



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

A report on
Tywyn Primary School
Channel View
Sandfields
Port Talbot
SA12 6JF

Date of inspection: June 2018

by

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

About Tywyn Primary School

Tywyn Primary School is in Aberavon in the south east of Port Talbot in Neath Port Talbot local authority. There are 454 pupils on roll, including 80 part-time nursery pupils. There are 14 single-year classes and one mixed-year class. In addition, there are six learning resource classes, providing education for 48 pupils from across the local authority. This provision caters for pupils with moderate to severe learning needs and pupils with profound and multiple learning needs.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is 29%. This is well above the average for Wales of 19%. The school identifies 40% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is much higher than the national average of 21%. This includes the pupils in the learning resource classes. A few pupils have a statement of special educational needs and a very few are in the care of the local authority. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity and come from homes where English is the main language. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

The current headteacher took up her post in 2017. The school's previous inspection was in 2010.

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

Leaders and staff ensure an exceptionally caring, inclusive and nurturing learning environment for pupils. They provide many rich learning experiences that support pupils' all-round development successfully. The quality of teaching is good. As a result, across the school, most pupils make good or better progress from their starting points. They develop strong literacy skills, which they apply effectively in their work across the curriculum, and they often achieve very high standards in sports and the expressive arts. Irrespective of their needs and abilities, pupils in Tywyn Primary School, including those in the learning resource classes, believe that there are no barriers to learning and achievement. They are very proud of their school and display exemplary behaviour and attitudes towards learning.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Raise pupils' standards in information and communication technology (ICT)
- R2 Develop leadership at all levels to maximise its impact on the school's priorities for improvement
- R3 Improve the governing body's ability to hold the school to account about the quality of teaching and learning

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 a case study on its work in relation to developing pupils' oracy and performance skills, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Many pupils enter the school with skills that are at a level below that expected for their age. Over time, most pupils make strong progress in most aspects of their learning. In upper key stage 2, this progress is rapid and, by the time they leave the school, nearly all pupils achieve good or very good standards in literacy and numeracy. In the learning resource classes, nearly all pupils make effective progress in line with their needs and abilities.

Across the school, nearly all pupils listen attentively. By Year 2, most pupils use partner talk effectively to participate in lively dialogue about their work, for example when peer assessing their writing of how to make a 'fabulous funky fruit juice' for the giant in 'Jack and the beanstalk'. By Year 6, nearly all pupils communicate extremely effectively and confidently. They adapt their speech skilfully to match the task and their audience. For instance, in a role play activity, more able pupils deliver outstanding performances, when presenting evidence on the life of 'Timothy Winters' to a police constable from the perspective of characters in Charles Causley's poem.

Many pupils in the foundation phase develop secure early reading skills. Year 1 pupils use strategies such as 'chunky monkey' to break a word into smaller chunks or 'slide the snake' to identify sounds to read unfamiliar words independently. In the learning resource classes, most pupils are enthusiastic about reading and they read age-appropriate texts accurately. By the end of key stage 2, the reading skills of most pupils enable them to access all aspects of the curriculum successfully. More able pupils engage exceptionally well with more challenging materials to develop very effective higher-order reading skills. For instance, they convey a mature appreciation of how and why authors and poets use literary techniques, such as metaphor, symbolism and rhyme.

As they move through the school, most pupils produce writing of good quality in their literacy lessons and in other areas of learning. Many reception pupils begin to write independently using the initial and end sounds in words. In Year 2, most pupils use imaginative vocabulary effectively to add colour and interest to their writing, in a wide range of genres. In key stage 2, most pupils plan, draft and improve their work thoroughly to produce extended pieces of high quality. For instance, in Year 6, more able pupils write exceptionally well-crafted letters to campaign persuasively for the return of organised transport for pupils moving to secondary school. In all classes, standards of spelling and punctuation are good. Nearly all pupils develop a neat, cursive handwriting style and they present their work with exceptional care and pride.

Most pupils make strong progress in developing their Welsh language skills. Pupils are eager to talk to visitors in Welsh and they use a set range of language patterns well to communicate outside of lessons. In the nursery, pupils sing songs happily and in a learning resource class, pupils count in Welsh successfully to work out how many stones David threw to attack Goliath in a religious education lesson. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils extend their sentences, explaining their feelings and preferences. A very few more able pupils speak freely in English and in Welsh during their drama activities.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop a secure grasp of mathematical skills. They work neatly and accurately and make good progress. For example, many Year 2 pupils use a range of methods to add and subtract two-digit numbers to 100. In their topic work, they plot co-ordinates confidently to solve the problem of helping Dorothy to find her way back to the wizard's palace in Oz. In key stage 2, most pupils build upon these foundations well. By Year 6, nearly all pupils are competent mathematicians who use efficient mental strategies. They apply their reasoning skills to solve problems successfully. For instance, they piece together 'evidence' to calculate how much bank robbers stole in a heist across Europe. They apply their knowledge of ratio effectively to work out how long each robber will spend in prison, based upon their share of the stolen money. However, in a few classes, pupils do not develop their numeracy skills in their work across the curriculum well enough.

