



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

A report on

Burlais Primary School

**Gerddi Alexander
Cwmbwrla
Swansea
SA5 8BN**

Date of inspection: September 2024

by

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

About Burlais Primary School

Name of provider	Burlais Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	481
Pupils of statutory school age	383
Number in nursery classes	47
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 22.9%)	34.8%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 11.1%)	12.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	15.7%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	19/06/2017
Start date of inspection	30/09/2024

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

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- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Summary

Burlais Primary School is a happy, safe and successful school where all pupils are valued and respected, and their achievements celebrated. The headteacher provides thoughtful and dedicated leadership and the committed team of staff and governors support him well.

Throughout the school, strong and purposeful working relationships between staff and pupils enable pupils to learn in a caring and positive environment. Teachers and classroom assistants know pupils well and plan an engaging range of activities that support their well-being and learning needs successfully. As a result, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who attend the two specialist teaching facilities (STFs), make strong progress from their individual starting points. The school has developed its curriculum to include a wide and varied range of beneficial learning experiences. However, teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to make choices in their learning or to develop effectively as independent learners.

Leaders have a sound knowledge of what the school does well and what needs to improve. Recent work to develop pupils' reading skills has been particularly successful and a sharp focus on well-being has led to valuable improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance. However, the school's work to improve pupils' Welsh language skills is underdeveloped.

The school's approach to caring for pupils and their families is a strength. Staff, including those in the STFs, work closely with parents and outside agencies to provide invaluable advice, signposting and access to resources.

Recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Develop all pupils as effective independent learners
- R2 Improve pupils' Welsh language skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Burlais Primary School is safe, secure and welcoming. A strong sense of pride, respect and purpose permeates the school and, as a result, most pupils are happy and attend school regularly. Across the school, pupils behave exceptionally well and engage with their learning enthusiastically.

All staff treat pupils with care and sensitivity. The highly inclusive nature of the school means that all pupils, including those in the two Specialist Teaching Facilities (STFs), receive the help, support and guidance they need. As a result, by the time they leave the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those in the school's STF classes, make good progress in their learning and well-being and are well-prepared for the next step in their education.

Leaders, staff and governors share the headteacher's determined and inclusive vision for the whole school community and enact it purposefully in their work. They have high expectations and communicate these clearly. This is evident in the school's successful work to improve behaviour and reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions.

Spotlight: Developing a strong culture of positive relationships and behaviour

Pupils and staff have worked together successfully to agree, develop and demonstrate a strong vision and ethos for positive relationships and behaviour based on a sense of pride and collective responsibility. The school celebrates pupils' achievements, recognises effort and progress and reflects the vision through all aspects of school life. Pupils of all ages show high levels of respect, care and zest and behave consistently well.

Staff have worked purposefully to develop a curriculum that reflects pupils' interests and allows them to deepen their learning through a broad range of experiences. The school's thoughtful planning successfully supports pupils to improve their understanding of diversity, identity and spirituality, and to develop respect. Staff diligently ensure that pupils take part in a valuable range of visits and first-hand experiences to enrich their learning. These useful opportunities support pupils' understanding of cultural heritage, local history and the world of work well, and help most to develop as aspirational learners.

Across the school, teachers and classroom assistants are positive and effective language role models. Staff in the younger classes are rigorous in their approach to supporting pupils' early language needs and the school builds on this work successfully as pupils get older. By Year 6, most pupils speak confidently and develop a valuable range of vocabulary that they use ably in a variety of contexts. Recent work to improve pupils' reading skills has been highly effective. By the time they leave the school, most pupils read with strong levels of accuracy, confidence and enthusiasm. In general, they use their reading skills capably to access and understand their learning across the curriculum.

Many teachers provide pupils with regular and useful feedback that helps them to take the next steps in their learning. Many older pupils use this feedback efficiently to enhance aspects of their written work such as paragraphing, presentation and vocabulary. Many teachers use questioning effectively to elicit pupils' understanding, develop their thinking and clarify misconceptions. These approaches support pupils to make good progress in developing their knowledge and skills over time. However, across the school, teachers often over-direct the learning and this limits pupils' opportunities to make choices and to develop as effective independent learners.

The school values pupils' contributions and provides numerous opportunities for them to influence school life. The school's various pupil groups play an active and enthusiastic role in representing their friends. They have been responsible for the introduction of a new school prayer and a wider range of after-school clubs and enrichment opportunities.

Leaders prioritise the well-being and workload of staff effectively. As a result, staff feel well supported and valued. Throughout the school there is a strong sense of teamwork. A notable example of this is the way that staff work together to identify and meet pupils' individual learning needs, in both the mainstream and STF classes. The school benefits from an impressively skilled and committed team of classroom assistants who display high levels of compassion and care in their work. They know their pupils extremely well and provide them with thoughtful and sensitive support that greatly enhances their learning and well-being.

The school demonstrates a rigorous commitment to supporting the well-being of pupils and their families. The impact of this is highly visible in the strength of relationships, behaviour and attitudes to learning seen in all classes. The worthwhile introduction of the 'Happy Hive' provision ensures that vulnerable pupils receive highly effective support for their learning and well-being. Innovative work by the STF staff supports parents to make beneficial connections with each other through a digital platform. Parents value this network as it helps them and their children to settle and make new friends when transitioning into the school and provides support during challenging times.

Governors support the school well and use their expertise in areas such as health and safety to good effect in assisting the school's work. Along with leaders and staff, they are developing a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school takes appropriate account of national priorities. Leaders have addressed ALN reform thoroughly and have successfully improved attendance levels. However, work to improve pupils' Welsh language skills is underdeveloped and, as a result, pupils do not make sufficient progress in developing these skills.

Governors work well with the headteacher to ensure the school plans and uses its budget effectively. For example, they use the Pupil Development Grant well to deploy staff to provide valuable family engagement and support.

Spotlight: Care for pupils and their families

The school's dedicated and highly skilled pastoral team work very effectively with staff, parents and community services to support pupils and their families. They provide invaluable guidance on well-being and support access to a wide range of free resources. This helps pupils, including those experiencing poverty, to feel happy, safe and ready to learn.

Leaders ensure that all staff have timely access to relevant professional learning. Collaboration both within the school and with a wide variety of other partners is strong. Staff work closely with local schools on curriculum development, and this has been beneficial in developing the leadership skills of the school's middle leaders. Leaders manage staff performance effectively and opportunities to share good practice across the school support staff development purposefully.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for site security do not give any cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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