



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

A report on

Gors Community Primary School

**Step Ahead Education Centre
Gors Avenue
Cockett
Swansea
SA1 6SF**

Date of inspection: September 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Gors Community Primary School

Name of provider	Gors Community Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	*
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	N/A
Number of pupils on roll	322
Pupils of statutory school age	224
Number in nursery classes	50
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%)	48.1%
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 11.1%)	9.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	23.7%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/03/2017
Start date of inspection	23/09/2024

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

Many pupils start school with skills below the expected level, especially in language, communication, and social skills. Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make strong progress over time. Leaders and staff at the school are committed to improving pupil well-being and raising standards. There is a growing sense of teamwork, with a shared focus on creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all pupils.

Pupils generally make good progress in developing their literacy skills. They develop sound writing skills and older pupils produce well-structured and engaging writing in their work across the curriculum. The school is beginning to establish a more consistent approach to the teaching of reading. However, a minority of pupils do not read well enough, or with suitable fluency and understanding.

Pupils develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding well. By Year 6, they confidently apply their skills in real-life situations. The school offers good opportunities for creative, physical, and digital development, with pupils engaging in coding projects and multimedia work. The school is working well to strengthen Welsh language provision across all year groups, but older pupils lack confidence in speaking Welsh.

Pupils' well-being is a strength of the school, and staff provide a nurturing environment that supports pupils' personal and social development. Behaviour is generally good, but there are some instances of low-level disruption in lessons, which staff do not always manage effectively. Additionally, teaching across the school does not always provide enough challenge to ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress in learning.

Leaders and governors set useful targets for improvement. In a few instances, leaders do not focus rigorously enough on the quality of teaching. However, overall, they work effectively with staff to improve leadership at all levels, which is impacting positively on the direction of the school. Leaders have built strong relationships with parents, providing regular coffee mornings and workshops. The school is further strengthening its communication with parents to ensure all feel informed and involved in school life.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Sharpen evaluation processes to focus more closely on improving the quality of consistency of effective teaching across the school to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged and are actively engaged in their learning

- R2 Improve approaches to teaching reading across the school to ensure that all pupils develop their skills suitably
- R3 Continue to improve attendance

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

When pupils first start school, the majority have personal, social, and communication skills well below those expected for their age. Over time, most pupils, including those entitled to free school meals and pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), make effective progress across the curriculum.

Teachers work well to support pupils in developing their oracy skills. Staff in the foundation classes have a secure knowledge of how best to support the learning of younger pupils. They model language effectively and create valuable opportunities for pupils to make choices, initiate their own play, and participate in activities that enhance their language and social skills. As a result, pupils make strong progress, and many older pupils speak thoughtfully and justify their views, for example when discussing what makes a good friend.

Throughout the school, staff are beginning to support pupils to develop positive attitudes to reading. Teachers in the younger classes provide inviting reading areas and use story maps effectively to build pupils' understanding of story structure. As a result, many younger pupils confidently retell or recreate familiar stories. Leaders and staff are beginning to develop a consistent approach to the teaching of early reading, including a systematic approach to developing pupils' knowledge of phonics. However, this approach is at an early stage of development, and while younger pupils learn to use initial letter sounds successfully, a minority struggle when blending sounds to form words. Older pupils attempt to read unfamiliar words by sounding them out or asking for help, but overall, a minority struggle to read independently with suitable fluency or understanding.

Teachers plan well to develop pupils' writing skills. Staff provide regular opportunities for younger pupils to experiment with mark-making and practice forming their letters accurately. Teachers plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across the curriculum, for example through persuasive letters and instructional texts. By Year 6, many pupils include well-organised paragraphs and incorporate a range of techniques, such as rhetorical questions, to add interest to their work.

Staff support the development of pupils' creative and physical development well. Younger pupils engage enthusiastically in creative activities, such as making playdough necklaces and creating natural material portraits. Older pupils deepen their creative understanding when painting in the style of indigenous people, effectively combining artistic expression with storytelling.

Most pupils demonstrate strong progress in grasping key mathematical concepts. By Year 6, pupils use numeracy skills confidently and apply them in real-life contexts, such as graphing data for an Enterprise Week project. Pupils' digital skills are well-developed. For example, older pupils create simple code to make games or control devices and create engaging multimedia projects, such as stop-motion animations on anti-bullying.

