



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

A report on
Rhws Primary School

**Fontygary Road
Rhoose
Barry
Vale of Glamorgan
CF62 3DS**

Date of inspection: May 2024

by

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

This inspection was undertaken as part of trying out our new inspection arrangements. As a result, this report may be slightly different in format to other published reports for providers in the sector.

About Rhws Primary School

Name of provider	Rhws Primary School
Local authority	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Language of the provider	English
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	398
Pupils of statutory school age	291
Number in nursery classes	56
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 23.7%)	20.1%
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 13.2%)	4.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	2.1%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (categories A-C)	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	21/06/2016
Start date of inspection	07/05/2024

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

Leaders successfully place well-being at the heart of Rhws Primary School, fostering inclusivity and respect among pupils and staff and creating a calm and happy learning environment.

Most pupils make good progress in their learning and well-being during their time at the school. This includes pupils affected by disadvantage and those with additional learning needs (ALN). While pupils generally make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply these skills across the curriculum.

The school's curriculum aligns broadly with the Curriculum for Wales framework. Teachers provide pupils with beneficial opportunities to learn about their community and diversity. For example, older pupils explore the Barry race riots and create a diversity magazine. Teachers use strategies to engage pupils effectively, including using the outdoor environment for learning and well-being purposes. However, teachers in the younger classes do not plan the use of the indoor and outdoor learning environments well enough to enable pupils to investigate and understand their immediate world and to practice their skills.

In many cases, teachers use questioning effectively to prompt pupils' thinking and learning. However, on occasion, their feedback is not effective enough in moving pupils on with their learning. Teachers provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to input into their learning and, in these circumstances, pupils work extremely well collaboratively and independently. Nevertheless, too often teachers over-direct learning, the pace is too slow, and they do not challenge pupils sufficiently.

Evaluation processes accurately identify areas for improvement. However, leaders do not always address important issues, such as improvements in teaching, swiftly enough. School governors play a suitable role in supporting and challenging the work of the school. While the school is successfully addressing national priorities, such as ALN reform and the promotion of the Welsh language, the priorities of improving pupils' attendance and promoting their healthy eating and drinking have not been addressed sufficiently.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Address the shortcomings in teaching across the school, including the provision for younger pupils
- R2 Strengthen curriculum planning to ensure that pupils independently apply their skills, across all areas of learning, with an appropriate level of challenge
- R3 Improve attendance.

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Leaders place well-being at the heart of Rhws Primary school. Staff work determinedly to ensure that the school is a fully inclusive and considerate environment. The care, support and well-being they provide is highly effective, underpins the school's vision and supports most pupils to make good progress in their learning and well-being during their time at school. This includes pupils affected by disadvantage and those with additional learning needs (ALN). The school is a calm and happy community, where staff and pupils show a high level of respect for each other. Most pupils enjoy school and are rightly proud to be part of such a supportive environment.

Pupils appreciate the help they get from staff to support their well-being, including the opportunities they are given to talk about their concerns and how to manage these. Most pupils enjoy being physically active and learning outdoors, experiencing and appreciating nature through their work and play. These experiences are highly successful in developing pupils' self-esteem.

Cameo: Developing pupils' social, emotional and personal skills effectively

A particularly strong aspect of the school's work is its nurture provision. Skilled staff monitor the well-being of pupils throughout the day and provide highly beneficial assistance when needed. Carefully planned and creative sessions meet the needs of identified pupils very effectively. For example, support staff provide high quality 'Rhws Ranger' sessions to develop pupils' confidence and engagement with each other and the natural world through extended and uninterrupted periods of outdoor learning. As a result, pupils deepen their understanding of emotions, form friendships and build their self-esteem successfully through this thoughtfully constructed support.

The school's curriculum broadly meets the requirements of Curriculum for Wales. It provides pupils with beneficial opportunities to learn about their community, local area, Wales and the wider world, including the world of work. Pupils learn about the diverse nature of society and this is helping them to become more aware of ethical issues. For example, older pupils explore the Barry race riots and create a diversity magazine with a fellow cluster school. Through regular assemblies, staff foster the development of pupils' moral, and social skills thoughtfully, providing pupils with valuable opportunities to reflect on values, and attributes such as resilience.

