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

A report on

Bryncethin Primary School

Heol Canola
Bryncethin
CF32 9TH

Date of inspection: November 2024

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Bryncethin Primary School

Name of provider	Bryncethin Primary School
Local authority	Bridgend 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	258
Pupils of statutory school age	198
Number in nursery classes	26
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%)	34.0%
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%)	9.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2015
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/07/2018
Start date of inspection	04/11/2024

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

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

Summary

Most pupils at Bryncethin Primary School behave well and are polite and respectful to one another. They are developing a sound understanding of their sense of place through learning about their locality as well as being a citizen of Wales. Many pupils enjoy coming to school and play an active part in its development through taking up leadership roles, such as the digital leaders. However, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

By the time they leave school, a majority of pupils have made suitable progress from their starting points, including those with additional learning needs and those who attend the local authority learning resource base. However, the overall rate of progress pupils make across the school is too variable. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and a lack of opportunity for pupils to be more involved in the next steps in their learning.

Leaders and staff collaborate appropriately on the development of a curriculum to foster a sense of belonging and understanding of the wider world. Although they consider how to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills over time, opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in their work are limited and too many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Leaders monitor the quality of provision and the impact this has on pupils' progress over time. However, these processes do not provide leaders with a clear enough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Overall, leaders and governors do not hold each other accountable enough for the quality of provision or pupils' standards.

Recommendations

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

R1 Improve leadership at all levels

R2 Ensure that monitoring and evaluation processes identify precisely the strengths and areas for development of the school's work most in need of improvement and contribute effectively to school improvement planning

R3 Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress with their literacy, numeracy, digital and independent learning

R4 Improve rates of attendance

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress usually every four to six months.

Main evaluation

Leaders at Bryncethin Primary School are committed to creating a happy school that celebrates its place in the local community and in Wales. This contributes to an important sense of belonging where many pupils feel safe and respected at school.

Leaders have high expectations of the school's provision for all pupils. The school has a positive approach to managing behaviour. This supports the harmonious way in which most pupils behave when learning in class and during playtimes or moving about the school. Pupils are polite, respectful and kind towards each other. However, a few pupils do not attend school regularly enough, including those who are vulnerable.

Around half of pupils begin school with social and communication skills and knowledge below that expected for their age. As they move through the school, a majority of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs (ALN) make suitable progress. However, overall pupils' progress is inconsistent particularly with their writing, numeracy and independent learning skills

The school hosts a local authority learning resource base. This is a purposeful environment for learning, where relationships are strong, and pupils are well-cared for. In most cases, staff plan learning experiences that match pupils' individual needs well. As a result, many pupils make valuable progress in the development of their learning and well-being.

Leaders monitor the quality of provision and the impact this has on pupils' progress over time. However, these processes do not provide leaders with a clear enough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their evaluations are too generous and provide an over-optimistic picture of the performance of the school. As a result, improvement planning lacks the necessary precision to bring about the urgent improvements required to the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes.

Governors work carefully with leaders to monitor the school's deficit budget and carry out their duties diligently. Overall, they ensure that there is a purposeful culture of safeguarding and work hard to ensure that this is understood by all at the school. However, governors' ability to hold the school to account is underdeveloped.

Many pupils engage well with their learning, particularly when this ignites their interest and the level of challenge is appropriate. However, too often teachers'

planning does not address the needs of all pupils well enough. This prevents a minority of pupils across the school from accessing their learning and making sufficient progress. Leaders work with staff to agree suitable approaches to teaching, and support this through professional learning. However, staff do not use the agreed strategies consistently to ensure provision, feedback and the modelling of learning is effective for all pupils. For example, teachers' feedback too often focuses on the completion of activities rather than ensuring pupils are involved fully in their learning and understand their next steps. Too often, learning is tightly controlled by staff, resulting in a lack of pupil choice and application of the skills they are beginning to develop.

Learning environments are well ordered, with suitable resources to support the curriculum. Pupils access these to help them in their activities. In the younger classes, staff create specific areas for learning which pupils choose to explore. However, in most classes these areas do not capture the interest of pupils well enough and as a result they do not engage well in the activities. This limits their learning. All pupils have access to learning outdoors, though the provision for younger pupils is often too adult led.

Teachers work well with other schools to consider how to develop the most appropriate curriculum for pupils and supports the growth of their knowledge, skills and spiritual and moral development. This has led to leaders and staff developing a curriculum that helps pupils to understand their locality as well as learning about Wales and the wider world. Staff plan purposeful events to draw out thoughts and questions from pupils that create an engaging curriculum. However, the success of these sessions is too variable and too few pupils see how this influences their learning.

Leaders recognise the need to support the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, this does not happen often enough because teachers do not always focus on pupil's individual needs resulting in gaps in skills development, or unnecessarily repeating the same teaching. In addition, teachers too frequently use whole class approaches with little attention to the needs of individuals, which inhibits the progress of all pupils.

Overall, many pupils develop their oracy skills suitably and apply them in a range of situations. They develop sound reading skills and younger pupils are beginning to talk about simple features of a text. As they get older, they refine their skills, enabling them to explore their curriculum and read for their own enjoyment. Younger pupils are enthusiastic when making marks and overtime developing their writing skills and understanding of different genres. However, most pupils' writing is underdeveloped, as they are not encouraged or supported well enough to be adventurous with vocabulary choices or sentence structures. In addition, pupils do not always take pride in the presentation of their work.

Most staff act as helpful role models to support pupils' use of the Welsh language. Over time, most pupils develop sound Welsh language skills and hold conversations where they extend their talk. Most pupils develop a good understanding of the history, culture and people of Wales.

Over time, a majority of pupils make appropriate progress in developing their mathematical and numeracy skills. Younger pupils begin to count to five and by Year 2 they count confidently in twos and fives. The oldest pupils explore a range of methods to solve number problems involving four-digit numbers. However, because of a lack of appropriate support and challenge for the wide range of abilities in classes, a minority are ill-equipped to use and apply their numeracy skills well enough.

Most pupils use a range of digital equipment for a variety of purposes. The youngest pupils use tablets and apps independently to support their learning while pupils in Year 2 are beginning to create stop-gap animations. However, pupils' ability to develop their digital skills appropriately is limited. For example, pupils in Year 6 are only beginning to learn how to use a search engine or understand a database. Across the school, many pupils struggle to access their digital files and have insufficient understanding of how to keep themselves safe online.

In most classes, pupils have suitable opportunities to develop their creative and physical skills. For example, most older pupils enjoy developing specific dance skills through regular sessions, such as street dancing. In addition, pupils learn about well-known Welsh artists and explore their colourful style of working.

Leaders and staff support pupils well in contributing to the life of the school. There are many opportunities for pupils, including those with ALN, to take up leadership roles across school life. For example, groups contribute to the development of internal spaces, such as the school's sensory room. As a result, many pupils feel they have a voice in the school community.

Additional information

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

The school's arrangements for site management give 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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