Many pupils demonstrate suitable skills in ICT. For example, Year 1 pupils use an audio application on a tablet computer independently to record their views about the artwork in 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. In key stage 2, most younger pupils use search engines competently to locate information on the internet, whilst a minority of older pupils use formulas successfully in their spreadsheets. However, overall, across the school, many pupils' ICT skills are underdeveloped.

Most pupils' creative and physical skills are outstanding. For example, Year 6 pupils produce self-portraits of exceptional quality in their art lessons. In the learning resource classes, pupils show a very good awareness of body positions, when throwing and catching a ball in a rugby lesson. As a result of these opportunities, pupils' confidence and self-motivation have a very positive impact on their progress in other areas of their work.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

All pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are exceptionally polite and respectful towards each other and to adults. They are at ease in the company of visitors and they communicate their immense pride in their school and its collective achievements with warmth and gusto.

In lessons, nearly all pupils immerse themselves in learning. Even when they find tasks challenging, nearly all pupils persevere and sustain concentration for extended periods.

Increasingly, as they move through the school, pupils make effective use of classroom resources and peer support to help them to progress in their learning. They make choices about what they want to investigate and follow their interests enthusiastically. For example, a group of more able Year 2 pupils decide to use standard measurements to find out how many different combinations of flavours they can add together to make 100ml of bean juice for a story character in their 'Green fingers and growth' topic.

Older pupils in key stage 2 make independent choices about how to record their learning. As individuals, they decide how they can best convey their understanding of the themes, characters and symbolism in a poem, for instance by creating a play script, diary entry or writing a narrative. They provide pertinent oral feedback to each other on how to improve their work and this leads to high-quality outcomes.

However, in a few lower foundation phase classes, younger pupils do not always develop their independent learning skills as fully as they could.

Pupils in the learning resource classes participate enthusiastically in their learning. They relate very well to adults and respond willingly to encouragement and instructions from staff and visitors, for example during rugby lessons where they develop their co-ordination, resilience and teamwork skills very successfully. As a result, these pupils are exceedingly motivated. They develop outstanding confidence and their self-esteem is high.

Nearly all pupils co-operate very well together in class and throughout the day. For example, in the foundation phase, pupils play harmoniously in their role-play areas and outdoors. During pupil meetings, such as the eco and healthy school committee, pupils take turns to speak and they listen attentively to each other, showing respectful consideration for other pupils' opinions.

By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils have excellent interpersonal skills and develop a very strong moral compass. They respond patiently and sensitively to others' emotional, physical and learning needs. They value and celebrate the diverse contributions of their peers to all aspects of school life, for example in assemblies, sports activities, concerts and after-school clubs. They have an excellent awareness of the need for tolerance in society.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school. They know whom to turn to when they have concerns and have full trust in their teachers and support staff to help them. Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Nearly all pupils understand well how to make healthy choices in their diet and they have outstanding attitudes to keeping themselves fit. Almost all pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of sporting activities and ride their bicycles and scooters to school. They talk knowledgeably about the importance of warming up and cooling down to protect their bodies from injury.

Many pupils develop strong leadership skills by taking on roles and responsibilities in pupil groups, such as the 'Cryw Cymraeg', school council and as digital leaders. They have a positive impact on the life and work of the school. For example, the eco and healthy schools committee has recently worked with the Marine Conservation Society to carry out a litter pick on Aberavon beach, collecting over 700 pieces of plastic. As a result, they have successfully raised the community's awareness of global issues, such as the need to protect their coastal environment. Nearly all pupils are developing very well as ethical, informed citizens.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good.

The best features of teaching, which are evident in all classes, are the exceptional working relationships between pupils and all staff, and the very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This means that staff and pupils are relaxed in each other's company, whilst taking learning seriously. Nearly all teaching assistants provide valuable support for groups of pupils and individuals across the ability range.

Most teachers have strong subject knowledge and they use their expertise very well to challenge pupils to achieve highly, for example in literacy, art and physical

education. Most teachers question skilfully, for example to extend more able pupils' understanding and knowledge, or to maintain pupils' focus and concentration in the learning resource classes. Nearly all teachers are good language role models and most take advantage of valuable opportunities to improve pupils' oracy skills.

