



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

A report on

**Hendre Junior School
St Cenydd Road
Trecenydd
CF83 2RP**

Date of inspection: November 2017

by

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

About Hendre Junior School

Hendre Junior School is on the outskirts of Caerphilly. Currently there are 222 pupils on role, aged from seven to eleven, in eight single-year classes. The rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is 23%. This is above the national average (19%).

The school identifies that around 21% of pupils have additional learning needs. This is in line with the national average. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. No pupils are from a home where Welsh is the first language and very few are from a minority ethnic background.

The school's headteacher took up his post in April 2013. The school's previous inspection was in February 2011.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Most pupils at Hendre Junior School make strong progress from their starting points and a few make excellent progress. Most pupils have a positive attitude to learning and participate enthusiastically in the range of interesting and engaging activities that teachers provide. Nearly all pupils show pride towards the school and their work. Staff ensure a very caring, nurturing environment. Working relationships between adults and pupils are respectful throughout all year groups. The headteacher leads the school well with significant improvement in standards, outcomes, attendance and provision since his arrival. An effective leadership team places a high value on pupils' wellbeing and leaders challenge staff and pupils appropriately to achieve high standards. The governing body is supportive, but members do not challenge the school effectively on its performance.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' ability to apply their extended writing skills across the curriculum
- R2 Ensure effective transition arrangements with the infants' school
- R3 Improve the level of challenge provided by the governing body

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, most pupils make good progress from their starting points. Across the school, most pupils participate enthusiastically in their learning. They are willing to take risks and are not afraid to make mistakes. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress towards their targets from their starting points and a few pupils that are more able make excellent progress.

Throughout the school, pupils engage well in talk with their teachers and with other pupils. They discuss their work willingly and provide thoughtful responses to questions. Many upper key stage 2 pupils speak with a high degree of confidence and expression. Most pupils develop well as readers as they move through the key stage. Many pupils read with fluency, expression and understanding. They articulate preferences for different books and authors maturely and discuss characters using imaginative vocabulary. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils use skills such as skimming and scanning to locate information in a range of texts quickly and accurately.

Most pupils develop their writing skills effectively using paragraphs to organise their work. The spelling and punctuation of most pupils are of a good standard. By Year 6, they have a good understanding of writing for different purposes such as comparing and contrasting how a character is portrayed as a story line unfolds. More able pupils write well using a greater range of vocabulary and phrases pertaining to the topic, for example when reviewing a film. Less able pupils identify simple features of texts correctly, such as a headline in a newspaper. Many pupils plan their work well and redraft their writing, for instance when describing the characteristics of Hugo, a fictional horologist. They identify and edit aspects of their work that need improving suitably. They make effective use of imaginative vocabulary that suits the topic well. Most pupils' handwriting is neat and presentation is good. However, pupils' ability to apply their extended writing skills across the curriculum is limited.

Most pupils' numeracy skills are developing effectively across the school. Many pupils use various number strategies and apply their skills well in real-life situations, for example in Year 3 when buying items in a shop and calculating change, and in Year 6 when calculating the size of curtains required for windows in a house. Most pupils apply their mathematical skills competently in other areas of the curriculum. For instance, they use a range of graphs and charts to organise data from their science work effectively, choosing appropriate scales. Pupils' ability to apply their mathematical skills is a strength of the school.

Across the school, most pupils develop good skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils use simple spreadsheets, search for information online, create picture collages and posters, prepare presentations and use a range of programmes competently to present their findings. Throughout the key stage, most pupils use digital tablets proficiently. For example, in Year 4 pupils model confidently on a two dimensional plan to create a three dimensional game.

