



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

A report on
Pantside Primary School

**Old Pant Road
Pantside
Newbridge
Newport
NP11 5DE**

Date of inspection: December 2023

by

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

About Panside Primary School

Name of provider	Panside Primary School
Local authority	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	N/A
Number of pupils on roll	208
Pupils of statutory school age	158
Number in nursery classes	29
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 23.7%)	47.0%
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 13.2%)	34.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2015
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/02/2016
Start date of inspection	11/12/2023

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

Panside Primary is a happy, caring school where all pupils are treated with respect and kindness. The headteacher and staff work with dedication to create a warm and valued environment for pupils and the wider school community. Staff promote positive behaviour effectively, and most pupils engage actively in lessons. The school provides strong support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) particularly those in its resource base classes. As a result, although most pupils start school with skills at or below the expected level, many make suitable progress and are developing as confident learners, who enjoy being part of their school.

Pupils develop their speaking skills effectively and most listen well to others. From an early age, they enjoy expressing themselves, sharing their ideas and talking about their own experiences. The school offers a well-planned range of experiences to enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills and also encourages participation in creative performance activities. For instance, all pupils are provided with opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument.

Pupils develop their early reading skills suitably. However, a minority of older pupils do not develop secure enough reading skills and struggle to make sense of the texts they are reading. When given the opportunity pupils write well, particularly in their science and technology work. The school is beginning to develop more regular opportunities for pupils to write in a wider range of contexts to help develop their creativity and improve their redrafting skills.

Pupils develop secure number skills and are beginning to apply these to other areas of the curriculum. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to use these to solve problems or practice and apply their skills at a suitably challenging level. Overall, the school effectively promotes the use of the Welsh Language, with a strong commitment to developing these language skills in both pupils and staff.

Leaders and governors reflect well on what the school is doing well and how it can further improve. Teachers receive useful professional development and support, and the school manages its resources well. However, overall school improvement planning is too broad and does not always focus clearly enough on the quality of teaching and how this can further improve pupils' progress.

Recommendations

- R1 Sharpen self-evaluation processes to focus more clearly on the impact of teaching on learning
- R2 Improve teaching to ensure that all pupils are challenged effectively
- R3 Refine the curriculum to ensure that pupils make systematic progress in developing their knowledge and skills across all Areas of Learning and Experience

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils enter school with understanding and skills at or below those for their age. Many pupils make suitable progress as they move through the school including pupils eligible for free school meals who make progress in line with their peers. Most pupils with ALN, and those in the specialist resource base, make strong progress towards their individual targets.

Many pupils make effective progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. In Reception, a majority of pupils listen to adults well and talk confidently about their experiences, such as explaining what they would like for Christmas. By Year 3, many pupils express their opinions confidently and clearly, for example when developing questions beginning 'I wonder if'. In Year 6, many pupils speak clearly. A few speak maturely, for example when talking about the bonds that form between characters in a book. Most pupils in the SRB develop their communication skills well from their starting points. They are beginning to communicate with their friends successfully using a range of strategies, including sign language.

In Reception, pupils develop their early reading skills well. They look at books independently and discuss what they see in pictures. They use images to help tell a simple story. A majority recognise a few letters, and a very few are beginning to read short, simple words. By Year 2, a majority of pupils read accurately and with expression. They are beginning to recognise an appropriate range of letter sounds, but do not always use their knowledge when attempting to read unknown words. By Year 6, a majority of pupils read with appropriate accuracy. A few read particularly well and show a clear understanding of the characters and ideas in the texts they read. Most pupils in the specialist resource base make suitable progress in developing their reading skills.

In Reception, most pupils are beginning to mark-make confidently, for instance to write a Christmas present list. By Year 2, many pupils write suitably. They use appropriate vocabulary when writing about Christmas traditions and a majority write in clear sentences, forming upper- and lower-case letters clearly. By Year 6, most pupils write sequences of sentences that explain their ideas clearly. They use well-chosen technical language and often write skilfully in their science and technology work. However, they do not write confidently enough in a wide enough range of genre, for example to write with imagination and creativity.

