



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

A report on

Parclewis Primary School

**Broadway
Pontypridd
RCT
CF37 1BE**

Date of inspection: May 2022

by

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

About Parclewis Primary School

Name of provider	PARCLEWIS PRIMARY SCHOOL
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Language of the provider	English Medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	258
Pupils of statutory school age	199
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	33
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 21.3%)</i>	20.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 20.6%)</i>	25.1%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	16.6%
Date of headteacher appointment	09/2011
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	29/04/2013
Start date of inspection	09/05/2022
Additional information	

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

Parc Lewis Primary School has a warm and caring ethos. Pupils feel safe in the school and know that if they talk to a member of staff about something that is bothering them it will be dealt with promptly. Pupils who are experiencing periods of emotional stress receive good support and value the opportunities to talk to adults in a supportive and friendly atmosphere.

A significant number of pupils join the school part of the way through their time in primary education. These pupils are supported well and fit into school life quickly. This is particularly true for pupils who have English as an additional language.

Overall, pupils make strong progress from their starting points. Teachers have identified that many pupils need support to improve their reading and writing skills and are putting in place systems to do this. However, there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing as they move through the school, and their presentation and handwriting are often untidy. In a few classes, work is not always matched accurately to all pupils' ability and a few pupils struggle to complete tasks successfully.

Staff have positive and supportive working relationships with pupils and provide interesting learning experiences that pupils enjoy. Pupils have good opportunities to suggest activities that they would like to take part in and talk enthusiastically about their lessons. Pupils like coming to school.

Leaders know the pupils and their community well. They are approachable and supportive and give pupils' well-being a high priority. Their processes to identify general areas for improvement are sound overall but, following the pandemic, their monitoring is not always sharp enough to identify specific areas that require improvement.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that teachers provide the right level of challenge for all pupils
- R2 Improve pupils' writing skills across the school
- R3 Sharpen self-evaluation processes to ensure that action plans focus on specific areas for improvement

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 its support for pupils with English as an additional language for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main evaluation

Learning

Few pupils start school with skills at the expected level for their age and pupils regularly join the school at a later stage. The school has appropriate arrangements to support these pupils, and this ensures that nearly all pupils, including those who are vulnerable or speak English as an additional language, make strong progress from their individual starting points.

Many pupils listen attentively to adults and their peers, and they respond well to instructions and questions. They speak with growing confidence and with an increasing range of vocabulary and, by Year 2, use a wide vocabulary. Many older pupils express their ideas and opinions on a range of topics clearly, responding maturely to questions asked during activities.

Most pupils make good progress in reading and many develop fluency and expression well. A majority of pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 recognise letters and short words by sight and, as they progress, almost all pupils vary their intonation as they read for dramatic effect. Many older pupils recognise and outline the features of a non-fiction text and can scan and skim for information, referring to organisational features where relevant. They outline a story plot and refer to other popular books from the same author.

Overall, most pupils make suitable progress when developing their writing skills. Many develop a good understanding of sentence structure and use grammar and punctuation accurately. By the time pupils reach reception, many form letters appropriately and, in Year 1, many pupils begin to write in sentences. As they progress, pupils write extended sentences that combine adjectives. In Years 3 and 4, pupils write for a range of purposes including playscripts, diaries and stories which, for the more able, include the use of paragraphs. They explore poetry and create thoughtful shape and cinquain poems, extending their use of language with a range of linguistic features. Older pupils recall the features of a given text type and use this knowledge effectively when drafting their work. Standards of presentation are variable across the school, particularly for more able pupils, and few pupils develop a fluent handwriting style. In a minority of classes there are limited opportunities for pupils to create extended pieces of writing that draw on the skills that they develop in individual English lessons.

Most pupils display enthusiasm for the Welsh language, and this is particularly notable of pupils with English as an additional language. Many pupils listen and respond appropriately to instructions given in Welsh. In nursery and reception, pupils use simple phrases and songs throughout the school day and describe the weather using suitable adjectives. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 build upon sentence patterns using appropriate sentence starters to describe themselves, their hobbies and interests. They develop their use of the past tense when writing about activities from the previous day. Older pupils use a range of sentences well to write and present a weather forecast.