Many pupils show a willingness to use Welsh. Standards have improved and the contribution of the school's impressive Criw Cymraeg helps to promote the language across the school successfully. This is a notable feature. Most pupils respond well to questions and instructions. Older pupils talk to others confidently, for example when talking about their interests and hobbies. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils write confidently in Welsh for different purposes using an increasing range of familiar sentence patterns and vocabulary. Pupils who are more able read texts in Welsh with accurate pronunciation and good understanding.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of positive values such as honesty, fairness and tolerance, and demonstrate these values daily. Most treat peers and adults politely and with respect and they move around the school in a calm orderly manner.

Most pupils show enthusiasm for their tasks and activities and settle quickly to their learning. Most pupils behave well in lessons and respond well to the use of behaviour "peg boards" in class and the individual computer based points system. However in the lower key stage 2 classes, the behaviour of a very few pupils occasionally disrupts the learning of others.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of the school's initiatives to improve attendance. Nearly all pupils display a positive attitude towards keeping healthy and they understand the importance of a good diet and drinking water regularly. They appreciate the value and benefit of keeping fit, for example embracing the opportunity to walk or run a mile daily. Most pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe when online.

Many pupils take advantage of the wealth of extra-curricular opportunities the school provides, such as football, dance and the popular and impressive 'Hendre High Notes', which focuses on developing pupils' creative talents.

Pupils are very proud of their work. Year 6 pupils speak passionately about the level of challenge and encouragement they receive from their teachers. Nearly all pupils have good collaborative skills and work purposefully in small groups. Pupils from all year groups are keen to share their work with others.

Most pupils are confident, independent learners, demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviours, which support lifelong learning. Most develop resilience as they go through school. They have a clear understanding of what to do when they find work difficult. By the end of the key stage, most pupils show a maturity in their attitude to work, realising that it is acceptable to get things wrong, as this will lead to new learning.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching in the school is good. Most teachers plan imaginative, exciting activities that engage pupils effectively. For example, Year 5 pupils investigate the alien visitation and create news report broadcasts on the remains left in the school grounds.

Many teachers have high expectations and manage behaviour effectively. They use a wide variety of teaching styles well and use the outdoor area creatively to enrich pupils' learning experiences. They use questioning techniques skilfully to further pupils' learning and enable them to explain their thinking purposefully. In the few classes where teaching is less effective, the pace of the lesson is too slow and teachers do not address low-level disruption well enough.

Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy and ICT skills purposefully across the curriculum, for example through filming a fictional news item on alien crafts landing in Caerphilly. This provides the pupils with good opportunities to record, film and present information effectively and creatively through digital technology.

Teachers facilitate worthwhile opportunities for pupils to acquire independent learning through developing research skills such as discovering how the heart works. However, in a few classes the over use of work sheets limits pupils opportunities to work independently and write at length. Most members of staff model the Welsh language to a high standard and encourage pupils to use the language throughout the school day. This is a notable feature of the school.

Most teachers give regular feedback about how well their pupils are doing, for instance by praising specific contributions in class. Their marking is purposeful and efficient and indicates clearly what the pupils need to do to improve. Teachers encourage pupils to use a range of self-assessment strategies. For example, pupils check their work against a jointly produced success criteria. They provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to set their own targets for improvement.

Teachers provide a wide and well-balanced variety of learning experiences based around a series of themes, such as studying the human body, or the Celts in Wales. A range of educational trips and visits, for example to local museums, historical sites, places of worship and science exhibitions, enrich pupils' learning experiences. As a result, nearly all pupils show a desire and enthusiasm to learn and take the initiative in many projects such as developing the school's radio station. This provides valuable opportunities to enable pupils to solve problems and develop their thinking and creative skills well.

Carefully planned literacy and numeracy interventions provide additional support for specific groups of pupils. Staff record their progress and they use this information effectively to plan further support as needed. As a result, most targeted pupils make good progress in improving their basic skills.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a very caring nurturing environment with respectful working relationships between adults and pupils evident throughout all year groups. There are effective systems to monitor attendance and the academic progress of all pupil groups. This includes a comprehensive provision-mapping document to track the progress of pupils who receive extra support. Pupils receiving additional support have detailed individual education plans with child friendly targets that staff review regularly. Most targeted pupils make good progress in relation to their targets.

