



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

**A report on**

**Blenheim Road Community Primary School**

**Blenheim Road  
St Dial's  
Cwmbran  
NP44 4SZ**

**Date of inspection: November 2024**

**by**

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

## About Blenheim Road Community Primary School

Name of provider	Blenheim Road Community Primary School
Local authority	Torfaen County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	281
Pupils of statutory school age	192
Number in nursery classes	44
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%)	42.6%
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%)	14.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	10.3%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	04/06/2018
Start date of inspection	18/11/2024

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](http://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

Blenheim Road Primary School is a nurturing, community-focused school where many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make suitable progress.

The school is part of a successful federation with Coed Eva Primary School, where leaders collaborate appropriately to promote effective learning and equality. The executive headteacher has aligned leadership structures across both schools, which has accelerated progress. A notable achievement is the consistent approach to supporting pupils with ALN. Professional learning opportunities for staff strengthen leadership capacity, and the governing body provides valuable support, ensuring that resources are well-managed.

Provision for pupil and family well-being is exemplary and is a strength of the federation. Highly-skilled staff work with pupils and their families successfully to mitigate the impact of any barriers to learning. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and adjust their provision to meet individual needs suitably.

The curriculum is broad, balanced, and purposeful. Strong links with the local community enhance pupils' social and moral development, such as through interactions with a local care home. Teachers provide systematic support for the development of pupils' reading, digital and spoken Welsh skills. However, provision to develop pupils' writing skills and aspects of numeracy are at an earlier stage.

The school provides a positive early start to school life with a stimulating learning environment that motivates pupils and fosters curiosity. As pupils move through the school, many teachers build on this approach appropriately. They ask a suitable range of questions to determine pupils' understanding and check progress. However, arrangements to promote pupils' independence are variable and teachers do not provide pupils with consistent opportunities to respond to feedback as a means of improving their work.

## Recommendations

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

- R1 Address the inconsistencies in teaching and assessment to ensure that pupils have increased ownership of their learning and develop independence
- R2 Improve pupils' writing and numeracy skills

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

Blenheim Road Primary School is a caring, inclusive school with a strong focus on supporting well-being. This enables many pupils, including those identified with additional learning needs (ALN), to make at least appropriate progress.

Across the school, many teachers and support staff know their pupils well. They use this information appropriately to make careful adjustments to provision and enable pupils to achieve well. In the most effective lessons, teachers organise resources thoughtfully to help pupils to be resourceful and independent in their learning. This supports these pupils to be resilient. However, across the school, provision for pupil independence is variable.

The school is part of a successful federation with Coed Eva Primary School and leaders work exceptionally well across both schools promoting high standards and equality for all. The executive headteacher has worked with the governing body to restructure and align leadership purposefully across the federation. This ensures that leaders use a consistent approach to school improvement and allows both schools to benefit and learn from one another. For example, provision for pupils with ALN is consistently effective and this enables these pupils to make secure progress from their individual starting points.

Provision for the youngest pupils is beneficial and ensures that transition when they first start school is smooth. Many teachers and support staff are knowledgeable about how young children learn. They use this information appropriately to provide learning environments that encourage pupils to be curious and to explore the world around them. On occasion, however, there is a tendency for adults to over-direct learning. This limits pupil choices and their opportunities to become independent.

As pupils move through the school, teachers build on the success of early provision appropriately. Many teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils and they ensure that the pace of teaching and learning meets their needs effectively. Where teaching is less effective, there is an over-reliance on worksheets and staff do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to be independent or develop the full range of skills. Many staff use questioning appropriately to challenge, check and extend pupils' understanding. However, arrangements for pupils to respond to teacher feedback are inconsistent and, as a result, pupils do not always know how to improve their work.

Leaders have worked diligently with staff to create an authentic, purposeful curriculum that is broad and balanced. They have thoughtfully developed and embedded a vision that promotes pupils' aspirations well. Many teachers provide learning experiences that are engaging. Staff establish strong links with the local community to enhance pupils' learning effectively, for instance by giving pupils the opportunity to work with the local care home. This has had a positive impact upon pupils' social and moral development. Teachers enhance learning well with trips and visitors to school such as when younger pupils handle and observe woodland creatures. These experiences excite pupils and motivates them to learn.

The school's curriculum builds upon pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding systematically. There has been a strong focus on reading development with a consistent approach to improving pupils' knowledge of letter sounds and comprehension skills across the federation. As a result, most pupils develop their reading skills well. However, work to develop pupils' writing skills is at an earlier stage and a minority of pupils do not develop these skills as well as they could. Extensive staff training in Welsh has enhanced provision for improving spoken Welsh across the school. Many pupils are now more confident and competent when speaking.

Overall, provision to improve pupils' mathematical skills is variable. Many younger pupils begin to show a good understanding of number through play-based activities. However, as pupils move through the school, teachers do not consistently cater for the breadth of mathematical concepts. As a result, a minority of pupils' understanding of aspects of number is limited.

**Spotlight: A community focused school approach to support families and pupils**

Provision for pupil and family well-being is an outstanding feature across the federation. A team of pupil and family engagement officers work successfully with senior leaders to gain knowledge of community, family and pupil needs. Leaders use this information exceptionally well to remove barriers to learning. They adapt provision carefully and provide families with dedicated spaces where they can interact with staff members. Staff provide beneficial opportunities for families and pupils to receive targeted help. For example, as a result of bespoke support, the gap in attendance between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils has reduced.

The executive headteacher provides determined, reflective headship and has created a leadership ethos of high expectations across the federation. He works successfully with senior leaders to promote the federation's vision and empowers leaders at all levels effectively to monitor and evaluate progress against school improvement priorities. This provides leadership with a clear picture of the progress being made across the federation.

**Spotlight: Growing your own leaders through effective professional learning**

Professional learning opportunities for staff are valuable and extensive. Leaders ensure that staff across the federation collaborate purposefully, and this has a positive impact on school improvement. For example, staff have shared foundation learning expertise, and this has developed greater consistency in this provision across both schools. The executive headteacher ensures that leaders at all levels engage in relevant strategic training to enhance their skills to lead. The federation grows its own leaders successfully and this strengthens the leadership capacity. This is a notable feature.

The governing body provides thoughtful support to senior leaders. Governors work effectively alongside staff to monitor and evaluate progress. They have a wide range of professional experience that enables them to contribute effectively to the school's improvement journey. They ensure that the schools work within their financial means

and that the strategic organisation of resources supports both schools well. For example, grant funding and resources have been used purposefully to create inspiring, highly beneficial outdoor learning environments. They work with leaders suitably to promote a positive culture of safeguarding.

### **Additional information**

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

The school's arrangements for site management 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](http://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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