



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

A report on

**Cwmafan Primary School
Ty'r Owen Row
Cwmafan
Port Talbot
SA12 9BB**

Date of inspection: October 2018

by

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

About Cwmafan Primary School

Cwmafan Primary School is in the village of Cwmafan in the Neath Port Talbot local authority. The school opened in January 2015, following the amalgamation of former infant and junior schools. The number of pupils increased further in September 2015, following the closure of two nearby primary schools. Currently, there are 410 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11, including 44 nursery pupils who attend part-time. There are 16 single-age classes in the school.

On average, about 28% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is above the national average of 18%. Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home. The school identifies around 15% of pupils with additional learning needs. This is below the national average of 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of educational needs.

The headteacher took up his post when the school opened in 2015. This is the school's first inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Nearly all pupils behave very well in classes and around the school. They have positive attitudes to their learning and work hard. Most pupils make good progress, often from a low starting point. They achieve well in literacy and numeracy and apply their skills competently across the curriculum. The curriculum is broad and balanced and engages most pupils successfully. The school provides pupils with high levels of care, support and guidance and nearly all feel safe and enjoy coming to school. The school promotes a Welsh ethos very strongly. The headteacher has overseen the amalgamation of four former schools successfully, setting a unified vision and direction that is supported well by all staff and governors. The school has effective processes to identify its strengths and areas for development. Leaders implement change successfully to improve the quality of provision for pupils.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length and to develop as independent learners
- R2 Ensure that teachers' feedback to pupils helps them to understand how to improve their work
- R3 Improve rates of attendance

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils enter the school with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those expected of pupils of that age. Nearly all make strong progress, so that by the end of key stage 2, most achieve at least the expected standards in their work. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals generally achieve as well as their peers.

Nearly all pupils are attentive and listen carefully to adults and to each other. They develop their speaking skills well, giving their opinions confidently. In the foundation phase, many pupils explain clearly where to place missing numbers in a sequence. By Year 6, many pupils are articulate, for example when discussing the importance of learning Welsh. They use descriptive vocabulary effectively, for instance to demonstrate empathy for the people of Swansea who lived during the blitz.

In the foundation phase, most pupils have a clear understanding of letters and their sounds and combine them methodically to sound out words. By Year 2, many pupils read confidently and accurately. In key stage 2, most develop their reading skills proficiently. They read with lively expression and demonstrate a good understanding of what they have read.

Most pupils in the foundation phase write neatly. They form letters correctly, aiming for uniform size and spacing. In the foundation phase, most pupils write in a wide variety of genres. For example, they retell the story of the Good Samaritan and explain the difference between light sources and reflections. They use basic punctuation correctly and spell a suitable range of words accurately. Many apply their phonics skills effectively to make sensible attempts at spelling difficult words.

In Key stage 2, most pupils write neatly and take care in presenting their work. They develop their writing skills well through a series of exercises. For example, they practise using speech marks and explain how adding prefixes can alter the meanings of words. On a few occasions, older pupils write at length independently. They plan and redraft their work well to produce engaging pieces of writing, for example, in their study of the Second World War, they use personification effectively in vivid depictions of the Normandy landings. Most use their literacy skills effectively across the curriculum.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their mathematical skills well. In the nursery, many count to five in English and in Welsh. Older pupils in the foundation phase develop a good recall of number bonds. They add and subtract two-digit numbers accurately. They measure carefully using non-standard and standard units when investigating how far different toys roll down slopes. In key stage 2, most pupils make suitable progress in mathematics and apply their skills competently in other areas of the curriculum. For example, they simulate planning a wartime expedition, working to a fixed budget. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils' mathematical skills are well developed.

