



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

A report on

Clydach Primary School

**Sybil Street
Clydach
Swansea
SA6 5EU**

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

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

About Clydach Primary School

Name of provider	Clydach Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	NA
Number of pupils on roll	202
Pupils of statutory school age	169
Number in nursery classes	28
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 23.0%)	24.6%
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 16.1%)	14.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	7.7%
Date of headteacher appointment	03/09/2012
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/01/2014
Start date of inspection	07/11/2022

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.

Overview

Clydach Primary school is an inclusive environment where pupils feel safe and cared for by their teachers. Staff work hard to build positive working relationships and provide good support for pupils' emotional well-being. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy sharing their work with visitors.

In general, pupils make suitable progress in their skills and understanding across the school. In a few areas of the curriculum pupils are making good progress, for example in mathematics and when developing their oracy skills. However, not all groups of pupils, including those with additional learning needs or the more able, are challenged or supported well enough. This means that these groups of pupils do not always make enough progress from their starting points.

The school is beginning to develop its curriculum appropriately and is providing a few engaging learning experiences for pupils. However, progress towards the Curriculum for Wales is slow and the school has not yet developed its curriculum well enough to ensure that pupils build on their skills and make sustained progress. The re-introduction of school trips following the pandemic is having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils engage enthusiastically with experiences such as their woodland walks.

Due to significant levels of staff absence, the school does not currently have an effective leadership team. The local authority and governors have recently appointed an interim headteacher who is helping to improve staff well-being and pupils' progress. However, this arrangement is temporary and there remains a lack of capacity in leadership at all levels. This is slowing the progress of the school and reducing its ability to build strong relationships with parents to help them support their children's learning. In addition, self-evaluation and improvement activities, as well as professional learning opportunities for staff, do not focus sufficiently well on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The local authority and governing body recognise challenges facing the school and are providing additional support.

Recommendations

- R1 Establish stable and effective leadership at all levels and improve communication with stakeholders
- R2 Improve self-evaluation and strategic planning to enable the school to identify and sustain the necessary improvements in teaching and learning
- R3 Improve teaching across the school to ensure that all groups of pupils are challenged well enough and make suitable progress
- R4 Improve the curriculum and provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills
- R5 Ensure that professional learning encourages collaboration across the school and improves teaching and learning

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 on a termly basis.

Main evaluation

Learning

Many pupils start school with skills, knowledge and understanding at around the level expected for their stage of development. The youngest pupils settle in well to school routines. As they move through the school, pupils become more independent in their learning and make sound progress in developing their skills. However, not all pupils, including those who are more able, eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs, make enough progress as they move through the school.

Many pupils make good progress in developing their communication skills. They speak confidently for a range of purposes, for example when creating their regular Clydach television report. Younger pupils listen attentively and with sustained concentration. They discuss a variety of topics enthusiastically, sharing their ideas with their friends and visitors, for example pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are keen to talk about their creative work when explaining their choices for materials when designing and making rafts.

Many pupils develop positive attitudes towards reading and they talk with enjoyment about their favourite books and authors. As pupils move through the school they read with increasing fluency and expression. Many pupils between Year 4 and Year 6 enjoy reading a wider range of books and often talk confidently about the characters and events in the text. However, while many pupils have a good sight vocabulary, a minority are not able to decode unfamiliar words well enough. This is related to the inconsistent provision for the systematic development of phonics across the school.

The majority of pupils make appropriate progress in their writing skills. The youngest pupils develop early writing skills suitably through simple mark making and, by the end of Year 2, they begin to write more extended pieces, for example when retelling well-known stories. When given sufficient opportunity, the majority of pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 write descriptively and creatively. They use an increasingly adventurous choice of vocabulary and show suitable understanding of the conventions of grammar and punctuation. However, a minority of pupils do not write well enough at length or use their skills purposefully enough to write freely for a range of purposes across the curriculum. Younger pupils begin to develop their letter formation skills suitably, but in general handwriting skills are not developed well enough and a minority of older pupils do not develop a fluent handwriting style.

