecting their passwords and personal information, and why they should keep that information secure. Most pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe out of school. In school, they know whom they can speak to for help or if they are worried.

Most pupils confidently describe their understanding of the purposes of rules, rewards and sanctions, how laws are formed and how they apply to them as well as the wider community. Most pupils know the importance of dealing with bullying, anti-social behaviour and the dangers associated with working, playing and socialising online. Standards of behaviour throughout the school are exemplary.

Pupil voice is a strong feature of the school. Pupils, including those in the Specialist Resources Base and others with additional learning needs, value the opportunity to take on leadership roles and responsibilities, for example as members of the School Council, Criw Cymraeg, Digital Leaders, Community Ambassadors and School Nutrition Action Group. Nearly all pupils feel that staff listen to their views and will consider them when planning learning experiences. This helps to ensure that pupils are highly engaged and enjoy their learning. Pupils prepare detailed reviews of their work for parents and governors when they complete a topic, which they share with them at a 'celebration of learning'. Pupils attend a broad range of after-school and lunchtime clubs enthusiastically and frequently.

Most pupils develop a good understanding of ethical issues through participation in pupil voice groups, after-school clubs and through the school's diverse curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 3 explored the impact of plastic on the environment when

writing to a Member of the Senedd and performed a song they composed about plastic waste in the Senedd building before a debate about an environmental protection bill.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school has developed and delivers an innovative and engaging curriculum that catches the imagination and enthusiasm of learners highly effectively in all classes. At the same time, practitioners maintain their focus on ensuring that all pupils make the best possible progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding. They ensure that the success of innovation and experimentation in teaching is carefully measured in terms of the outcomes for pupils. The school's curriculum is under constant review and is now in its fifth version, as practitioners adapt it to fit the needs of the changing cohorts of pupils and changes in the school's community and the wider world. All practitioners have a considerable input into curriculum development.

Across the school, staff deliver stimulating and authentic learning experiences. For example, pupils greatly enjoy their fortnightly 'Rucksack Days' when staff with specific expertise in art, physical education, and outdoor learning lead a carousel of sessions throughout the day. These very successfully develop a wide range of skills and knowledge, closely linked to pupils' previous learning in the classroom. A significant strength of the curriculum is the authentic nature of many of the learning experiences. For instance, practitioners use links with a local coffee shop to successfully promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle, to explore opportunities in the world of work and to consider issues around sustainability. Practitioners develop the school's curriculum carefully to reflect the nature of the school's context and the diverse historical, cultural and linguistic nature of Wales and the wider world. For example, they offer a wealth of learning experiences, such as visiting The Senedd, exploring the life of Wales's first black headteacher, Betty Campbell, and learning about religious festivals such as Hannukah and Diwali. Residential visits, including regular trips to the Brecon Beacons, provide pupils with further opportunities to develop their knowledge of Wales and apply the wide range of skills they develop at school.

Through meticulous planning and preparation and with a clear focus on developing new skills before applying them, the school ensures that nearly all pupils make good progress in a wide range of skills. This includes developing strong oracy, reading, writing, numeracy and creative skills. Practitioners plan frequent high-quality opportunities for pupils to apply, practise and further develop these skills in a range of contexts. All staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. Teaching challenges most pupils to achieve at the level that is appropriate for them, during tasks that are led by adults and through more independent activities. For example, pupils in Year 2 independently apply and develop a range of literacy and numeracy skills in their outdoor area with only occasional supportive guidance from an adult. However, as a result of a lack of opportunity to practise and apply their skills outside of specific lessons, the development of pupils' Welsh language skills has been less effective.

Practitioners' verbal feedback during lessons and activities helps pupils to know how well they are doing and how to improve their work. For example, during physical education lessons, teachers make timely interventions to ask pupils to model



effective practice. This provides all pupils in the lesson with a beneficial opportunity to reflect and improve their own techniques. Practitioners provide concise written feedback that allows pupils to reflect successfully on the quality of their work, make improvements and further develop their skills. Practitioners use assessments of pupils' progress effectively to identify next steps for learning and to plan and adapt their provision. They work collaboratively to develop a shared understanding of progression and to ensure that their assessments are valid, accurate and reliable.