Most pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) develop appropriately throughout the school. Most pupils in the foundation phase handle tablet computers confidently while developing their literacy and numeracy skills. They use ICT to compile bar charts displaying the results of their minibeast hunt and use a paint package to make pictures of ladybirds. In key stage 2, most log on competently to a virtual learning environment. They word-process their writing and make interesting audio-visual presentations to promote Wales as a tourist destination. Older pupils interrogate databases successfully, for example, to analyse the results of a series of hockey fixtures. Many older pupils use carefully considered search terms when using the internet to research their topic on the Second World War. This helps them to find the information they are looking for quickly.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop Welsh language skills well and communicate in Welsh enthusiastically. Many pupils in the nursery begin to talk about the weather and by the end of the foundation phase, most pupils describe the food they like and dislike. Many write well for a range of purposes using the language they have learnt. For example, they describe their visit to the local beach. Many pupils in key stage 2 hold extended conversations, using a range of connectives well. By Year 4, many pupils write a postcard using past tense following a visit to Caswell Bay. In Year 6, many write biographies of Welsh celebrities in the third person.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils are extremely polite and respond positively when meeting visitors. Nearly all behave very well and are caring towards each other. There are strong working relationships between pupils and staff and this promotes a caring and supportive ethos. Most pupils have a high level of trust in the staff. As a result, they enjoy school, feel safe and understand what to do if anything is worrying them. Many have a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe online.

Most pupils are aware of the need to make healthy choices. They are aware of the importance of eating fruit and drinking water. They have a sound understanding of what to include in a healthy packed lunch. They understand the benefits of physical activity and discuss intelligently the reasons why it is important to exercise regularly. As a result, nearly all pupils develop a positive attitude towards keeping fit.

Many pupils, particularly in key stage 2, develop valuable life skills, for example when participating in the First World War commemoration, 'The White Feather' and raising money for charities. This contributes well towards developing their personal and social skills. Many discuss their work confidently and talk about how they have improved it. They work well with their peers and provide support to each other when necessary, discussing effectively in pairs and groups. As a result, most pupils develop as confident learners.

Pupils who are part of the school's various committees undertake their responsibilities well. The school council, eco committee and criw Cymraeg contribute purposefully towards the school's improvements. For example, they raise money for different charities and distribute fruit provided by a local supermarket to the younger pupils. Many pupils' understanding of values and equality is developing well. The school provides beneficial opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of being active citizens by performing regularly at local places of worship.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and they work hard. Most pupils persevere with tasks during their lessons. They understand the need to produce work of high quality and generally succeed in doing so. In all classes, pupils are increasingly influential in shaping learning activities. For example, they choose the design of a home for a man made of leaves.

Rates of attendance are consistently low in comparison with those of other similar schools. They have not improved over recent years.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

There are strong working relationships between all staff and pupils. This encourages respect, courtesy and trust. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and manage their behaviour in classes and around the school effectively. Teachers deploy teaching assistants well to make good use of their skills and expertise. Teaching assistants provide valuable support and guidance to groups of pupils of all abilities. Nearly all members of staff are effective language role models, in particular, they use Welsh consistently well during lessons.

Teachers collaborate well to plan detailed learning activities that build upon pupils' prior learning successfully. Provision for younger pupils aligns closely with the philosophy of the foundation phase. Staff deal with the limitations of the outdoor areas well to provide pupils with opportunities to be physically active and learn from hands-on experiences. Nearly all lessons stimulate and engage most pupils well. For example, enthusiastic pupils in Year 3 research into the weapons and tools of the Celts and design their own daggers and scabbards following a visit to the iron-age village at Castell Henllys. Most teachers generally have high expectations of pupils. However, they do not always plan activities that provide sufficient challenge for pupils. In a few instances, teachers over-direct pupils. This limits the development of pupils' independent learning skills.

Nearly all teachers ensure that their lessons move pupils' learning forward at an appropriate pace. Most staff use questioning techniques skilfully to further pupils' learning and enable them to explain their thinking purposefully, for example, during guided reading sessions. However, oral and written feedback from teachers does not always help pupils to know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.

Useful curriculum maps help to ensure broad and balanced provision. The wide range of valuable learning experiences engage and motivate most pupils to succeed and improve their knowledge, skills and understanding. The school provides valuable contexts in which pupils develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write independently at length across the curriculum. Teachers respond well to pupils' ideas when planning learning activities. For example, in the foundation phase, they plan opportunities for pupils to learn facts about the sun and the moon as part of a 'Light and Dark' topic.