Many pupils make strong progress in developing their numeracy skills. Younger pupils learn how to add and subtract numbers successfully and by Year 4, pupils apply their skills effectively to solve simple problems, for example when calculating the profit made from a sale. Many older pupils use the four operations of number well and apply their skills to real life situations skilfully. Pupils in Year 6, apply their numeracy skills successfully to work out percentages when calculating attendance figures.

Pupils develop worthwhile digital skills during their time at school. They enjoy using a range of programmes to support their work across the curriculum, for instance pupils in Reception create a simple animation of a character from their favourite book. As they move through the school, they develop confidence in applying more complex

digital skills, for instance in Year 4, pupils use spreadsheets to calculate profit and loss. Most pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 demonstrate advanced skills in presenting their work, they create sophisticated animations merging sound and graphics. They are beginning to understand and apply basic coding techniques.

Many pupils make suitable progress in their Welsh language skills. The youngest pupils enjoy listening and joining in with Welsh stories and songs and many successfully repeat and pronounce simple words using the Welsh language. By the time they reach Year 2 many pupils ask and answer simple questions with growing confidence. The oldest pupils often use more complex language and extend their sentences, for example when they confidently ask, and answer questions related to their favourite foods or subjects.

Pupils develop good physical skills as they move through the school. Pupils in Year 4 for example, design and perform a sequence of movements across a mat and demonstrate control, poise, and flair. Younger pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 engage readily in outdoor play and enjoy physical challenges such as 'walking the plank' as part of their pirate topic.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Many pupils behave well at school and are kind and respectful to adults and other pupils. Overall, they feel cared for and know who to go to if they have a problem. Pupils often demonstrate good manners, are courteous to those around them and the majority demonstrate appropriate behaviour in class. Many regulate their emotions well and can talk about how they are feeling. However, the behaviour of a few pupils outside of the classroom and on the playground is not always of a good enough standard.

Many pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and demonstrate enthusiasm and enjoyment in their learning. They listen appropriately to the ideas and opinions of their peers. For example, in Year 5 pupils discuss their class book and share ideas about how the author uses language for effect. Many pupils understand the importance of considering and using the feedback they receive from adults. As a result, they often make good attempts at improving their work, for example pupils in Year 6 make useful edits to their journalistic reports.

In a few instances, pupils persevere to overcome difficulties or engage successfully in more challenging activities, for example they use bus timetables from the local area to solve problems and set agendas. However, in a minority of lessons, pupils are not well engaged due to the lack of challenge in the activities. In these instances, they do not develop their resilience or ability to sustain their focus on learning well enough.

The majority of pupils feel included in the life and work of the school and talk enthusiastically about their work. When given the opportunity, they enjoy being able to influence their own learning, for example when suggesting ideas for their independent learning tasks. Following the pandemic, the re-established pupil voice groups are beginning to engage pupils in making a difference to school life. The school council, for example, has recently improved the play equipment available on the school yard. However, the role of pupil voice groups is at an early stage of development and does not yet have a significant impact on school life.

Pupils are developing as ethical and informed citizens of the world. They understand their role in helping those less fortunate than themselves, for example, they raise money for the Ukrainian Appeal, through a range of enterprise activities. Nearly all pupils know how to stay safe online and can explain why this is important, for example they understand the impact of cyber-bullying on their own and others well-being.

Many pupils know how to keep healthy and fit. They talk knowledgeably about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how this contributes to their overall happiness. However, a very few pupils do not always make healthy choices when bringing fizzy drinks to school.

Teaching and learning experiences

Most teachers have warm and effective working relationships with pupils. They use praise and encouragement well and, in many classes, this creates a calm environment where pupils feel confident to ask for support.

