



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

A report on

Beaufort Hill Primary School

**Beaufort Hill
Beaufort
Ebbw Vale
NP23 5QD**

Date of inspection: October 2023

by

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

About Beaufort Hill Primary School

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Name of provider | Beaufort Hill Primary School |
| Local authority | Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council |
| Language of the provider | English |
| Type of school | Primary |
| Religious character | * |
| Number of pupils on roll | 239 |
| Pupils of statutory school age | 173 |
| Number in nursery classes | 37 |
| 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%) | 17.4% |
| 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%) | 12.1% |
| Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home | 0.0% |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language | * |
| Date of headteacher appointment | 01/01/2004 |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable) | 07/07/2015 |
| Start date of inspection | 23/10/2023 |

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

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

Overview

Beaufort Primary School is a happy and nurturing school that supports pupils and their families well. Nearly all pupils enjoy and value being part of the school and they speak appreciatively of the opportunities they have to learn and play. Nearly all pupils engage well with their learning and their behaviour is exemplary. Most pupils make good progress across the curriculum.

The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for education, and they work well with a range of partners to ensure that the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the pupils and the community. Teaching staff monitor the progress of pupils carefully and provide a wide range of exciting and varied learning experiences. Although teachers generally use assessment effectively to plan learning, they do not always identify or share clear next steps for learning for all pupils in their feedback.

Teachers work effectively in partnership with local schools to ensure that the school's curriculum is relevant for its pupils and allows for clear progression of skills. They ensure that learning experiences are exciting and varied. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum at a suitably high level of challenge.

Generally, vulnerable pupils and pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress through the wide range of learning and support interventions on offer. Support staff work in close partnership with teachers to ensure that both academic and emotional and social needs are met.

The school's approach to developing health and well-being is a strength. Staff know pupils and their families well. They ensure, through effective communication, that any issues arising are addressed quickly and that relationships are mutually beneficial.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve teachers' marking and feedback across the school to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of their next steps in learning
- R2 Strengthen opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils, including those who are affected by socio-economic disadvantage and those with ALN, make strong progress from their individual starting points.

Most pupils make effective progress in developing their oracy skills. The youngest pupils make rapid progress. They communicate effectively when playing and learning, responding readily to questions and instructions. As they move through the school, pupils develop as confident, articulate speakers who listen carefully to adults and each other. Older pupils respond with accuracy when questioned about their knowledge and understanding. For example, they refer to the features of a non-chronological report when skimming for information.

Younger pupils, particularly those in nursery and reception, develop their reading skills well. They explore simple books with enthusiasm and use a growing range of strategies to understand simple stories. Most reception pupils recognise initial sounds, and a minority are beginning to blend sounds with increasing accuracy when reading familiar words. By Year 2, pupils read with increasing accuracy, and they decode unfamiliar words successfully. Many older pupils are confident readers who enjoy reading a range of books. They show a good understanding of complex texts and use their knowledge effectively when researching.

Most pupils develop their writing skills well. Younger pupils explore mark making enthusiastically with a range of materials and the majority develop accurate letter formation quickly. As they move through the school, they begin to use basic punctuation correctly. Pupils in Year 1 create simple sentences retelling stories they hear, making good attempts to spell familiar words. In Year 2, pupils combine simple sentences effectively when writing letters asking for advice about a panda that they found in the school garden. Older pupils develop their knowledge of text types with growing confidence. They write for a wide range of purposes with an awareness of the audience and they take pride in the presentation of their work. Many pupils use a dictionary and thesaurus efficiently to enhance their writing, making effective vocabulary choices. For example, they choose words that elicit empathy when writing a diary entry for a child caught up in the holocaust.

Across the school, many pupils make good progress with their mathematical and numeracy skills. Younger pupils use a suitable range of mathematical terms well. For example, pupils in Year 2 refer to vertices when describing and investigating 2D shapes. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate their understanding of angles when performing turns in their gymnastics lessons. Many older pupils have a solid grasp of number facts. They recall these quickly and use them skilfully when investigating the relationship between values. For example, Year 6 pupils use their understanding of multiplication and division with efficiency when working with equivalent fractions. However, pupils do not always apply their mathematical knowledge and skills at an appropriate level across the curriculum.

Overall, most pupils use their digital skills suitably to support their learning. The youngest pupils begin to develop their early digital skills appropriately, for example

when typing simple instructions into programmable toys. Older pupils combine text and images carefully to create eye-catching presentations. They use editing tools with increasing proficiency, adding backgrounds to their videos and constructing simple stop-motion animations. However, older pupils do not develop and apply a wide enough range of digital skills across other areas of learning.

Many pupils are enthusiastic Welsh learners who make suitable progress when using and responding to the Welsh language. Pupils of all ages follow a range of Welsh instructions correctly and many use the chosen phrase of the week accurately in their conversations with others. As pupils move through the school, they extend their vocabulary well, discussing hobbies and past events with increasing fluency. Many older pupils use the present and past tense appropriately in their talk.

