



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

A report on
Bryncethin Primary School
Heol Canola
Bryncethin
CF32 9TH

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by

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

About Bryncethin Primary School

Bryncethin Primary School is in the village of Bryncethin on the outskirts of Bridgend.

There are currently 297 pupils on roll between the ages of 3 and 11, including 16 part-time and 32 full-time pupils in the nursery. The school has 10 classes, including four single-age classes, five mixed-age classes, and a nursery class. The school also has a learning resource base class with nine pupils from key stage 2. Most of these pupils come from a wide geographical area within the local authority.

The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is 30%, which is well above the national average of 19%. The school identifies around 24% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is marginally above the national average of 21%, but includes pupils in the learning resource base class. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background or are in the care of the local authority. A very few pupils have English as an additional language and speak Welsh at home.

The school was last inspected in December 2012. The current headteacher took up his post in September 2015.

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

Bryncethin Primary School is highly inclusive and provides a safe, welcoming and stimulating learning environment for all its pupils. Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and make good progress and achieve well.

Teachers foster a positive climate for learning and provide pupils with interesting activities that engage them well. The pupils' input into how and what they learn is a strong aspect of the school's work. Standards of behaviour and self-discipline of almost all pupils in lessons and around the school are high.

School leaders provide effective leadership and a clear strategic direction for the school's work. A culture of improvement permeates the school and the headteacher encourages the staff to research and to try out new approaches. This has led to the establishment of a strong teaching community where staff learn from each other effectively.

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 Improve pupils Welsh oracy and reading skills

R2 Improve strategies to increase attendance

R3 Provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils make at least strong progress in their literacy and numeracy skills from their starting points and achieve particularly well by Year 6. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress against their targets. Most pupils in the learning resource base achieve well in line with their needs and abilities.

Most pupils' English oracy skills across the school are very good. They listen attentively and consider others' views respectfully. From an early age, they can choose words effectively to describe emotions well. For example, most pupils in the nursery class can confidently describe how the ten little pirates are feeling and decide where they should be placed on an emotions graph. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils communicate confidently and they talk with accuracy and maturity. Most pupils' high standards of oracy have a positive effect on their reading and writing skills. As a result, across the school, most pupils develop effective reading skills. In year 2, for example, most use factual books confidently to search for facts about insects and to write a description successfully. By Year 6, most pupils use their reading skills very skilfully to access other areas of the curriculum, for example when writing informative reports about Ancient Egypt.

Most pupils use the writing skills they learn in English lessons to good effect in other subject areas. Most foundation phase pupils write confidently for a range of purposes. For example, in Year 2, they use imaginative vocabulary when writing an underwater story. Most pupils progress from using basic punctuation in the early years to the use of paragraphs and a suitable range of punctuation by the end of key stage 2. Most pupils show a clear understanding of different writing styles. For example, Year 3 pupils use emotive language effectively to engage the reader when writing about Gelert, and Year 6 apply their imagination well when creating letters about the sea journey in 'Kensuke's Kingdom'. Most pupils across the school present their work neatly and develop a clear style of cursive handwriting.

Across the school, most pupils use their strong understanding of number, shape, measurement and handling data skilfully when solving problems. Many pupils in key stage 2 develop purposeful mental skills based upon a sound understanding of place value and the relationships between numbers. When learning about gravity in science, nearly all pupils in Year 6 calculate the mean, draw a graph and interpret it skilfully when researching the effect of different weight hoops on a travelling object.

Overall, many pupils in the foundation phase apply their numeracy skills confidently when working across all learning areas. Most pupils in the reception class, when studying healthy food, collect a simple data base of the class pupils' favourite fruit and produce a bar graph to present their findings. Pupils in Year 6, while working on a project on rivers, compile a database of the longest rivers in the world and present information successfully about the effects of erosion.

Many pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop well as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, many use art programs effectively to draw pictures of characters from stories. Nearly all Year 2 pupils

competently instruct a rocket to move around in space and create an animated film about dinosaurs with ease. In key stage 2, most pupils develop their use of data, multimedia and word-processing skills progressively to a high standard to present and produce work across the curriculum. Year 6 pupils use green screen approaches successfully to create an interview room when questioning Hansel and Gretel and the more able pupils produce complex games skilfully.

Most pupils across the school are developing purposeful writing skills in Welsh. The Year 2 pupils write simple dialogues between doctor and patient successfully and Year 6 confidently write television reviews well. However, progress in pupils' Welsh oracy and reading skills is less well developed. Pupils use set phrases confidently in formal session in class, but their use of the language around the school is limited.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils feel safe and happy in school. They know where to turn if they need support and are confident that staff will deal with their concerns effectively. There are strong working relationships between pupils and staff, based on mutual respect. Across the school, most pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of fairness and equality. They are friendly, polite and well-mannered to one another and adults during lessons, assemblies, when moving around the school and during break times.