In the majority of classes, teachers model learning suitably and use an appropriate range of resources to scaffold and support learning. However, provision to support the needs of all pupils is inconsistent and, in a minority of instances, teachers do not always challenge the more able pupils sufficiently, or support those with additional needs well enough. Teachers' verbal feedback often helps pupils to understand how they can improve their work. Staff are developing a more consistent and effective approach to written feedback. Where this is most beneficial, pupils often have enough opportunity to respond to teachers' written comments and improve their own work successfully. The majority of teachers ask useful questions to gauge pupil understanding, develop their thinking and move learning forwards. However, in a minority of lessons, the pace of teaching is too slow, overly adult led and is not matched well enough to the needs of pupils. As a result, in these instances, a minority of pupils lose interest and do not engage well enough in their learning or make sufficient progress.

Staff often include a good range of engaging experiences within the curriculum. These experiences include a range of trips and visits that broaden and enrich pupils' knowledge of their local community and Welsh history. Pupils enjoy these opportunities and talk and write about them with enthusiasm, for example pupils in Year 3 write keenly about their walk through the local woods. However, while the school is beginning to think more carefully about their curriculum, the overall implementation of the Curriculum for Wales is still at an early stage of development. There is not yet a clear understanding of how all elements of the school's curriculum fit together, and teachers do not have a clear understanding of how pupils' knowledge and skills should progress over time and across the school.

Provision for the improvement of numeracy skills is effective across the school. Many teachers use a range of resources suitably to develop pupil skills, for example, younger pupils develop and deepen their numeracy skills through useful play-based activities. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to access beneficial resources to support their understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, pupils in Year 4 use a range of hands-on mathematical equipment to support their number work. Teachers challenge more able pupils in maths well and provide a good range of opportunities for them to apply their skills across the curriculum.

Support for pupils' language, literacy and communication skills is generally suitable and there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. However, opportunities for pupils to write across the curriculum are inconsistent and not all teachers have suitably high enough expectations of the quality of pupils' writing. Overall, provision to develop pupils' reading and handwriting is not planned systematically enough and therefore, these skills are not always developed well enough over time. The majority of teachers and support staff model the Welsh language well across the school. They encourage pupils to use their spoken Welsh suitably and promote an awareness of their Welsh heritage. For example, pupils in Year 3 find out about their local woodland or beaches. The school's curriculum helps to develop pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. Pupils take part in African drumming sessions, for instance, and enjoy a range of activities to celebrate Chinese New Year. However, the strategic planning for the development of pupils' understanding of equality and diversity is underdeveloped and work in this area lacks consistency.

Care, support and guidance

Staff work hard across the school to provide effective care, support and guidance for pupils. This was particularly important during the recent pandemic and since returning to school staff have continued to prioritise pupils' well-being. Staff are strong role models and encourage kindness and respect between pupils. Staff ensure that pupils' behaviour in class is usually well monitored. However, strategies across the school are not always consistent, and as a result pupils do not always understand how rewards and consequences support them to improve their behaviour and attitudes towards their learning.

The school enriches pupils' spiritual and social development suitably. Members of the local church lead school assemblies, and children learn about other faiths in their lessons. Staff encourage pupils to consider the views of others sensitively and to respect diversity. They use assemblies thoughtfully to promote school values, such as kindness. The school provides a wide range of after-school clubs that offer sporting and creative activities. These are a firm favourite with pupils and help to develop their physical and social skills effectively.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is generally appropriate and supports pupils' needs suitably. During the current absence of the additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo), a class teacher has recently begun to support work in this area and works conscientiously with a range of external agencies to provide suitable support. When families join the school there are suitable arrangements for them to talk about their children's individual needs. However, as these pupils move through the school, regular communication, and arrangements to share information about progress are less effective. A dedicated team of support staff deliver suitable interventions to support pupils basic skills and often provide beneficial support to develop pupils' well-being. However, arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of these interventions are underdeveloped and lack rigour. While processes are appropriate, support is often disjointed and inconsistent. As a result, these interventions are not always having enough impact on pupils' progress.

