



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

A report on

Bryncoch C.I.W. School

**Furzeland Drive
Bryncoch
Neath
SA10 7UG**

Date of inspection: October 2024

by

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

About Bryncoch C.I.W. School

Name of provider	Bryncoch C.I.W. School
Local authority	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	English medium only
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church In Wales
Number of pupils on roll	130
Pupils of statutory school age	106
Number in nursery classes	12
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%)	4.3%
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%)	12.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.8%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.8%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/05/2017
Start date of inspection	21/10/2024

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

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

Summary

Bryncoch Church in Wales Primary School is a welcoming and inclusive school where staff know the pupils well and provide high levels of care and support. Pupils are friendly and kind to each other and they enjoy coming to school. As a result, nearly all pupils attend school regularly, attitudes to learning are positive and behaviour is good. Most pupils, including pupils affected by disadvantage and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress in their learning and well-being during their time at the school.

The school has effective arrangements in place to support pupils with ALN. Staff maintain a close and supportive relationship with parents and outside agencies to meet the needs of pupils successfully. Overall, relationships between parents and the school are positive and productive.

The school curriculum provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about their local area, Wales and the wider world. Staff make good use of the local church, external providers and educational visits to enrich learning experiences. However, work to ensure that skills, including literacy and numeracy, are developed progressively is at an early stage of development.

In most classes, teachers plan activities that have a clear purpose, promote independence and provide an appropriate level of challenge. However, teachers have a tendency over-direct learning, limiting pupils' independence. Most teachers pose suitable questions to ensure understanding and use feedback to support and extend learning during lessons. However, this feedback is not always specific enough to ensure that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

Leaders undertake a range of evaluation activities with members of the governing body, who play a full role in monitoring the impact of initiatives and provision. As a result, the headteacher has gained good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas in need of improvement, in a short period of time,

Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school and bring a range of experience and professional expertise to the role. They provide a good balance of support and challenge to the headteacher and fulfil their role as a critical friend well. Governors deploy the school budget and grants effectively to secure improvements for all pupils.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Strengthen curriculum planning to ensure that pupils develop their skills progressively over time
- R2 Provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills

R3 Ensure that feedback clearly identifies next steps for learning

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Bryncoch Church in Wales Primary School places a strong emphasis on pupil and staff well-being. The headteacher has created a welcoming and inclusive school where staff know the pupils well and provide high levels of care and support. The beneficial relationships that exist between staff and pupils are a strength. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they have a concern. During their time in the school, most pupils, including those affected by social disadvantage, make good progress.

Pupils are extremely friendly and show great kindness towards their friends and other pupils during break and lunchtimes. For example, older pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to join their younger peers and encourage them to develop confidence during play, as well as establishing beneficial relationships across the age ranges. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and nearly all pupils behave well and work collaboratively with others. Most pupils enjoy school and have a positive attitude towards learning. They make worthwhile contributions to their lessons, listening attentively and demonstrating high levels of perseverance. Nearly all pupils attend school regularly.

Leaders have taken appropriate steps to involve all stakeholders in developing a broad and relevant curriculum for the school that covers all areas of learning and experience, in line with the principles of Curriculum for Wales. Staff ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with a range of worthwhile opportunities to learn about their local community, Wales and the wider world. For example, they learn about the diverse nature of society through their work during Black History Month, when they consider ethical issues, such as segregation and equality. Staff make good use of the local area, external providers and educational visits to enrich provision. For example, Year 4 and 5 pupils gain first-hand experience of life in Victorian times through roleplay during a visit to St Fagans. Overall, many pupils develop their knowledge and understanding appropriately across all areas of the curriculum. However, leaders recognise that their work to ensure that pupils develop their skills progressively across the school is at an early stage of development.

The school places a strong focus on supporting pupils' well-being. Staff use a range of approaches to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. For example, a 'daily check in' encourages pupils to share how they are feeling at the start of the day. Staff respond effectively to any concerns and this supports pupils to manage their emotions well. Provision for pupils' ethical and moral development is good. The school's values are evident throughout the school through the actions of pupils and

staff, in assemblies, on displays and in activities led by older pupils, such as the Values Club.

Most classes are well organised and support learning appropriately. In the early years for example, the environment promotes pupil independence and sustained engagement extremely well, which results in highly effective learning. Elements of this practice are developing appropriately across the school. For example, older pupils speak positively about the digital stations they now use to conduct research independently. Most teachers make good use of the extensive outdoor areas to enhance pupils' learning and support well-being.

In most classes, teachers' plan activities that have a clear purpose, promote independence and provide an appropriate level of challenge. Teachers adapt their approaches to meet the differing interests of pupils, they build on prior learning and provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to apply newly acquired skills to deepen learning. For example, pupils use their Welsh language skills to complete a digital task successfully. However, teachers tend to over-direct learning, which limits pupils' independence. In addition, the level of challenge in lessons and activities does not always meet the needs of learners well enough. This means that pupils do not always achieve to the level of which they are capable. Most teachers pose suitable questions to ensure understanding and use feedback to support and extend learning during lessons. However, this feedback is not always specific enough to ensure pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Arrangements to support pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) are well-established and effective. Teachers and support staff ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils across the range of learning experiences at the school. They support learning skilfully, adapting their approach according to each pupil's particular strengths and needs. For example, in the woodland area, they follow pupils' interests and gently encourage them to use their senses to explore the outdoor learning environment. The additional needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) and staff maintain a close and supportive relationship with parents and outside agencies. Staff work effectively with them to meet the needs of pupils successfully.

A significant minority of pupils enjoy the opportunity to be part of one of the many well-established pupil voice groups in the school. These groups meet regularly to plan a range of activities to address changes suggested by their peers. For example, The Healthy Schools Committee introduced 'Tropical Tuesday' where tropical fruit is sold in the tuck shop instead of more standard fruit items.

Leaders have established a positive Welsh culture throughout the school. They have invested in professional learning to develop the Welsh language skills of staff and introduced teaching strategies to improve pupils' language skills. Staff provide good role models for pupils and take every opportunity to engage pupils and visitors in conversations to practise their skills. As a result, Welsh is heard frequently throughout the school day.

Leaders worked successfully with staff to improve reading skills. This has been effective in developing a consistent approach to teaching phonics and increasing opportunities for reading from an early age. As a result, by Year 2, most pupils read simple texts accurately and with confidence. Many older pupils read with enthusiasm,

fluency and understanding. Overtime, most pupils' writing skills progress appropriately and many pupils make good progress in developing their mathematical skills. However, pupils have too few opportunities to apply these skills independently in work across the curriculum and at a sufficiently challenging level.

The school has a well-established process for tracking and monitoring the impact of its work on teaching and pupil progress. Leaders gather information from a range of sources and use it effectively to inform school priorities. They link professional learning effectively to school and national priorities as well as the individual needs of staff. In a short period of time, the headteacher has gained good understanding of the strengths of the school and is taking steps to address areas in need of improvement. For example, whilst relationships with parents are generally positive and productive, the headteacher is improving the way the school communicates with parents to ensure it is more accessible, informative and timely.

School governors bring a significant range of experience and professional expertise to the school. They provide a good balance of support and challenge to the headteacher and fulfil their role as a critical friend well. Through their regular visits, and participation in self-evaluation activities, they have a secure understanding of the school's priorities. Governors monitor the school budget carefully to ensure that they improve pupils' outcomes and well-being, including using grants to fund enrichment experiences. This ensures that pupils affected by poverty and disadvantage do not miss out on valuable learning experiences.

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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