Practitioners have excellent working relationships with pupils. They know their pupils and families very well, and know what pupils need to thrive and flourish at school. They adapt their teaching and planned learning activities very effectively to reflect the progress, interests and needs of pupils. The culture of self-reflection and low stakes accountability that exists throughout the school is reflected in the flexibility with which practitioners approach teaching. They frequently and openly discuss what has worked well in individual lessons and over time and amend their approach to make improvements where needed.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school places a high priority on the well-being of pupils, and this has been a particular focus during and since the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff know their pupils very well and meet their well-being needs highly effectively.

The school has woven its approach to well-being into its curriculum successfully. Through regular cross-curricular topics such as 'Healthy body, healthy mind', the school provides good quality opportunities for pupils to explore a wide range of ethical, moral and cultural issues in authentic contexts. Additional programmes to develop and support pupils' well-being, for example social and emotional literacy interventions, are well embedded and have considerable impact on pupils' social skills. The school supports all pupils by working with external agencies and professionals where appropriate. Overall, this strong focus on pupil well-being is a strength of the school.

Llanishen Fach Primary School has successfully built a highly inclusive community based on its core values of care, curiosity, co-operation and confidence. These values are well understood by pupils and consistently modelled by staff. Regular assemblies develop pupils' spiritual awareness and provide profound experiences for the school to affirm its sense of togetherness, for instance, when pupils in the older classes sing 'Proud' using sign language to ensure that every pupil can 'hear' or 'sing-along'. Older and younger pupils support each other through an effective 'buddy' system and the school supports vulnerable members of the community well, for example through an enhanced 'Breakfast Café'. Collectively these, and other initiatives, have established strong relationships and trust between all members of the school and with the wider community.

Throughout the school, there is a calm, consistent and proportionate approach to behaviour management. Staff use effective de-escalation and restorative techniques to resolve any issues at a very early stage. The school employs a range of rewards for positive behaviour, although pupils are generally strongly self-motivated. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is exemplary.

The school has extensive outdoor areas that staff use imaginatively to support pupil well-being and to develop pupils' understanding of their environment and the importance of healthy lifestyles. For example, the school keeps bees and chickens and uses their honey and eggs in cookery activities. The school provides pupils with opportunities to perform as individuals and in groups, during the imaginative 'Rock School' activity each Friday. Additionally, the school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities after school, including ballet and a wide range of sports.

Across the school, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and the school environment, and to apply for positions of responsibility on the extensive array of pupil voice groups. These include the School Council, Super Ambassadors, and the Active Travel club, which promotes the school community to rely less upon motorised transportation and more upon walking, scooting or cycling. These pupil groups are well established and meaningful. The school responds positively to pupils' ideas and requests. As a consequence, these groups strengthen the partnership between pupils and the school and support the development of their leadership and teamworking skills.

The school supports pupils with severe and complex learning and physical needs highly effectively through its specialist resource base, Dosbarth Enfys. The pupils in Dosbarth Enfys are fully integrated into the rest of the school. In addition to attending assemblies, fully utilising the school grounds and joining lessons in mainstream classes at appropriate times, the Dosbarth Enfys pupils all attend residential visits. This high level of inclusion illustrates the closeness and strength of the school community.

The provision for the few pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is well developed and very effective. Teachers and leaders use regular assessment information purposefully to identify pupils whose progress is not in line with their abilities or stage of development. In response, the school plans specific strategies, such as literacy, numeracy and emotional interventions, to address pupils' needs effectively. Staff track these interventions closely and review them regularly. As a result, most pupils in need of additional support make strong progress from their starting points.

The school creates and maintains a safe environment for all pupils, which includes effective site security and a strong, embedded culture of safeguarding. There is an established system to report safeguarding concerns. The school makes timely referrals to outside agencies when appropriate. The school has thorough safe recruitment procedures and all staff complete regular safeguarding update training.

The school's engaging authentic learning experiences and nurturing culture are supported by robust arrangements to monitor attendance. As a result, pupil attendance rates are extremely high.