Pupils across the school develop their creative skills well through a wide range of opportunities. For example, Year 2 and Year 4 pupils develop a sense of rhythm and pitch by playing musical instruments such as the violin and ukulele. Younger pupils demonstrate their creativity well using movement in response to a range of stimuli. Older pupils develop their understanding of line, colour, and expression well when recreating the work of Welsh artists.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils appreciate and value their school. They approach each day with enthusiasm and a positive attitude. Pupils form positive working relationships with adults in the school and this ensures a settled and productive learning environment. Most pupils feel that staff look after and care for them well. They feel safe and secure and, as a result, develop well as learners and members of the school community.

Most pupils are exceptionally well mannered. They behave well in class, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes and they understand and respond positively to the school's positive behaviour approaches. Pupils move around the school calmly, showing care and respect for their peers, staff and visitors to the school. Pupils use school resources carefully and help to ensure that classrooms are well organised.

Nearly all pupils collaborate well with each other and value each other's contributions and ideas. Younger pupils show kindness towards each other and are happy to wait their turn when using equipment. Older pupils engage with each other well during class discussions, sharing and developing ideas together. For example, they make suggestions and respond to others' thoughts when deciding what vocabulary to use in order to have the greatest impact when campaigning against a proposal to ban chocolate.

Most pupils play an active role in the life and work of the school. They take full advantage of their opportunities to influence school life through a wide range of pupil leadership groups. Members of each group plan and review their impact and achievements carefully. This allows them to ensure that their work is effective and in the best interests of their peers. In addition, pupil groups make a positive contribution to their local community. For example, they promote the Welsh language by making Welsh signs for local shops.

Most pupils develop a clear understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. They make informed choices about foods that will benefit their long-term health. Most pupils understand the benefits of exercise. They take part in a range of play activities and after-school clubs that develop their physical skills well. As a result, pupils show a good understanding of their own emotional well-being, and they establish supportive relationships with their friends.

Most pupils have an acute awareness of their rights and responsibilities as global citizens. Pupils show pride in and talk passionately about the inclusive nature of the school. Many pupils recognise the important role and impact of influential Welsh people such as Betty Campbell, Wales' first black headteacher.

Teaching and learning experiences

Teachers create calm and purposeful learning environments. They foster warm relationships with pupils, and this promotes effective learning and positive behaviour successfully. Teaching assistants provide a high level of support for pupils' health and well-being. They place a high priority on ensuring that all pupils, particularly those with ALN, feel safe and able to make good progress.

Nearly all teachers provide a range of engaging activities that enable pupils to develop and apply new skills appropriately. Staff promote high expectations consistently and this is reflected through the pride pupils display in the quality and presentation of their work.

Staff plan a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills. Teachers include interesting opportunities for older pupils to apply their skills and knowledge independently. However, teachers do always plan for pupils to apply their numeracy and digital skills in other curriculum areas at a high enough level.

Most lessons are well paced and provide an appropriate balance between teacher input and pupil activity. Staff ask well-framed questions that enable pupils to clarify and extend their thinking. This ensures that many pupils are challenged and supported according to individual need.

Staff use a wide range of strategies effectively to assess pupil progress. Teachers meet with individual pupils regularly to discuss learning and to agree areas for improvement. As a result, many pupils are beginning to take a more active role in setting their own improvement targets. Written feedback helps pupils understand what they have done well and to identify and correct basic errors such as spelling and punctuation. However, the use of written feedback to enable pupils to understand the next steps in their learning is in the early stages of development.

The school's curriculum engages pupils effectively, providing exciting learning experiences that ignite curiosity in the world around them. Teachers enrich the curriculum thoughtfully, providing an interesting range of trips and visitors to school. For example, Year 5 pupils discover and celebrate the history and culture of Wales through visits to the local ironworks.

Staff collaborate closely with colleagues across the cluster to develop a shared curriculum. This provides useful support for teachers in planning for progression in

learning. As a result, in many areas of the curriculum, learning experiences build successfully upon pupils' skills as they progress through the school.

Teachers plan for regular and meaningful opportunities to improve pupils' oracy skills carefully. As a result, pupils become confident and enthusiastic when talking to others and sharing their ideas. Staff plan well for the development of pupils' reading skills, from an early age. Staff are beginning to develop literacy-rich classrooms that encourage pupils to read a wider range of books for pleasure.

Staff plan meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their writing for a range of purposes. Teachers ensure that pupils build a sound understanding of different genre, before using them in a variety of contexts. For example, teachers plan carefully to develop pupils' persuasive writing skills over time, resulting in pupils producing skilfully written arguments. Overall, the curriculum ensures that pupils' mathematical skills are developed effectively across the school. Staff ensure that maths lessons offer suitable challenge and allow pupils to practise and revisit skills regularly.

Staff plan well for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills. They ensure that pupils regularly hear and respond to spoken Welsh in classrooms and around the school. Staff are also beginning to teach French across the school.

Teachers are developing their understanding of progression in digital skills and overall, they plan useful opportunities for pupils to practise these skills in a range of contexts. However, in a few instances, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to develop and apply digital skills at a high enough level.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop physical and creative skills through extra-curricular clubs. This provision is a strength with all clubs being well attended by pupils, including those who are vulnerable. Year 6 pupils participate in a residential trip that further develops their resilience and independence.