The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to become active citizens and develop their awareness of important social issues. The school community has

embraced several pupils and families from Ukraine and helped them settle into school life well. The school has appropriate provision to ensure pupils and families understand the importance of maintaining good rates of attendance. The interim headteacher has strengthened safeguarding procedures and, as a result, there is now a suitable culture of safeguarding across the school where staff work diligently to ensure that pupils are safe.

Leadership and management

Leaders, governors, and staff at Clydach Primary work hard to provide a caring and inclusive environment where most pupils feel valued and supported. Currently however, there is significant instability in the senior leadership team, which is negatively affecting the cohesion and well-being of staff across the school. Senior leaders do not always support teachers and middle leaders well enough to innovate or provide enough opportunities for them to collaborate effectively with others. This means that even when staff begin to work effectively together sufficient progress is not always sustained.

The governing body, supported by the local authority, has very recently taken appropriate actions to secure interim leadership of the school. This includes work with the school improvement partner to provide suitable support. The interim headteacher is beginning to improve staff well-being and pupils' attitudes to learning. However, there remain important gaps in leadership at all levels and the school's administration capacity, which have not yet been addressed sufficiently.

A majority of staff develop useful links with parents to help support their children's learning. However, communication between school leaders and parents has become less effective over time, and a minority of parents have lost confidence in the school's ability to meet the educational and social needs of their children.

Governors are enthusiastic supporters of the school and ensure that there are generally appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking. They have established useful links with members of staff, take part in monitoring activities and are regular visitors to the school. While governors often provide challenge for leaders on a wide range of school matters, they do not always have a secure understanding of the school's work to develop an accurate enough picture of overall progress. As a result, there is insufficient focus on those areas for development that need more immediate support, for example the progress towards the Curriculum for Wales and the ALN reform agenda.

Leaders pay due regard to reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment and allocate their pupil development grant appropriately, for example to provide additional learning support staff. However, they do not always monitor the impact of this provision well enough or allocate support carefully enough to accelerate the progress of these pupils. Leaders have worked to ensure the development of an effective culture of safeguarding.

The school has a comprehensive monitoring and self-evaluation cycle that it uses suitably to gather a range of information. In a few instances, these processes help secure good improvements in pupils' learning, for example in raising the standards of mathematics across the curriculum. However, monitoring does not always focus rigorously enough on important issues, such as the progress of all groups of pupils, the effectiveness of curriculum planning and the quality of teaching. Consequently,

areas for development often lack clear and coherent steps for improvement. As a result, staff do not always know what they need to do to improve their own practice or how to contribute effectively to the wider progress of the school.

The interim headteacher has very recently ensured improvement planning links appropriately to the needs of the school. However, over time, improvement planning does not focus well enough on the findings of self-evaluation processes or take good account of the views of key stakeholders, such as parents, staff, and pupils. As a result, leaders do not always match actions carefully enough to the needs of the school. Actions are often too broad or too numerous to help leaders move the school forwards. Approaches to develop the school's curriculum, for example, are not systematic enough and as a result are not effective in supporting leaders and teachers to develop a coherent approach to curriculum development.

Leaders occasionally provide suitable opportunities for staff professional learning and link these to school improvement priorities. They have begun to engage staff in action research projects to support them in using educational literature to guide their practice. However, leaders do not evaluate this work well enough to understand its impact on teaching and learning or create opportunities for staff to share or experience good practice. As a result, professional learning does not support all staff well enough to improve the quality of their teaching and does not raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Overall, leaders and governors use the school's budget appropriately. They work diligently to address the financial challenges of managing a small school with limited outdoor space and older buildings, which are split across two sites. However, while leaders and governors think carefully about how to deploy resources, classrooms and indoor learning environments are not always sufficiently equipped or used well enough to inspire and motivate pupils' learning.

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

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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Publication date: 13/01/2023