From an early age, most pupils show very positive attitudes towards their work. They engage fully in lessons and they discuss current and previous learning with knowledge and enthusiasm. Nearly all pupils are very comfortable in each other's company and carry out tasks in pairs or groups with ease. They concentrate on activities for extended periods of time and are developing the ability to use 'self-help' strategies and peer support with increasing confidence. For example, in Year 1, pupils make good use of interactive displays to help other pupils to spell words correctly. Across the school, most pupils contribute to their own learning successfully. They make decisions about topics and activities. For example, pupils in Year 5 plan a range of cross-curricular activities linked to mythical creatures as part of their recent topic. Most pupils have a secure understanding of how to improve their own work.

The daily fruit tuck shop initiative and planting and caring for the fruit and vegetables grown in large planters develop all pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy through eating a balanced diet. All the foundation phase pupils walk a mile daily, which has had a positive impact on their understanding of the importance of regular exercise in achieving a healthy life. Many pupils attend the wide range of extra-curricular sessions to improve their health and fitness, such as rugby, netball and basketball.

Most pupils are very proud of their school and the roles they play within it. Pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 speak enthusiastically about the range of leadership roles available to them and the difference they are making to school life. Pupil groups, such as the active buddies, develop younger pupils' abilities to play traditional games together at break and lunchtime and this contributes purposefully to the development

of their social skills. The prefects and members of the various sub-committees have a positive impact on school life, for example by raising most pupils' awareness of rights and responsibilities. Most pupils are developing well as ethical and informed citizens, for example through fundraising activities and links within the community, such as the digital leaders who teach basic ICT skills to the residents of a local care home. Pupils show consistently good attitudes to the wellbeing of others.

Many pupils and parents have responded positively to the school's focus on improving attendance, and pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly. However, over the last three years, attendance levels have remained lower than those in similar schools. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching across the school is good. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and they plan carefully for the range of abilities in their classes. Overall, most teachers ensure that lessons move at an appropriate pace for all pupils. They explain and model work effectively and all adults question pupils skilfully in order to assess their understanding and to encourage them to think further. The caring working relationship between adults and pupils helps pupils to feel comfortable making mistakes and to persevere to overcome them. This is a particular strength of the school. Teachers use a variety of ideas successfully at the start of lessons to engage pupils from the outset. Teachers provide clear goals and instructions that enable most pupils to move forward quickly. A highly effective and committed team of support staff contributes purposefully to the work in class and in specific intervention groups.

During lessons, teachers give pupils constructive oral feedback. As a result, most pupils have a clear understanding on how to improve their skills and the content of their work. Teachers give pupils regular opportunities during and at the end of lessons to reflect on their own and others work. This approach ensures that most pupils across the school develop successfully as confident independent learners.

The curriculum provides a wide range of learning experiences for pupils that reinforce and build successfully on their prior learning. Teachers are beginning to incorporate the four purposes of the new curriculum for Wales into their planning and pupils have a clear input into what and how they learn and the topics they study. Teachers take good account of the literacy and numeracy framework to ensure that planning for the development of pupils' skills is effective, particularly in relation to literacy. Opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in tasks across the curriculum are purposeful. For example, in science lessons, Year 4 pupils measure the impact of the weight of a pendulum on the rate of its movement. The school is developing its provision to meet the requirements of the digital competency framework well. As a result, pupils apply their ICT skills successfully in all learning areas. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in real-life situations. For example, drawing on the pupils' own observations, they have written to a large snack manufacturer highlighting the issue of the amount of plastic floating around the local coastline.

The school plans a number of visits, which broaden all pupils' knowledge of the local community and wider world. For example, pupils in the foundation phase visit the local supermarket and pupils in key stage 2 meet visitors from the national marine aquarium. The wide range of extra-curricular activities for all ages, both after school and at lunchtime, is a notable feature of the school. These include gardening, the orchestra and the digital construction club.

The principles of the foundation phase are well established in the planning and teaching. Teachers organise an exciting range of activities to develop pupils' skills in the indoor and outdoor areas, such as creating dens for the dinosaur eggs in the nature area or being a captain on the pirate ship. They ensure an appropriate balance between adult-led activities and purposeful opportunities for pupils to work independently indoors. However, most activities outdoors tend to be led by an adult.

A very few teachers use Welsh well in their classrooms and this encourages pupils to use the language themselves. However, staff generally do not use enough Welsh themselves or ensure that pupils receive sufficient rich opportunities to hear and speak Welsh. The provision to develop pupils' knowledge of the culture and heritage Wales is limited overall.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has a caring and highly inclusive ethos within a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment.

There are robust systems for tracking pupils' progress. Teachers use a wide range of information and test results appropriately to provide support for pupils. They make suitable use of performance information across the areas of learning and core subjects to check that pupils are making good progress. Staff know their pupils well and work successfully with parents to deliver effective learning programmes. A notable example is the worthwhile mathematics workshop, which has a positive impact on raising pupils' confidence and attainment.