Care, support and guidance

The school's leaders, including the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo), teachers and support staff, work effectively to ensure that pupils with ALN are successfully integrated into the classroom and participate fully in school life. Teaching assistants support pupils' learning through a range of carefully chosen interventions. The school has created useful learning spaces, such as the 'Cwtch Corner,' that provide a safe haven for pupils to help them relax and improve their readiness to learn.

The ALNCo collaborates effectively with staff to identify pupils who need additional support. They provide this through targeted interventions for literacy, numeracy and emotional well-being. The impact of these interventions is generally monitored effectively. However, in a few instances, improvement targets are not always used effectively enough to ensure that pupils make sustained progress over time.

The ALNCo communicates appropriately with parents of pupils with ALN. She meets with families whose children receive targeted support to discuss or review progress.

When more significant concerns arise, the ALNCo engages with relevant external agencies to identify further support. The school benefits from strong partnerships with advisers who support teachers and parents in discussing potential concerns and offering additional support.

The school ensures that pupils have a good understanding of their rights. Staff work with pupils to create useful class charters that reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This has a notable impact on the high level of empathy and understanding that pupils show toward each other.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take on important roles and responsibilities. Pupil leadership groups are well developed and influence the school's work effectively. The school's Digital Leaders, for example, recently ran a successful campaign to install a Digital Den in the school where pupils can continue to develop digital skills throughout the day. The Heddlu Bach improved the local area by planting apple trees in the local Welfare Hall Community Garden.

The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to influence what and how they learn. Pupils share the things that interest them when new class topics are discussed. Teachers then ensure that these ideas are incorporated into their planning where appropriate. As a result, pupils feel that their ideas are valued and this helps ensure strong levels of engagement with learning.

Overall, the school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to understand the diverse nature of Wales and the cultures that make up its history. For example, they research important Welsh figures, such as Eddie Paris, who was the first Black man to play football for Wales. Older pupils also broaden their understanding of Britain's cultural diversity. For instance, Year 6 pupils research and discuss governmental decision making and its impact on members of society such as those involved in the Windrush generation.

The school offers good opportunities for pupils to develop as active citizens who make a difference in their local community. For example, through its intergenerational work, pupils regularly visit patients at a local hospital. During these visits, pupils and patients share their experiences, play board games, or create artwork together.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. The school has comprehensive processes for monitoring and supporting pupils' attendance and, as a result, attendance levels for most pupils are improving over time. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements well and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides strong, compassionate leadership with a clear vision for school improvement. He has worked effectively with all stakeholders to establish a vision for the school focused on the community it serves.

School leaders promote and sustain a strong team ethos. They place a high value on staff well-being and work with pupils to ensure that staff feel appreciated and supported. For example, the Wellbeing Warriors pupil group nominates and rewards

staff weekly with a mug of treats. All staff work together to encourage pupils to be responsible and respectful and, as a result, pupils feel safe and behave well.

Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development well. They plan and implement school development successfully. Leaders provide high levels of support for all staff to support them with their roles and responsibilities. The robust school performance management processes in place, together with a detailed programme of professional learning, ensure that the whole school team receive appropriate development. School staff take ownership of their professional development and are given time to implement and embed improvements. This is having a positive impact on collaboration and the quality of teaching and learning.

School leaders draw upon a wide range of assessment information to monitor the progress pupils are making. Senior leaders hold termly meetings with class teachers to discuss individual pupil progress and to ensure that provision is suitable. Leaders use these meetings well to identify areas where they can provide further support and any additional resources. They discuss the progress of vulnerable pupils in detail to ensure that provision is well matched to pupil need.

School staff use highly beneficial links with local schools to establish a shared understanding of effective progression and assessment. These links have enabled the development of a cluster curriculum that spans seamlessly across the primary and secondary phase. The school's professional learning lead works effectively with staff to ensure that the curriculum and learning activities reflect the local community of Beaufort, Wales and the wider world. The headteacher and staff build highly beneficial links with parents, governors and the community. As a result, they widen and enrich the curriculum through an extensive range of useful partnerships.

The school communicates effectively with parents through a wide range of media. Parents are often involved in opportunities to share their own experience, for example to enrich the school's work on careers and the world of work. They take part in Welsh language activities alongside their children.

The governing body provides strong support for the school and governors are passionate about working with the whole community. They work effectively with staff through regular visits to school and this ensures that they have a sound understanding of school strengths and areas for improvement.

The headteacher and governing body work well together to ensure that spending is closely linked to the school's plans for development. Leaders ensure that pupils who are affected by socio-economic disadvantage take part in and benefit from all school activities. For example, they arrange access to free school uniform and subsidise school trips and visits where needed.

Governors promote a positive culture of safeguarding. The headteacher works with governors to evaluate the school's safeguarding procedures effectively. They use this information well to make necessary improvements, such as supporting the introduction of an online internet use agreement for parents and carers. Governors ensure that the school promotes healthy eating and drinking effectively.

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)

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:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

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

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2023: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 27/12/2023