A majority of pupils' Welsh language skills develop suitably. Younger pupils are beginning to use a few words and phrases independently. For example, in Year 1, pupils use the Welsh words for colours in their play activities. By Year 4, many pupils

answer and respond to simple questions about themselves confidently. In Year 6, a majority of pupils have suitable Welsh language skills. They recall and use simple sentences to share information about themselves and their family, such as how they feel and where they live.

A majority of younger pupils learn to count accurately and use this skill in their play activities confidently. For instance, pupils in Reception count the number of blocks that correspond to the height of toy soldiers. By Year 2, many pupils have suitable number skills. They read and write numbers to 100, and a majority recall and use multiplication tables appropriately. By Year 6, many pupils have a secure understanding of number. They use their mathematical skills to add and divide, for example to find fractions of whole numbers. Many pupils are developing a suitable understanding of shape and space, for instance when using co-ordinates to identify a position on a grid. However, they do not always apply their mathematical skills to solve problems in a variety of contexts. Most pupils in the specialist resource base make good progress in developing their numeracy skills. They recognise numbers and their values at an appropriate level and are beginning to apply their skills independently, for instance by matching images of ladybirds to the corresponding numbers.

Throughout the school, many pupils use tablet computers in their learning and play confidently. For example, pupils in Reception draw and colour pictures and, in Year 2, pupils photograph their work and upload them to share with their parents. In Year 5, many pupils are developing a basic understanding of databases and, by Year 6, many pupils create imaginative presentations, such as those on the impact of smoking or vaping on health. Pupils use their coding skills to programme small digital devices well. However, pupils' skills are not always secure enough across all classes. A minority of older pupils do not have a strong enough understanding of how to use spreadsheets or save, edit and retrieve their work competently.

Many pupils develop their physical skills well. In Reception, many use balance bikes confidently and build snowmen from large cardboard boxes skilfully. Pupils in Year 5 develop and perform gymnastic sequences confidently with a partner, using different types of jumps, and a start and finish position. Most pupils in the specialist resource base develop their fine motor skills appropriately. They take good care and maintain their focus well when mark-making and when making Christmas tree models.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe and believe that the school encourages respect and good behaviour. They enjoy the opportunities and experiences the school provides. In the specialist resource base, most pupils are happy and behave suitably. They actively participate in practical activities, perform songs and rhymes readily, and confidently access their daily schedule independently while following routines happily.

Many pupils engage well with new experiences and actively participate in lessons. Many maintain a good level of interest in their work. For instance, younger pupils work and play together productively when building snowmen from cardboard blocks. However, a minority of pupils lose motivation when they are unsure of what to do and do not look for solutions independently when they face problems.

Most pupils value and respect the contributions of others. They listen to others read in groups and work together to respond to what they have heard. During group work, many contribute thoughtfully, such as when researching information on local collieries and sharing their thoughts about life as a miner. Most pupils respond appropriately to verbal feedback from adults. When they receive purposeful written feedback, they generally make useful changes to their work.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and taking exercise. For example, pupils in Year 2 talk about the importance of exercise and not eating 'junk food' like 'burgers and pop'. They provide useful examples of healthy breakfasts and snacks, such as fruits and vegetables. Many older pupils have a suitable awareness of the importance of internet safety and how to recognise potential risks, such as strangers trying to contact them online. They understand who they should turn to if they have concerns.

Many pupils are developing as well as informed citizens. They understand how acting sustainably has a positive impact on the world. Older pupils talk thoughtfully about the importance of re-cycling and waste management, for instance of the importance of reducing the amount of clothing that we throw away and the damage that plastics can do to the environment. They encourage others not to waste food in school and remind them of their principle of 'taste not waste'.

Older pupils understand the importance of rights and talk confidently about their own rights. For example, they recognise their right to an education and their right to receive reliable information. They understand that this is something that affects their lives in practice. For example, the learning detectives feed back their thoughts on teaching and learning throughout the school to subject leaders and the headteacher.

Pupils participate actively and enthusiastically in the school's pupil leadership groups including Sports Ambassadors, Learning Detectives and 'Heddlu Bach'. They are eager to make a difference and take responsibility for improving experiences for pupils, and the school's environment. Sports Ambassadors design games and activities for younger pupils and encourage them to participate. This promotes relationships and encourages teamwork effectively. Older pupils support the wider community when helping to run the school's food bank. They recognise that this is a way they can help others.