## **Leadership and management**

The executive headteacher, executive deputy headteacher and head of school provide highly effective leadership for the school. Along with other senior leaders, they have worked collaboratively with staff to develop a clear vision for the school based on a culture of self-reflection and improvement. They have created a strong

sense of low-risk accountability that supports this ethos. As a result, staff feel empowered to innovate and take managed risks to improve learning experiences and outcomes for pupils. This often results in significant and swift improvements in the quality of the school's provision. For example, experimentation, reflection, and a focus on the individual strengths of staff members resulted in the development of 'Rucksack Days'. This innovative approach to the delivery of aspects of the curriculum has supported pupils' well-being effectively as we move out of the pandemic and, at the same time, helped to develop a wide range of pupils' literacy, numeracy, creative and physical skills.

Senior leaders model the school vision well. They are open and honest about their practice and unafraid to admit when mistakes have been made. There is a clear senior leadership structure with an effective balance of defined roles and shared team work. All members of the senior leadership team have a good understanding of the work of others and support and step in as needed. Similarly, staff across the school have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They share a joint ambition to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils. Senior leaders effectively identify and address issues of underperformance where they arise. They provide good support to help members of staff make improvements, for example through applying a coaching model to support staff to develop weaker aspects of their practice.

The school's monitoring, self-evaluation and improvement processes are highly effective. Staff know the strengths and areas for improvement in the school well. The school has strong track record of improvement driven by an ethos of low stakes accountability. For example, the school identified that standards of reading were below those expected following the pandemic. As a result, leaders created a new role of 'Reading Manager' to monitor and develop the provision for improving pupils' reading skills and this had a significant impact on raising standards of reading across the school. The school engages well with parents. Leaders frequently ask parents for their view of the school's provision and act upon their suggestions. Practitioners ensure good working relationships with parents. Most parents feel that teachers and leaders respond effectively when they have concerns or questions about their child's school experience. Senior leaders maintain a focus on risk taking and innovation without losing an emphasis on ensuring effective pupil progress. The school's ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress ensures that staff accurately identify those initiatives that are successful and need to be maintained and those that are not.

Senior leaders focus well on developing the skills of all staff, including their own. For instance, they employed an organisational psychologist to help them evaluate their strengths and areas for improvement as leaders. This helped them to distribute tasks in a way that makes the most of their individual strengths as leaders. Professional learning is effective in developing the skills and knowledge of staff and the overall quality of provision to meet the specific needs of the schools and its pupils. This is because most professional learning takes the form of an enquiry-based approach where all staff are involved in considering key questions about the school's provision. Senior leaders then use the expertise of the staff and other members of the school community, such as parents, to develop the skills of staff, drawing on external sources and the outcomes of research where needed. The school is part of the Cardiff Metropolitan University education partnership and is a lead school for initial

teacher training. This means that the school's staff are responsible for mentoring a significant number of students each year. They work effectively to guide students to develop their skills, knowledge and expertise in teaching and learning.

Leaders pay good attention to addressing national priorities, such as their highly effective implementation of the Curriculum for Wales. They place a strong emphasis on ensuring good progress in a wide range of skills and this results in strong outcomes for nearly all pupils, including with their well-being. Nearly all pupils achieve well relative to their age and individual starting points, and many pupils exceed expectations. Leaders ensure a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and the actions they need to take in the event of having a concern around the safety of a child. This positive safeguarding culture is supported by a curriculum that ensures high levels of well-being and places an emphasis on pupils feeling safe and developing such attributes as care and compassion.

Leaders consider carefully the best way to allocate human and financial resources, including grant funding, such as the pupil development grant. They work well with the governing body to decide on spending priorities and monitor their impact through the implementation of the school improvement plan. Governors have a good knowledge of the work of the school and its impact in ensuring positive outcomes for pupils. They engage in the first-hand gathering of evidence through, for example, taking part in special events where pupils share their learning with parents. They have recently resumed the more formal gathering of first-hand evidence following the end of COVID-19 restrictions. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are kept well informed by staff about developments in the school. They work well with staff to ensure effective arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking amongst pupils.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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