Pupils in nursery and reception develop confidence in using their numeracy skills and begin to develop a sound understanding of number bonds. In Year 1, pupils count and use a range of up to 20 objects to create magic potions from given recipes. Most pupils in Year 2 recognise distances of one and two metres when attempting to throw bean bags into targets, and more able pupils use and apply this knowledge to solve simple problems, such as the length of two cars parked together. Many older pupils display a sound understanding of place value which they apply to more complex calculations involving a range of measurements. By the time they reach Year 6, many pupils use the correct formula to calculate the area and perimeter of compound shapes and they apply this effectively when solving word problems involving area and perimeter. They recognise and perform calculations using equivalent fractions and use their knowledge of angles when describing movement. However, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematics skills across the curriculum.

Most pupils make effective progress in developing and using their digital skills. During their time at the school, pupils of all ages use a wide range of technology to enhance their learning. Younger pupils navigate to and access folders where they save and retrieve projects. Older pupils develop their use of coding to control robots and when creating online games. They create spreadsheets to manage budgets for events, such as a Christmas party, and they create simple animations.

Pupils make strong progress in developing their creative skills across the school. They use a range of media when creating pieces of artwork inspired by famous artists, for example using fruits and vegetables to create faces. Older pupils follow simple notation to play chords on the ukulele. They apply artistic techniques with increasing skill such as smudging when using pastel to create an abstract effect.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Across the school, most pupils demonstrate high levels of well-being. They show considerable respect for each other, their school and their community. They understand that they are well cared for and are caring towards others. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school. When they experience periods of emotional stress, they know who to turn to for support. Through the numerous opportunities to discuss their feelings and emotions and through daily well-being check-ins, pupils feel supported and valued.

Many pupils develop their leadership skills well as they move through the school. They are eager to take up leadership roles, such as belonging to the school council or eco committee. Digital leaders help others with their work and provide advice about how to stay safe online. Many pupils explain their role clearly and provide examples of where their work has had an impact on school life or on the wider community. For example, pupils in the eco committee identified the need to stop using plastic straws and to replace them with a less environmentally damaging alternative. Pupils enjoy the responsibility of being a peer mentor and discuss the training they receive for this role and how it prepares them to help others.

Most pupils understand that they have rights as pupils. Older pupils talk in detail about children's rights, what they mean to individuals, and how they are reinforced within the school. They cite Ukraine as a place where children's rights are not

currently being upheld and compare their lives with those in different countries thoughtfully. They show empathy for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils demonstrate that their work on children's rights has helped them to treat others with respect and to celebrate the diversity within their school and society.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. For example, they know the importance of protecting their passwords and personal information. They lead assemblies on aspects of e-safety and produce posters to display in local shops to try to prevent cyber bullying.

All pupils understand the importance of regular exercise to be healthy. Most have an age-appropriate knowledge of the importance of making healthy choices relating to diet. Most pupils like taking part in physical education and enjoy attending extra-curricular sporting activities when available, however, these activities have not resumed fully following their suspension due to COVID-19.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. They take care when using the staircases and are supported to do this effectively by the pupils who monitor staircase safety.

Across the school most pupils engage fully in their learning. They talk enthusiastically about their work and are eager to have a say in what they learn. Overall, learning is calm and purposeful. All pupils settle quickly to independent tasks on arrival at school. They know what is expected of them and work conscientiously, co-operating well with one another. Most pupils sustain concentration in lessons and persevere to complete challenges. Older pupils talk about what they need to do if they require help and how to use the learning wall and ask others before asking the teacher. At the start of the day, pupils in nursery and reception demonstrate good independent skills when they choose activities for themselves, but generally during the rest of the day there are fewer opportunities for them to develop these skills. As pupils move through the school, they develop their independent learning skills well.

Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not report pupils' rates of attendance during the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Inspectors will, however, consider the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of inspection area 4 (care, support and guidance).

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has made good progress towards considering its implementation of the Curriculum for Wales. It has involved the community in reviewing its vision for the curriculum. Staff have worked with pupils to ensure that they understand what the four purposes mean to them at an age-appropriate level.

Overall, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which offers pupils a good range of purposeful and interesting learning experiences. Themes stimulate pupils' interests and build on their existing knowledge and skills well. Teachers plan a wide range of activities that include many opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills and to improve their well-being. They enrich the curriculum well through planning a range of visits and visitors. For example, they invite parents into school to share any areas of expertise that they have with the pupils.

The lead teacher for expressive arts has carried out an audit of the skills of staff and parents to look at ways that the school community can enrich this aspect of the curriculum. The school also uses a range of peripatetic providers to develop the music skills and knowledge of pupils from Year 2 to Year 6. Each year there are opportunities for all pupils to learn a range of instruments, such as taiko drums, guitar and ukulele. There is an established link with the Royal College of Music, which allows students to come into school to work with pupils.

Following the easing of restrictions from the pandemic, teachers have begun to re-establish beneficial extra-curricular clubs, including a well-attended coding club. Teachers give older pupils useful opportunities to help others to develop their digital skills. An extra-curricular drama club performs productions such as Oliver, and Romeo and Juliet.

There is an engaging and stimulating learning environment that utilises the indoor and outdoor spaces effectively. The school offers strong opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills. Many pupils use the outdoor learning environment well. However, planned activities do not always make the most of the benefits that the outdoor learning environment provides, with some activities being too adult led.

Teachers develop pupils' Welsh language communication skills well and this builds incrementally as pupils move through the school. Teachers aim to make learning fun, and this builds pupils' confidence and enthusiasm.

Teachers and support staff work well together and understand the needs of the pupils in their class. There are strong working relationships between adults and pupils and, as a result, most pupils respond well. The support that all staff give to pupils' well-being is a strength of the school. Learning experiences challenge pupils who are more able or have additional needs appropriately. However, the level of challenge for other pupils is not always suitable.

Teachers are good language role models, and this helps to develop pupils' language skills effectively, especially those with English as an additional language. Staff use a range of questioning techniques, which helps to move pupils' learning forward. In a few classes the pace of learning is too slow, and pupils do not have enough time for independent work. Support staff work with pupils successfully to improve their confidence and to meet their individual needs through a range of effective intervention programmes.

The school has a robust assessment and tracking system and teachers have regular meetings with senior leaders to discuss the progress of the pupils in their class. They use mini assessments in mathematics to identify any gaps in pupils' learning and to inform teachers' planning. Teachers have identified a need to improve reading and all staff have aimed to raise the profile of reading throughout the school. The school has an agreed marking policy. However, feedback to pupils does not always help them to understand how to move their learning forward. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of handwriting and presentation for all pupils.

Staff are beginning to re-establish appropriate provision for younger pupils following a more formal approach they identified as necessary to maintain pupils' safety during

the pandemic. This is supporting pupils to develop greater independence and to have more autonomy about their learning.

Care, support and guidance

The school places a high priority on ensuring that pupils are happy and settled and that it meets their emotional needs. There is strong support for pupils' emotional needs throughout the school including the early morning check in system and through the deployment of teaching assistants that have been specifically trained to support pupils' emotional needs. The school has a caring ethos and seeks to promote the self-esteem of all its pupils. For example, staff select pupils to act as peer mentors because they have an identified skill or characteristic that it would be beneficial to share with others. They receive training for this role and the trainer supervises their work closely to ensure that it is having the desired impact. She also trains pupils to provide one-to-one support for peers who need some additional help to improve their overall experience of school. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of mental well-being through mindfulness sessions. These help to maintain a calm classroom environment, particularly after breaktimes for older pupils.