The school works effectively to promote the Welsh language and provide opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles through the Criw Cymraeg. Leaders and staff have recently improved provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills and, as a result, many younger pupils are making suitable progress. However, many older pupils do not use the language confidently enough and struggle to ask or respond to questions using appropriate language patterns.

In many lessons, teachers clearly communicate the intended learning outcomes and use questions well to evaluate and develop pupils' understanding. They provide useful feedback, and many pupils use this feedback successfully, for example, when redrafting their writing or improving the quality of their artwork. However, the quality of teaching across the school is variable. In a minority of lessons, staff do not always match learning well enough with pupils' next steps, resulting in insufficient challenge and progress. Additionally, staff do not always address pupils' behaviour appropriately during lessons and, as a result, pupils become distracted and lose interest in their learning.

The school's curriculum, driven by the vision 'Imagine the World,' is designed to raise aspirations and promote engagement. It reflects the needs and interests of the school community well, offering pupils opportunities to explore local and global issues and what it means to be part of an inclusive and diverse community through topics like 'Everyone Together'. Staff ensure that there is a suitable focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, celebrating those pupils who embody the school's values. Visits and visitors enrich learning experiences and celebrate diversity, for example through food-sharing events that reflect the heritage of the community.

The school has worked with dedication to develop an ethos of care and inclusivity, ensuring that pupils feel happy, safe, and supported. In general, provision for pupils with ALN is effective. Leaders have established rigorous processes for identifying and supporting pupils with complex needs, and nearly all staff receive regular training to support this work. The school employs a wide range of intervention programmes to support pupils' well-being, including the effective use of the 'Sunshine' room to help pupils regulate their emotions. However, while pupils are sometimes withdrawn from lessons for additional support, this provision is not always effective. In these cases,

the activities provided and the approaches to teaching do not always match pupils' needs, limiting their progress.

The headteacher provides purposeful leadership and is well supported by a dedicated senior leadership team. Together, they ensure that there is a growing culture of collaboration across the school and, as a result, staff work well together with a sense of care for each other, and a determination to ensure that nearly all pupils feel safe and valued.

Spotlight: A school at the heart of its community

The school is working hard to strengthen its role in the community, by offering a range of initiatives to support and engage families. They hold workshops, such as maths and reading sessions, to guide parents in supporting their children. Leaders hold coffee mornings, which provide parents with advice and access to a range of external agencies, as well as establishing a network of mutual support. The school has introduced *Pantri Pawb*, a food bank, along with a Christmas hamper and toy appeal for families in need. It has transformed its community rooms into a café, library and resource centre, where parents can access food, clothing, and learning materials. Through these efforts and an ambition to further strengthen this provision, the school is becoming a vital hub, offering practical support and fostering a sense of belonging for all.

Governors play a critical role in providing challenge and support to the school. A few governors visit the school to gain first-hand evidence of progress towards national priorities, and these visits are beginning to help leaders monitor and evaluate school improvement. They recognise the need to distribute roles and responsibilities more widely across the governing body and further strengthen the role of parent governors in the school.

Leaders use a range of evaluative approaches effectively, such as learning walks and book scrutinies, to assess the school's priorities. Many staff take on leadership roles in the school, which are starting to impact positively on school improvement. For example, curriculum leaders produce useful reviews of their areas of responsibility, and these are beginning to identify the link between good quality teaching and improvements in pupils' learning. Overall, leaders use this information to make accurate judgments regarding the quality of provision across the school. As a result, they identify the school's priorities suitably, for instance to improve pupils reading skills.

However, leaders at all levels do not always ensure there is a sharp enough focus on important areas of teaching that need improvement, such as the quality and effectiveness of learning experiences. Leaders link professional development opportunities suitably to the school's improvement priorities and provide useful opportunities for teachers to collaborate with colleagues in other schools. However, professional learning does not always focus closely enough on elements of teaching that have the greatest impact on pupils' learning.

The school manages its resources appropriately. Classrooms are suitably resourced, and leaders use grants such as the pupil development grant to ensure that there are suitable levels of staffing that focus on the needs of pupils, for example by developing the role of the family liaison officer to support families and improve their children's well-being and attendance. As a result, the school has made strong progress in improving attendance, particularly for pupils with ALN. However, overall attendance rates remain lower than expected, and too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

Additional information

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

The school's arrangements for site security 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 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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