The school has many pupil groups that ensure pupils have an active role in the daily life of the school. For example, members of the Criw Cymraeg and school council led a lively assembly to introduce the Welsh phrase of the week and report back on the success of their recent “Ugly Bug Ball” disco, which raised funds for playground equipment. Pupils in all pupil groups speak about their role with pride and enthusiasm. There is good evidence that these groups contribute a great deal to the life of the school. For example, the ‘Learning Detectives’ undertook lesson observations and fed back to pupils on how they could improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning. This had a positive effect on some pupils’ behaviour.

The school is very successful in developing pupils as global citizens. The school’s eco-committee led a very impressive project, which raised money for the creation of a borehole to provide fresh clean water for a partner school in Lesotho.

Arrangements to develop pupils’ awareness of how to stay healthy are good. There are strong procedures to cater for the emotional health and wellbeing of each pupil. The school conducts commercially produced screening surveys to establish pupils’ emotional development and their attitude towards themselves and school. Staff analyse results and use this information effectively to plan and deliver appropriate interventions for individuals and groups of pupils, which have a positive impact on pupils’ self-esteem and confidence. Despite these good systems, transition arrangements with the infants’ school are not effective enough.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

There are positive relationships with parents. For example, a recent meeting of the parent forum focused on concerns and perceptions about bullying in the school. As a result, the school council has decided to re-instate the ‘friendship bench’ and is introducing ‘Friendship Friday’.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders and staff share a vision based on the core values of pride, belonging and collaboration, within a clear leadership structure. Since the headteacher’s appointment, there has been a continuous improvement in standards, outcomes, attendance and provision. The effective senior leadership team support the headteacher well.

Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and they work well together to ensure a supportive and caring environment that promotes the wellbeing of pupils successfully. The school is an effective learning community and leadership teams contribute well towards improving aspects of provision, for example the introduction of a radio station at school, mindfulness sessions and maintaining good standards of behaviour and wellbeing across the school.

Leaders have a good understanding of the school’s strengths and areas for development. They gather information on pupils’ progress through scrutinising pupils’ books, undertaking lesson observations and analysing data. They also gather the views of pupils through various child led group. For example, the eco group have influenced the curriculum by enhancing pupils’ knowledge of recycling, renewable energy, climate change and fairtrade through regular ‘Go Green’ days organised by the pupils.

There are effective arrangements for performance management. Targets link clearly to the school's priorities and areas for individuals' personal development. There are useful opportunities for staff to attend courses, receive in-house training and work with other schools to view and share good practice. This has improved standards of teaching throughout the school.

The school's strategic plan focuses on a worthwhile range of priorities identified from self-evaluation. It is a detailed document, which defines relevant and measurable actions for improvement pertinent to the school. In addition, it addresses national priorities clearly such as improving literacy and numeracy, and developing the digital competency of pupils as well as reducing the attainment gap between specific groups of pupils. It is effective in bringing about improvement, and as a result, the school has improved its provision for Welsh.

There are good opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge of current teaching strategies and to share good practice with other schools, for example on how to adapt mathematical activities to motivate and improve outcomes for girls. Links with the comprehensive school through joint planning of lessons and moderating pupil outcomes help staff to agree pupil attainment and areas for support on transition to Year 7.

Governors work with the headteacher, the senior management team and staff effectively to evaluate progress carefully. They keep a careful check on school expenditure and evaluate the cost effectiveness and impact of resources. However, governors do not challenge the school sufficiently enough as critical friends.

Leaders ensure efficient use of the school's budget and target specific resources to meet school priorities such as developing pupils' Welsh language skills and their digital competency. The school makes effective use of the pupil development grant to improve provision for developing the literacy and numeracy skills and wellbeing of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2018: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 11/01/2018