There is a strong Welsh ethos across the school and there is clear emphasis on promoting pupils' understanding of their Welsh heritage. A comprehensive range of educational visits linked to topics and themes stimulate pupils' interests well. For example, visits to the national museum of Welsh life and an in-depth study of the

work of Sir Kyffin Williams help to develop pupils' awareness of Welsh culture. Welsh language provision is an integral part of activities throughout the school day. Additional strategies, such as the development of the Cwriw Cymraeg enhance this provision well and provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. Stimulating displays celebrate the pupils' numerous Welsh achievements such as their successes at the Urdd National Eisteddfod. The school holds its own annual Eisteddfod with very interesting and stimulating competitions for example, designing a new Welsh £10 note with images of famous Welsh celebrities.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school's ethos has a positive influence on pupils' wellbeing and behaviour. The sense of community within the school and the locality encourages all pupils to develop the values of loyalty, responsibility and a feeling of belonging. Beneficial working relationships ensure that pupils are confident in seeking staff support when they need it

Overall, staff manage pupils' behaviour very well and deal with any reported incidents of misbehaviour promptly and effectively. Assemblies and personal and social skills lessons provide pupils with a good understanding of what is right and wrong and help them to build positive relationships with others. There are valuable opportunities for all pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, pupils have frequent opportunities to sing and make music and to study the work of a variety of artists, including Andy Goldsworthy and Giuseppe Arcimboldo. The school provides a good range of sporting activities and after-school clubs that are open to all pupils. A beneficial partnership with other schools within the local cluster and the local secondary school ensures a smooth transition for pupils at the end of Year 6.

Arrangements to monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing are effective. Senior leaders use this information well to provide support for pupils as their needs arise or change. School staff identify pupils' additional learning needs at an early stage and produce beneficial education plans to support pupils to progress. Effective partnerships with parents and specialist agencies enhance the school's provision successfully. A broad range of intervention programmes as well as class-based support ensure that pupils receive the academic, emotional and social support they need to make good progress as they move through school. The school offers informative parents' evenings to improve parents' understanding of reading strategies, for example, and foster confidence to support their children with numeracy.

A valuable personal and social education programme is successful in developing pupils' understanding of healthy living and their emotional wellbeing. It also fosters positive attitudes towards safety and social responsibility. The school makes appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Processes to and seek pupils' views are an increasingly prominent part in the school's work. The school council has a positive influence on school life. For example, they seek pupils' ideas through a suggestion box and set up an 'old book' sale that raised valuable funds. The digital wizards take their responsibilities seriously, as they support fellow pupils within their classrooms and promote a good understanding of online safety. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has worked effectively with staff, governors, pupils and parents to lead the successful amalgamation of four very different schools. He has worked with all stakeholders to establish the school's vision for raising standards and ensuring the wellbeing of pupils. The headteacher sets high expectations and supports and challenges staff to meet these successfully.

A clear staffing structure ensures that staff share responsibilities effectively. All members of staff have a clear understanding of their responsibility for securing continuous improvement. They carry out their roles well. Regular staff meetings to discuss pupil progress ensure that all teachers take responsibility for the standards pupils achieve and the progress that they make in their classes.

The school's self-evaluation processes identify the school's strengths and areas for development accurately. The process informs the school's priorities for improvement appropriately. Senior leaders and staff with specific responsibilities implement change effectively to improve the provision for pupils. For example, the introduction of a phonics programme has improved standards in reading and writing and the introduction of joint planning ensures greater consistency in the quality of teaching.

Leaders work strategically to meet national and local priorities. For example, arrangements to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy, ICT and Welsh language skills are effective overall. They support most pupils to make good progress.

The headteacher ensures that governors have a sound understanding of the school's performance and procedures through a programme of visits and relevant observations. For example, governors have monitored the impact of a new phonics programme thoroughly and standards in reading and writing have improved. The governing body is very supportive and provides constructive support to the leadership team. Governors and leaders have a strong understanding of the school's finances and monitor spending diligently.

Leaders make effective use of additional funding, such as the pupil development grant, to provide effective intervention programme and to provide pastoral support and nurturing activities for vulnerable pupils.

Performance management arrangements are effective. They help to improve aspects of staff's professional performance and to support the school in achieving improvement goals. For example, all staff have received training related to literacy and standards are now improving. The school is proactive in working alongside other schools to share expertise. For example, a project on promoting pupil voice is having a positive effect on pupils' contribution to school life.

The school has plentiful resources of good quality, and leaders use the school budget purposefully to improve provision. The school successfully ensures significant additional funding through various grants to secure funding for pupils to experience creative arts.

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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Publication date: 17/12/2018