



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

A report on

Coed Hirwaun Primary School

**Cwrt y Carw
Margam
Port Talbot
SA13 2TS**

Date of inspection: September 2024

by

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

About Coed Hirwaun Primary School

Name of provider	Coed Hirwaun Primary School
Local authority	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	English medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	N/a
Number of pupils on roll	174
Pupils of statutory school age	141
Number in nursery classes	15
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%)	14.6%
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%)	6.4%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3.5%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/01/2018
Start date of inspection	23/09/2024

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

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

Summary

Coed Hirwaun Primary School is an inclusive, caring school where the well-being of all is a priority. The headteacher provides purposeful and supportive leadership. Staff build trusting working relationships with the school community and arrange effective support to ensure that pupils succeed. There are extensive arrangements to meet the needs of all pupils effectively. For example, the dedicated support for pupils to develop their emotional well-being is a strength of the school. Nearly all pupils behave well at school. They show respect to adults and to each other. As a result of the positive relationships between staff and pupils, most pupils feel safe and happy during their time at the school.

The curriculum is suitably wide-ranging. It is based around the study of broad concepts, for example 'energy'. Pupils regularly devise their own questions and make decisions about how they want to learn. This is particularly effective in engaging pupils and giving them a voice in their learning. Teachers plan for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills systematically and they ensure that there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply these skills across the curriculum. However, pupils' confidence to speak Welsh is limited. Leaders have identified this as a priority for improvement.

Most teaching meets the needs of pupils well. Teachers are successful in developing pupils' speaking, listening and thinking skills and they use questioning effectively to encourage pupils to debate and consider a range of real-life social and moral issues. Most older pupils enjoy justifying their opinions and do so articulately. They respond well to opportunities to work collaboratively. However, in a few lessons, teachers over-direct learning and this limits pupils' independence and the learning that takes place.

Governors undertake their roles effectively. They take an active interest in the school's improvement priorities and monitor the use of resources diligently.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Improve teaching to enable pupils to work independently in lessons more often
- R2 Raise standards of Welsh oracy

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Coed Hirwaun Primary School is welcoming and inclusive. The headteacher provides purposeful, caring and supportive leadership. She prioritises the well-being of pupils and their families. Staff build trusting relationships with pupils and parents. They often seek the support of appropriate external agencies to help pupils to succeed. There are effective arrangements to monitor pupils' progress and well-being, and staff take prompt action if there are any concerns. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe, confident and happy and say they enjoy coming to school.

Spotlight: provision for pupils' emotional needs

A very positive aspect of the school's work is its emotional literacy provision. A highly trained member of staff monitors the well-being of pupils across the school and provides high quality, responsive support when needed. Carefully planned and, at times, spontaneous sessions meet the individual needs of pupils effectively. This targeted support impacts very positively on individual pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Staff work hard to secure additional grant funding to provide extra opportunities and resources to improve the well-being of vulnerable pupils. They develop the school environment to provide safe and quiet areas so that pupils have space and time to regulate their emotions and are ready to learn.

Throughout the school, staff are positive, supportive role models for pupils. They share a calm and consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond very well to this, and, across the school, nearly all pupils behave well and are respectful towards adults and each other.

Staff devise their curriculum together, to provide a range of learning opportunities for pupils. There are beneficial common teaching strategies across the school, such as planning opportunities for pupils to ask their own questions about the topics they are studying.

Spotlight: involving pupils in how and what they learn

A particularly effective aspect of teaching is the way in which staff enable pupils to make decisions about how and what they learn. The curriculum supports pupils' ability to develop their own lines of inquiry. There are well-embedded processes for pupils to determine the things they would like to learn about, and they decide how they will research the information they need to learn more. Younger pupils learn to ask a range of questions confidently and older pupils become skilled at seeking and ordering information and justifying their points of view, whilst respecting the views of others. These strategies support pupils' engagement and well-being very effectively.

Teachers plan systematically to develop individual literacy and numeracy skills in specific lessons before providing pupils with opportunities to apply what they have learnt in lessons across the curriculum. This ensures that pupils make good progress in the development of these skills and learn to apply them more widely. Overall, most pupils make good progress in developing the skills they need, achieving high standards in literacy, numeracy, digital and thinking skills. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to use speaking and listening in lessons, such as during their 'daily debate' where they consider moral and ethical questions, showing empathy and a developing understanding of right and wrong. However, pupils lack confidence when using their Welsh language skills and their progress in developing Welsh oracy is too slow.

In the classes for younger pupils, suitable learning opportunities help pupils make decisions and solve problems. Staff provide a variety of outdoor activities including water play, use of natural items, blocks, and junk play. These activities promote exploration and cooperative skills successfully.

Teachers generally ensure that lessons move at a good pace. In most cases, they use questioning skilfully to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers set clear expectations for learning and provide useful advice and modelling of effective learning strategies that support pupils to be successful. However, on occasion, teachers over-direct pupils in activities, and this limits opportunities to promote pupils' independence or collaborative work.

A small but skilled team of support staff provide a useful range of interventions and in-class support for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy. This includes local authority staff who work specifically to meet the needs of the traveller community. Staff work closely with class teachers to ensure that these interventions meet pupils' needs well and in a timely manner. As a result, most pupils who access these programmes make good progress overall.

Teachers employ a range of assessment techniques to engage pupils in their learning and develop their skills as reflective, confident learners. This ensures that pupils are clear about the purpose of their learning and what they need to do to be successful. As a result, most pupils can reflect on the quality of their work and make improvements. This helps them to make effective progress during lessons and over time.

Teachers from Year 3 to Year 6 provide pupils with useful written feedback in the form of success criteria grids to assess their own progress as they develop their writing skills. Many pupils make realistic assessments of how well they achieve and indicate reasonable areas for improvement. This is effective in supporting them to make good progress with their writing. In most cases, verbal feedback from staff provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work.

The school has suitable arrangements to assess and track the progress of pupils over the term and through the year groups. For example, in the classes for younger pupils, teachers use assessments of pupils' phonetic understanding effectively to inform future planning. Staff use a range of assessments including national personalised assessments and specific literacy, and numeracy tests to ensure that they match learning effectively to pupils' needs.

Leaders and staff keep the development of the school curriculum and pupil progress under regular review. They identify priorities for improvement accurately and arrange professional development opportunities for staff to support these improvements. For example, when staff identified that pupils were not confident enough in speaking Welsh, leaders prioritised staff training and daily Welsh sessions. However, this work is at an early stage of development.

The governing body works proactively as a critical friend to the school's leadership. Governors understand the challenges the school faces, such as the budget position, and they plan accordingly. They monitor the school's priorities diligently. They help to ensure that the school meets the needs of all pupils successfully and take a particular interest in the school's provision to improve the attendance and progress of different groups of pupils.

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:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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