The school's provision to support pupils with additional learning needs is strong. Staff identify pupils' additional learning and personal needs from an early age and ensure that they receive the necessary support to succeed in their work as they move through the school. A purposeful range of intervention programmes and strategies enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. Individual education targets for pupils with additional learning needs are specific and measurable, and pupils and parents play an important part in the process.

The school's arrangements to integrate pupils with special educational needs is particularly effective. They have full access to the same broad and balanced curriculum as other pupils. All pupils in the learning resource base have detailed programmes, which have a very positive impact on their individual progress. They take a full part in their own learning and assess confidently their own and other pupils' progress towards meeting their personal targets. This is a particular strength. The additional learning needs co-ordinator uses the provision creatively to support other mainstream pupils. This impacts positively on the progress and wellbeing of all targeted pupils.

The school provides pupils with valuable opportunities to undertake leadership roles that have a positive impact on their wellbeing and on the day-to-day life of the school, for example when the school council interviews candidates for job vacancies at the school. The eco group's decision to create a wild area for bees to pollinate has developed most pupils' understanding of environmental issues well.

The school has effective systems in place for pupils to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyle choices, for example during physical education sessions and sporting extra-curricular activities. The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about how to stay safe by inviting guest speakers to talk about relevant topics, such as beach safety. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school's provision for developing pupils' moral and social development is sound. Staff make good use of the multi-cultural week to broaden pupils' knowledge of the cultural differences of countries from around the world. The school promotes respect and tolerance well through planned lessons, pupils' voice groups and charity events. Pupils reflect well on how they should treat others and develop an appropriate understanding of the diversity of the wider world through activities such as the school council poster competition to raise awareness of endangered species and work on how children in Uganda collect water. There are beneficial arrangements through the curriculum, assemblies, and visitors to the school to promote pupils' spiritual development.

Staff develop pupils' creative skills successfully by encouraging pupils to take part in class assemblies, the school Eisteddfod and playing in the school orchestra. These opportunities include the annual, well-attended parents' assemblies that celebrate pupils' work and provide a stage for all pupils to perform. In addition, the majority of pupils in key stage 2 benefit from music tuition during the school day. These experiences develop pupils' self-confidence, and pride in themselves and in their ability to work with others.

The headteacher has introduced a range of strategies in place to promote good attendance and punctuality, including working closely with the local authority. However, these approaches are not having as much impact as they could on improving overall attendance over time.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher's collaborative leadership style is highly effective. He invests time appropriately in developing productive relationships with staff, parents, governors and pupils. As a result, nearly all stakeholders feel valued and share 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. Senior leaders have introduced many robust strategies to secure and to improve the provision for pupils. Notable examples include the regular opportunities for teachers to share effective classroom practice. These have contributed positively to the good quality teaching throughout the school.

The staffing structure ensures that staff share responsibilities effectively. All members of staff have a clear understanding of their responsibility for securing

continuous improvement and they carry out their roles well. The 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 class.

Staff at all levels have a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use a wide range of first-hand information to inform the self-evaluation process, including analysis of information on pupils' performance, book scrutiny and listening to learners. A strong feature of the process is the detailed self-analysis of the effectiveness of senior leaders. Senior leaders use this information well to reflect on their effectiveness and to improve their skills. The school's self-evaluation processes lead to an accurate and honest account of the school's strengths and areas for development.

The self-evaluation process informs the school's priorities for improvement successfully. Strategic plans include suitable allocation of responsibilities to staff for leading actions and monitoring progress. Financial planning links well to improvement priorities, and there are realistic timescales to achieve challenging targets. Leaders ensure that strategic plans are successful in meeting national and local priorities. For example, plans to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are effective and most pupils make good progress. Plans to develop pupils' Welsh language skills are thorough, but these are not having as much impact as they could on pupils' progress in using the Welsh language as they move through the school.

The governing body is very supportive and knows the school and the community it serves well. The headteacher, senior leaders and groups of pupils regularly provide detailed reports to governors, outlining the work of the school. As a result, governors have a clear understanding of how well the school is progressing and can identify the areas requiring improvement. They hold the school to account successfully, for example when discussing the impact of the school's strategies to improve attendance and the effect of changing the school's staffing structure.

The school is an effective learning community. The performance management system for staff is robust and all have access to relevant professional development opportunities. These have had a positive impact on developing staff expertise and on pupil outcomes, for example as a result of the action research undertaken by senior leaders to develop pupils' independence skills. Senior leaders have shared the outcomes with all staff, who have adopted best practice ideas, including improving their use of more effective questioning skills in their teaching.

The school uses its attractive indoor areas and stimulating, extensive outside areas effectively to support teaching and learning of good quality. The headteacher and governing body manage the budget efficiently and ensure that learning programmes are cost effective. The quality of financial forward planning is particularly strong. The pupil development grant supports pupils eligible for free school meals well to provide individual support for vulnerable learners, which develops their skills and wellbeing highly effectively. These pupils also have full access to the same experiences as other pupils and most make good progress from their starting points.