The school serves a diverse community and pupils are taught to respect the beliefs and cultures of others through lessons and cultural experiences, such as parents visiting the school to talk about their culture and to share different foods. Pupils have good opportunities to consider what it is like to live in modern Wales and to contrast this with the lives of others in different countries. This links to the school's work on respecting children's rights which features strongly throughout the curriculum. As a result, pupils have a firm understanding of their rights and regularly share information linked to the articles of the United Nations Rights of the Child through assemblies and displays around the school.

There are well-established and well-considered systems to support pupils who have English as an additional language. Staff give pupils time to build their confidence in a new and unfamiliar environment before they encourage them to start to speak. They use songs, rhymes and lots of repetition to develop pupils' English language skills. This approach helps pupils to settle quickly and make rapid progress. There are effective systems to evaluate pupils' language needs when they arrive at the school. This work has been shared with other schools in the local authority and more widely.

Pupils have beneficial opportunities to influence school life through their involvement in several pupil voice committees including the school council and eco committee. There are opportunities for pupils to take on lead roles, such as digital leaders or members of the group to promote the use of Welsh in the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to be involved in influencing their own learning and teachers regularly ask them to think about aspects of topics they would like to investigate further. Teachers take good account of pupils' views when planning future learning.

Teachers plan well for pupils to learn how to be healthy across the curriculum and the provision of an extensive variety of playground games and apparatus encourages pupils to be physically active at break and lunch times.

The school makes effective provision for pupils with additional learning needs. Staff have effective systems to track and monitor pupils' progress and well-being. Arrangements for identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with additional needs are rigorous. The school is making good progress towards the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs Act.

The school monitors pupils' attendance effectively and addresses persistent absence well. The systems to support and challenge low attendance are robust and over time have resulted in improved levels of attendance.

The school has robust arrangements to safeguard pupils and places a high priority on this aspect of its work. Leaders and teachers ensure that the school is a safe environment for all pupils and deal with any concerns promptly.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides effective leadership. Leaders have a clear vision that concentrates on inclusion, well-being and placing the school at the heart of the community. They have engaged successfully with all stakeholders to develop this vision, which is understood by all and is evident in the day-to-day running of the school.

The school has a strong culture of effective teamwork. Members of staff have clear responsibilities and undertake their roles effectively. There are high levels of expectation among staff, and this has led to sustainable improvements. For example, staff share pupils' performance information and plan next steps in provision collaboratively. All members of staff have positive and professional working relationships, which support the school's caring ethos successfully.

There are effective arrangements to manage the performance of staff, which link well to the priorities in the school development plan. The headteacher promotes the professional development of staff successfully, which has a positive effect on the school's work. For example, the additional learning needs co-ordinator has adapted the school's provision effectively and has shared this good practice with schools in the local authority as the cluster leader.

Prior to the pandemic, the school had beneficial self-evaluation activities to identify its strengths and areas for improvement. However, monitoring activities are not currently always rigorous enough to identify specific areas of standards and provision that require improvement. Leaders identify and allocate resources and staffing to support improvement priorities suitably. The school responds purposefully to local and national priorities, such as developing the new curriculum and implementing the Additional Learning Needs Act. There is also an active culture within the school to develop the Welsh language.

Governors are very supportive of the school and have a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have a general understanding of the school's main strengths and areas for improvement. They contribute constructively to the improvement process and deepen their knowledge of standards and provision successfully. However, after an enforced break due to the pandemic, governors have yet to restart their independent scrutiny and are reliant on the information provided by

leaders to evaluate the work of the school. The governing body has suitable arrangements for healthy eating and drinking. The governors challenge leaders appropriately, especially regarding financial management and the use of grants.

The headteacher and the governors manage the school's budget purposefully. Decisions on expenditure link closely to the school's strategic priorities. They ensure that the school uses the pupil development grant and Welsh Government grants effectively to improve the literacy skills and support the emotional development of more vulnerable pupils, or pupils whose standards are below expectation.

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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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