Pupils respond positively to opportunities to undertake a range of physical activities through clubs and activities. For example, they talk excitedly about bike club, where they learn to balance and ride safely.

Teaching and learning experiences

All staff, including those in the specialist resource base, foster strong working relationships with pupils and work effectively alongside skilled teaching assistants to support pupils' learning. In most instances, classes are calm and productive environments where pupils behave well, show respect for each other, and are keen to learn.

The school collaborates with governors, pupils and their families to provide a curriculum that is suitably broad and balanced, while focusing on the needs of its

pupils. The school's recent work on refining its curriculum is beginning to further improve opportunities for engaging pupils' curiosity, for instance through its recent emphasis on Science and Technology. Pupils have regular opportunities to contribute to what they learn, and the school values their contributions to planning learning.

Teachers plan engaging learning experiences to stimulate and develop pupils' imaginative and creative work. For example, older pupils visit a local heritage centre to study the history of the local mines using the work of local artists to inspire their own work. Visitors to the school further enrich the curriculum, and staff seek out engaging opportunities for pupils to experience. For example, pupils develop their physical skills whilst participating in a Welsh language television programme as part of the Geraint Thomas Cycling Trust.

Most staff provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to practise their Welsh language skills regularly. Through learning about Welsh culture and the local area, pupils begin to understand the community in which they live. For example, pupils explore and map out the local area during a visit to Panside park and visit businesses to understand how they serve the local area.

Teachers plan well to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, and staff are developing a growing culture of reading across the school. There is a progressive programme of phonic development in place, alongside opportunities for pupils to share books regularly with a staff. However, while this provision is generally suitable, a minority of older pupils do not develop their reading skills well enough.

The school is developing appropriate provision for pupils' writing skills. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop non-fiction writing skills, and plan for these carefully, particularly in their science topics. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write creatively and at length.

Teachers generally plan suitably for pupils to develop their numeracy and digital skills and staff are beginning to provide opportunities for them to apply these skills in other areas of learning. However, provision to ensure pupils apply these skills systematically in challenging contexts is underdeveloped.

Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the curriculum and provide clear and effective explanations about the intended learning. They are beginning to develop useful approaches to assessment in lessons. For example, they pause lessons to check pupils' understanding and to address common misconceptions. However, they do not always use questioning well enough to deepen pupils' thinking or allow them to practise and strengthen their skills at a high enough level.

Many teachers and support staff provide timely and worthwhile feedback to pupils during lessons, which helps them to make suitable progress. Staff use feedback effectively to support pupils to identify and correct basic errors in their work. They are beginning to develop useful approaches to help pupils understand what they have done well. For example, they encourage pupils to reflect on their own work and that of their peers using clear success criteria. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to refine or redraft their work in more detail, for example to improve the quality of their writing.

The school is developing secure approaches to monitoring pupils' learning across the curriculum. Staff work alongside senior leaders to reflect on pupil progress regularly and identify pupils who may need further support. They use this information thoughtfully to adjust their approaches to teaching. Teachers and support staff in the SRB have a strong understanding of pupils' learning and well-being needs and ensure that activities are focused sharply on the next steps in pupils' learning.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a highly inclusive, caring community where pupils feel valued and safe. The quality of care, support and guidance for pupils in mainstream and in the specialist resource base is a strength of the school.

There is strong collaboration across the school to meet the needs of pupils with ALN. The Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators (ALNCos) work effectively with teachers and support staff to ensure pupils with ALN are integrated successfully into the classroom and play a full part in school life. Support staff carry out their roles with dedication and provide careful support for pupils, intervening where necessary to guide their learning. Where pupils require more individualised support, this is carried out sensitively. For example, the school provides gentle intervention for pupils needing help to regulate their emotions and to help them stay engaged in their learning.

Leaders have established robust procedures to identify pupils needing extra support, including those with ALN. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for staff across the school ensure a suitable range of support and intervention is organised effectively. Leaders monitor the progress of pupils with ALN carefully and are developing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of interventions on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Staff and leaders work effectively with the parents of pupils with ALN. They share the progress their children are making towards individual targets, discuss next steps and help them play a full role in supporting their children at home.