Overall, teachers establish calm, inviting classrooms where pupils talk freely and feel safe. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour, and this ensures that most pupils have strong attitudes towards their learning and engage positively in all aspects of school life. Teachers think carefully about how pupils learn and use a range of approaches to engage them successfully in their learning. At times, staff

make effective use of the outdoor environment to support pupils' learning and to support pupils' well-being. However, teachers do not use the indoor and outdoor learning environments effectively to enable younger pupils to investigate and understand their immediate world and to practice skills in line with their development.

In many cases, teachers use questioning and feedback effectively to prompt pupils' thinking and learning. However, on occasion, feedback is not specific enough and teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to improve their work. Teachers collaborate purposefully with pupils to review their progress during termly reviews. This enables teachers to usefully monitor each pupil's progress and allows pupils to reflect on the progress they are making throughout the year.

Teachers provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to input into their learning through selecting questions to research from a list, generally developed in collaboration with their teachers. For example, older pupils choose to explore the concept of 'fast fashion' and the impact this has on the environment. Pupils work extremely well collaboratively and independently in these circumstances. Nevertheless, too often teachers over-direct learning, the pace is too slow, and pupils are insufficiently challenged. As a result, pupils do not always develop deeper thinking or achieve to the level of which they are capable.

Throughout the school, staff are positive language role models who provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their speaking skills. This leads to nearly all pupils developing impressive oracy skills. They listen carefully, respond well to their teachers and peers and take good account of the views of others, often building upon and extending each other's thoughts and ideas. From a young age, they make strong progress in their reading, writing and mathematical skills through the well-planned, teacher-led learning opportunities. They write to a good standard, use a range of contexts for their writing and complete mathematical work accurately. However, overall, pupils have insufficient opportunities to independently apply, develop and consolidate these valuable skills in work across the curriculum at a challenging level.

Most pupils use digital resources competently to support their learning and enhance their work. For example, older pupils use coding well to create games. Staff model every day Welsh phrases and words in class and around the school well. Younger pupils use these enthusiastically in and out of the classroom. By the time pupils are in the older classes, they use Welsh language patterns confidently, including accurate time tenses and conjunctions, to describe what they have done.

Leaders invest in staff development effectively, resulting in a passionate team of professionals who provide pupils with a supportive learning environment in which everyone feels safe and valued. The commitment of staff to develop their professional skills and knowledge together, and with partners beyond the school, is a strength. Close collaboration with other schools supports a shared approach to the curriculum and the evaluation of pupils' progress.

Leaders employ a robust cycle of monitoring and school improvement that, overall, accurately identifies and addresses key areas for development. However, on occasion, the school takes too long to bring about improvements, for instance with key aspects of teaching. Governors are committed to the school, have a significant

range of professional expertise and contribute well to school life and to its place within the community. They are beginning to make useful visits to gather first-hand information to help them evaluate the impact of school improvement actions on pupils' progress.

Leaders and governors have successfully addressed a number of national priorities including ALN reform and promoting the development of the Welsh language. However, the low attendance of a few pupils and the provision to ensure that pupils make healthy choices in their drinking and eating habits while in school have not been sufficiently addressed. They make effective use of grant funding, including the pupil development grant. The school has agreed a plan with the local authority to address its large financial deficit.

The school values the opinions of pupils. The pupil leadership groups are beginning to work alongside school leaders to bring about improvements. For example, the 'Criw Cymraeg' meet regularly to support the school in promoting the use of the Welsh language. While at an early stage of development, the pupil groups are beginning to help pupils to develop their leadership skills and take on responsibility.

Additional information

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

The school does not have appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors use the pupil development grant appropriately. However, overall, they do not manage the school's finances well.

The school's arrangements for site security do not give any cause for concern.

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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