



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

A report on

Dinas Powys Primary School

**Cardiff Road
Dinas Powys
Cardiff
CF64 4JU**

Date of inspection: June 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 Dinas Powys Primary School

Name of provider	Dinas Powys Primary School
Local authority	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Language of the provider	English
Religious character	n/a
Number of pupils on roll	474
Pupils of statutory school age	355
Number in nursery classes	61
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%)	13.9%
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%)	4.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	n/a
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (categories A-C)	3.1%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	02/05/2016
Start date of inspection	10/06/2024

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

Dinas Powys Primary School is a welcoming, inclusive school where leaders and staff are committed to providing effective care and support for all pupils. Staff nurture positive relationships with pupils, which ensures that most feel safe and happy in school. Leaders focus their work firmly on improving outcomes for pupils' learning and well-being. As a result, most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress.

Provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills including literacy, numeracy and digital skills is strong and pupils make good progress in these areas. Staff have created a positive culture of reading across the school, which results in many pupils developing as enthusiastic readers. The school provides beneficial opportunities for outdoor learning. Pupils develop their physical skills well and many older pupils enjoy sports such as cricket and netball.

Overall, teaching is effective, and teachers know pupils well. They have clear aims for lessons and model positive approaches to learning. Staff provide a range of interesting learning experiences across the school which engage pupils well. However, at times, there are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching. For example, in a minority of lessons, teachers' use of questioning techniques is underdeveloped. In a few lessons, teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to influence what and how they learn, however, in general, this is at an early stage of development.

Leaders focus successfully on developing staff through beneficial professional learning. This includes learning support staff, who make a strong contribution to the work of the school. For example, professional development for all staff has had a positive impact on pupils' Welsh language skills.

The transition arrangements for pupils moving from Year 2 to Year 3 are highly effective. This ensures that pupils settle into their new learning environment successfully. The school has developed strong partnerships with most families. Parents appreciate the ample opportunities they have to share their child's learning experiences and understand the progress they are making.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Address inconsistencies in teaching to ensure all pupils make the progress they should
- R2 Ensure that all pupils have effective opportunities to influence what and how they learn

What happens next

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

Main findings

Dinas Powys Primary School is a welcoming, inclusive school where leaders and staff are committed to providing effective care and support for all pupils. They nurture positive relationships with pupils and know them well. The headteacher provides assured and effective leadership. He has been successful in developing a clear vision for the school which focuses on developing effective teaching and learning experiences for all pupils. As a result, most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and those with ALN, make good progress in developing their knowledge and skills.

The school's provision for the development of pupils' literacy, language and communication skills is strong. Leaders have established a clear, progressive approach to teaching reading from an early age. As they move through the school most pupils build on their early reading skills successfully and develop their fluency, expression and understanding well. Staff create a positive culture of reading across the school, which results in many pupils developing a love of reading.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills. They have provided beneficial professional learning opportunities for staff to improve their approach to teaching writing. As a result, teachers provide frequent, often purposeful, opportunities for pupils to write. This has had a beneficial impact on improving pupils' writing skills. Most older pupils develop ideas and themes in their work successfully. For example, pupils in Year 6 use emotive language effectively when writing a diary entry from the viewpoint of a workhouse child from the Victorian age.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress in developing their understanding of mathematical concepts. They are beginning to apply these skills in their work across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 apply their understanding of measure well when using a ruler to measure sandcastles they have made when playing in the sand. Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their digital skills and apply them in their learning. Across the school, pupils use a range of technologies with confidence. For instance, in the Reception class, pupils track the direction of the local train track to Barry Island using an interactive map when learning about their local area.

The school provides many engaging opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors, such as growing and caring for fruit and vegetables. Teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills, often in creative contexts. For example, staff use classical music to inspire younger pupils to express themselves through dance. This has a positive impact, with most pupils developing their physical

skills successfully and many older pupils showing an enthusiasm for sports such as cricket and netball.

Overall, teaching is effective, and teachers know their pupils well. They have clear aims for lessons and model positive approaches to learning. Staff provide a range of interesting learning experiences across the school which engage pupils well. However, at times, there are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching. For example, a minority of staff provide overly long explanations, or do not provide helpful verbal feedback to pupils regularly enough. Teachers' use of questioning techniques, to help pupils reflect on or deepen their learning, is often underdeveloped. As a result, pupils do not always make the progress they could.

The school has developed a purposeful curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, older pupils are highly engaged in their 'Cynefin' topic. They enjoy opportunities to better understand the physical and human features of their locality and the wider world. In a few cases, staff provide pupils with opportunities to influence their learning. However, in many classes, staff do not enable pupils to make meaningful decisions about what and how they learn and often over-direct pupils' learning. For example, in around half of classes for younger pupils, the range of resources readily available for pupils to choose from is too narrow. This limits the development of pupils' independent learning skills.

Spotlight

Staff and leaders ensure that there are effective transition arrangements in place to prepare pupils for the move from Year 2 to Year 3 when they relocate from one site to another. During the summer term, pupils in Year 5 buddy up with pupils in Year 2 to offer friendship and provide support. This involves pupils getting to know each other through a range of activities including reading together. When pupils move into Year 3 in September, their Year 6 buddies take time to check in on them, play with them and make sure they are settling well. This approach is having a positive impact, with many pupils forming firm friendships. Pupils in Year 3 adapt well to their new environment and those in Year 6 enjoy the responsibility the scheme gives them. Across the school, staff apply the recently amended behaviour policy successfully to promote positive behaviour. Pupils respond well to these new approaches. They move around the school sensibly and are respectful and polite to both adults and other pupils. The school monitors pupils' attendance closely and has clear policies and procedures in place for staff and parents to follow regarding pupil absence. A detailed tracking system is having a positive impact and pupil attendance is improving.

A strong feature of the school's improvement work is the development of staff through worthwhile professional learning focused on both national and school priorities. For example, professional learning opportunities focusing on Welsh language development have had a positive impact on pupils' progress in this area. Leaders ensure that learning support assistants are fully included in the school's programme of professional learning. They attend INSET days and other opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. As a result, they have been able to develop their practice purposefully and feel that they are valued members of the team.

School leaders work well together and carry out their roles efficiently, sharing expertise and communicating high expectations. Leaders guide staff effectively, such as when they support them to meet pupils' ALN. The school has robust systems in place to identify pupils with ALN and works productively with other agencies to ensure that they receive the specialist provision they need. Staff monitor pupils' progress carefully and adjust provision accordingly. As a result, pupils with ALN make good progress towards their individual targets. The school's capable team of support staff work closely with teachers to provide an effective programme of interventions for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, and to support their well-being when needed.

In general, processes support leaders to evaluate the school's work accurately and bring about improvements at a brisk pace. Leaders know the school's strengths, aspects of its work that need to be embedded and areas that require improvement. For example, leaders recognise pupils' strengths in reading and identify the need to improve assessment for learning strategies. However, leaders do not always address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching effectively.

Overall, the school has developed strong partnerships with families. Leaders consult parents and regularly act on the feedback they receive. As a result, parents feel that communication has improved. They appreciate the ample opportunities they have to share their child's learning experiences and understand the progress they are making.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils 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 use of the pupil development grant.

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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