The school provides a broad and engaging curriculum. Most teachers plan relevant, topical learning experiences, which stimulate and enthuse nearly all pupils. This is particularly evident in upper key stage 2, where teaching is often of very high quality. These teachers provide pupils with skills-rich projects and real-life scenarios, for example linked to the football World Cup and the meeting of world leaders, Donald Trump and Kim Jong-Un. Teachers incorporate pupils' ideas on how and what they want to learn into the curriculum effectively, which gives their learning meaning and purpose.

Teachers provide well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum effectively. For example, impassioned Year 6 pupils write to the First Minister of Wales to urge the Welsh Government to control the use of plastic as part of their geography studies. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum are more variable. Overall, provision for pupils' ICT skills is underdeveloped.

Across the school, most teachers use a wide range of teaching approaches and resources to support pupils' learning successfully. For example, pupils with profound and multiple learning needs listen to bird songs by pressing a sound button and they dance to a Welsh sea shanty, when reading 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'. In the foundation phase, nearly all teachers provide a good range of experiential learning opportunities in class and outdoors for pupils to develop their exploratory, creative and physical skills.

Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they meet individual pupils' needs effectively. However, in a few classes, the challenge for all pupils is not always high enough. For example, teachers in these classes tend to rely too heavily on the use of worksheets and on a few occasions, pupils copy out information from whiteboards. Consequently, not all pupils develop their independent learning skills as fully as they could.

Most teachers provide pupils with positive feedback about their work, relating their achievements to the lesson's success criteria. Teachers in the foundation phase classes provide beneficial verbal feedback to their pupils, which helps them to consider for themselves, and with a partner, what they can do well and what they need to work on next. Most key stage 2 teachers provide useful questions to encourage pupils to reflect on their work. They give pupils opportunities to respond through a thoughtful dialogue. In the best examples, teachers' comments focus well on improving the work, for example by refining or practising a specific literacy skill. In a few cases, the questions are more general and do not always link well enough to the lesson's objective, for example in mathematics.

The school's provision for developing pupils' Welsh language skills is good. It promotes pupils' awareness of Welsh culture successfully, especially through sporting activities and the expressive arts, such as the annual Eisteddfod. All pupils participate in a range of relevant visits linked to their topics and whole-school events, which enhance the curriculum successfully.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is an inclusive community, which values, respects and nurtures all of its diverse members very successfully. The culture of outstanding care, equality and high expectations permeates all of the school's work. This results in pupils who display exceptional tolerance towards each other, understand that there are no barriers to learning and become confident and capable learners.

The school provides extensive support for pupils with additional learning needs, including those who are more able and talented. Key to its success is the early identification of these needs by highly effective partnership arrangements with parents and close liaison with pre-school settings. Each pupil has a one-page profile, which summarises their skills and identifies highly relevant opportunities to meet their needs and interests, through the planned curriculum or extra-curricular provision.

The tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress and outcomes, including those with special educational needs, is robust. There are regular reviews of pupils' individual education plans, which reflect pupils' views of their progress well. Staff target interventions to meet pupils' needs successfully and they evaluate these programmes rigorously to measure their impact on pupils' progress. Consequently, nearly all pupils make good progress towards their personal targets. Well-established partnerships with specialist agencies, such as the early years' educational psychologist and speech and language therapists, contribute very positively to successful outcomes for vulnerable pupils.

The school employs a range of very beneficial strategies to communicate effectively with parents. It provides valuable workshops to help parents support their children's learning at home, for instance in reading, and staff offer high-quality individualised guidance to parents where their children have more complex needs. Leaders value parents' views and gather their opinions on aspects of the school's work. For example, as a result feedback from parents, the school has changed the format and content of annual pupil reports. These very high-quality reports now provide clear, detailed and personalised information for parents on how their children have progressed throughout the year.

A notable strength of the school is how well it develops pupils' sense of civic and moral responsibility by providing valuable and relevant opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of their community and the wider world. For instance, key stage 2 pupils have met with their Member of Parliament to debate maturely and intelligently the 'pros and cons' of locating a prison in Port Talbot. Staff prepare pupils skilfully for the transition to secondary schooling through a skill-rich project. This encourages them to consider how they might work with community groups to increase their personal safety when travelling to and from their new school. They explore the types of decisions adults make in the world of work, such as removing funded transport, and the factors that influence them, such as financial constraints. This project is an outstanding example of how staff are preparing pupils to be active citizens of Wales and the world.

The school has a strong tradition of high achievement in a range of sports, such as rugby, netball and football. It provides pupils with extensive opportunities to participate in a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs to practise their skills.