Staff in the specialist resource base prioritise pupils' well-being effectively and provision is strong. They work together purposefully to meet pupils' needs through a range of effective strategies. These include using additional resources thoughtfully, such as the 'Magic Room' and 'Safe Space' to provide secure environments for pupils to express and explore their feelings.

Leaders work closely with a wide range of agencies to provide valuable specialist services to support pupils' emotional health and learning needs. Staff across the school share their expertise effectively to widen teachers' skills in promoting inclusion for all pupils. For example, staff from the resource base support staff to develop useful behaviour management strategies and develop more effective approaches to teaching pupils with autism.

Staff create worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about values. For example, they provide carefully planned sessions that help pupils to develop self-awareness and empathy for others. The school seeks opportunities for pupils to have an active and positive influence on their local community. For example, pupils visit a local care

home to sing to residents, deliver Christmas cards and put-up decorations, as part of their commitment to being a dementia friendly school.

The school offers strong opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and performance skills. Most pupils learn to play musical instruments including the guitar and violin. The school funds these opportunities to ensure that all pupils benefit.

School leaders monitor attendance robustly and work closely with the families of children who are not attending school regularly. As a result, the rates of attendance show a continual upward trend for all pupils. and a particular strength is the current rates of attendance for those pupils entitled to free school meals.

Leaders ensure that there are appropriate procedures for safeguarding pupils and all staff understand and promote the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. Pupils understand where to seek support if they feel they need it and many have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe, for example while online. As a result, there is a suitable culture of safeguarding across the school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is a strong role model who has a clear vision for Panside Primary School to be a highly inclusive learning environment for all pupils at the heart of its community. There is a strong family ethos in the school and all staff work together with energy and dedication to ensure that all pupils feel safe, valued, and cared for.

Leadership in the specialist resource base is strong. Staff have a clear vision for provision and clear roles and responsibilities across a dedicated and effective team. They work closely together to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and undertake comprehensive training to support them to carry out their roles effectively.

Leaders use a wide range of approaches to make decisions about the school's priorities for improvement. These include regular learning walks, book scrutiny, and listening to learners. Overall, leaders use this information to make suitable judgements regarding the quality of teaching and the schools next steps. However, school improvement strategies do not always focus clearly enough on pupil progress, or the aspects of teaching that require most attention, for example providing sufficient challenge for pupils.

Leaders monitor progress towards school improvement priorities suitably. Many teachers take on leadership roles and are beginning to have a stronger influence on improving the quality of teaching and learning. For example, middle leaders have led recent work on additional learning needs reform, which is impacting positively on classroom practice, for instance in behaviour management.

The governing body works diligently to support the school. They work closely with the headteacher and school staff and understand how the school operates on a day-to-day basis. Governors meet regularly and receive useful information from school leaders. They undertake a suitable range of monitoring activities with leaders, such as learning walks and listening to learners. This helps them to develop a useful understanding of how the school is working towards a few priorities such as the

national additional needs reform. However, they are less secure in their understanding of the school's improvement targets or how well the school is progressing towards implementing Curriculum for Wales. They fulfil their statutory responsibility for ensuring healthy eating and drinking at the school well.

Leaders ensure that there are useful opportunities for staff to engage in professional learning. These opportunities link well to improvement priorities, for example recent innovations to improve approaches to teaching writing. There are good opportunities for teachers to collaborate with colleagues across the cluster of local schools, such as when developing common approaches to assessment for the youngest pupils. While leaders provide opportunities for staff to improve their teaching, they do not always monitor carefully enough how well this is impacting on pupils' learning.

Leaders and staff have developed strong and effective partnerships with families, who appreciate the support and guidance that staff provide for their children. Leaders work to ensure that families who are disadvantaged by poverty are well supported, for example by supplementing the cost of school trips and providing uniform for every pupil.

The school manages its resources effectively. Classrooms are well resourced, and leaders use grants, such as the pupil development grant, to ensure that there are good levels of staffing to provide effective well-being and learning support for 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)

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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