In addition, staff provide a weekly physical activity session, where pupils explore a range of sports activities of their choice, for example the long jump and javelin. As a result of these opportunities, nearly all pupils have outstanding attitudes to keeping themselves healthy and fit, and exceptional physical skills. A few pupils, including those who attend the learning resource classes, excel and represent their school or region at a very high level in team sports. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. For example, it offers parents useful advice on how to make a healthy lunchbox.

Pupils have worthwhile opportunities to make decisions about their learning, to influence the life of the school and to develop leadership skills. For example, across the school, pupils make regular contributions to the planning of learning activities. The 'Cryw Cymreig' has successfully raised the profile of the Welsh language across the school. For instance, they lead games and activities at playtimes in the 'Cwtch Cymreig' and have set up a fruit tuck shop, as an opportunity for pupils to practise their oracy skills.

A wide range of enriching learning experiences nurtures pupils' cultural understanding and develop pupils' expressive talents very well. For example, many pupils attend the highly popular 'crafty club', led by an art and design specialist. This introduces pupils to new techniques and media and enables them to produce highly imaginative and skilful work inspired by different cultures, which staff display as an exhibition for parents to attend. Regular opportunities to perform in concerts and assemblies develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem to a very high level. Across the school, pupils' singing is outstanding. They perform their part in a four-part round extremely well and provide descant harmony to enhance their performances. Over time, these experiences have a notable impact on the progress and achievements of all pupils.

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

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides effective leadership. She has high expectations for all pupils and sets a clear strategic direction for the school, which focuses successfully on providing all pupils with a well-rounded education to maximise their life chances. The whole school community works closely as a team to ensure an extremely caring ethos for the benefit of all pupils. There is a high level of mutual trust and respect among leaders, staff, governors and parents. This contributes very strongly to the exemplary attitudes to learning and respect for others that all pupils show.

The deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team support the headteacher effectively. Purposeful whole staff and key stage or phase meetings focus clearly on pupils' progress and on addressing the school's improvement priorities. As a result, the school has made strong progress in addressing national priorities, such as improving pupils' literacy skills in English and Welsh.

Leaders deploy staff highly effectively according to their subject expertise. For example, co-ordinators in physical education, art and literacy provide very effective support for these subjects across the school. This has led to the outstanding

development of pupils' skills in these areas of learning, particularly for more able and talented pupils. Leaders encourage staff to share their knowledge and expertise through supportive peer observations. This helps practitioners to pinpoint an aspect of their own practice they wish to improve, to trial new approaches and to receive beneficial, non-judgemental feedback. However, in general, the role of middle leaders and a few senior leaders in taking responsibility for whole-school developments to raise standards is not yet fully developed.

The governing body is highly supportive of the school's work and champions its inclusive and caring approach. Governors monitor the budget effectively and make prudent decisions about staffing levels in the short- and longer-term for the benefit of pupils. However, in general, governors' ability to challenge leaders about the standards pupils achieve is underdeveloped. For instance, they do not corroborate or use first-hand evidence well enough to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching.

The school's effective self-evaluation arrangements provide leaders with an accurate overview of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders draw on a worthwhile range of first-hand evidence, such as lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, together with performance information to identify where initiatives and interventions have a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

School improvement planning draws effectively on the valuable evidence from self-evaluation to prioritise a manageable number of areas for whole-school development. Leaders implement focused actions, identify clear milestones for monitoring and support improvement successfully through effective staff training. For example, standards in oracy, which are well above expectations by the end of key stage 2, are a direct result of the school's well-targeted activities to raise standards in this area.

Nearly all staff take part in a wide range of valuable professional learning activities that have a beneficial impact on pupil outcomes. For example, staff participation in the Welsh sabbatical course has had a positive effect on the development of pupils' Welsh oracy skills across the school. Leaders ensure staff develop specialist knowledge and skills to meet individual pupils' needs effectively, for example in the learning resource classes. The school has appropriate arrangements for the performance management of staff. However, a few objectives do not focus precisely enough on the aspects of teaching and learning that individual staff need to improve.

The school allocates financial resources successfully in line with improvement priorities, for instance by purchasing equipment to raise standards in pupils' ICT skills. The school's parent-teacher association and local community groups raise valuable funds to help provide worthwhile resources for the learning resource classes, such as the dark room and sensory garden.

Leaders make good use of the pupil development grant to develop the basic literacy and numeracy skills of eligible pupils well. As a result, most vulnerable pupils make good progress from their low starting points. In addition, leaders ensure that more able and talented pupils, who are eligible, benefit from the grant. For example, they pay for transport for pupils to visit the Hay literary festival and to take part in sports activities across the region. This helps to nurture pupils' skills and raises their aspirations successfully.

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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