



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

A report on
Trerobart Primary School

Crawshay Street
Ynysybwl
Pontypridd
RCT
CF37 3EF

Date of inspection: September 2024

by

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

About Trerobart Primary School

Name of provider	Trerobart Primary School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	153
Pupils of statutory school age	140
Number in nursery classes	13
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%)	29.5%
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%)	11.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	8.2%
Date of headteacher appointment	10/06/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	15/05/2017
Start date of inspection	30/09/2024

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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

Following a period of turbulence in leadership and governance, Trerobart Primary School has appointed an interim headteacher from a local school on a part-time basis until the appointment of a substantive headteacher. Recent improvements in the behaviour of a very few pupils means that most pupils are happy in school and know who to go to if they have any concerns. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and the school is developing good working relationships with parents.

Nearly all pupils settle well when they first join the school. The youngest pupils make rapid progress developing their communication and number skills. Many pupils from Reception to Year 2, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and pupils eligible for free school meals, continue to make suitable progress with their communication, number, writing and Welsh language skills. However, staff do not provide older pupils with the learning experiences they need to support them to make the progress they could. Plans for the progressive development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school are underdeveloped. The quality of teaching and assessment is variable.

Teachers plan a range of learning activities that focus on termly topics. However, these activities often lack challenge and staff tend to rely too heavily on worksheets and do not provide useful feedback for pupils to improve their work. As a result, pupils do not develop effectively enough as independent learners.

Leaders do not focus sharply enough on improving pupils' progress. Recently, they have identified relevant priorities for improvement, such as reading, but progress in bringing about the needed change is too slow. Overall, processes to evaluate the quality of the school's work lack rigour. Leaders do not identify important areas in need of improvement. This means that aspects of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and provision to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills, do not support older pupils to make the progress they could. Arrangements to manage the school's finances lack clarity and rigour.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Improve leadership at all levels and ensure that evaluation processes focus on identifying the difference that teaching and learning experiences make to pupils' progress
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching and ensure that all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and challenge them appropriately
- R3 Ensure that curriculum and assessment arrangements develop pupils' knowledge and skills, including Welsh language skills, progressively as they move through the school

R4 Improve arrangements to manage the school's finances

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 usually every four to six months.

Main evaluation

Following a period of turbulence in staffing and governance, the school has appointed an interim headteacher from a local school on a part time basis. This arrangement will be in place until the school appoints a permanent headteacher. The interim headteacher is beginning to work well with leaders and staff to establish a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning. There is a strong culture of safeguarding that is supported by all staff and an increasing sense of teamwork within the school. Behaviour management is generally effective. Staff foster positive relationships with pupils and treat them fairly and respectfully. This means that most pupils feel cared for and know who to turn to if they feel worried about anything.

Most pupils enjoy school, and work well collaboratively, However, too often pupils are passive in their learning and do not develop their resilience and perseverance well enough, due to the lack of opportunities provided. As a result, during their time at school, many pupils, including those from low-income households and those with additional learning needs (ALN), fail to make sufficient progress in literacy, numeracy, and other key areas of the curriculum. This lack of progress is a result of low expectations from teachers and inconsistent challenge during lessons. In a few instances, teachers match the level of challenge in activities well with pupils' varying abilities. This positively impacts on pupils' progress, motivation and enjoyment. However, the frequent use of prescriptive worksheets restricts pupils' opportunities for independent learning and limits development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers' feedback is inconsistent, and often too congratulatory. It does not make a notable contribution to pupils' progress.

In the foundation learning classes, many pupils express their ideas clearly and retell familiar stories, such as The Three Little Pigs, with confidence. They make suitable progress with their mathematics and writing skills and, by Year 2, many pupils are able to write in simple sentences independently. However, in the older classes, the development of pupils' mathematics and writing skills is limited by the opportunities they have to write independently and engage in maths problem solving activities. Younger pupils make quick progress with their Welsh language skills and are generally enthusiastic when using simple words and phrases in class. However, this progress slows as they reach the older classes and too few pupils develop a sufficiently broad Welsh language vocabulary by the time they leave school.

Pupils show a good understanding of healthy lifestyle choices. For example, older pupils have written persuasive letters about the dangers of smoking, The recent focus on developing digital skills across the school has provided pupils with a few relevant opportunities to use their skills to support their learning across the curriculum. For example, older pupils create presentations on workhouses as part of their topic on Victorians.

Staff recognise the need to improve pupils' awareness of the importance of celebrating diversity and the inclusion of people from different backgrounds and ethnicities, as well as people with different spiritual beliefs and personal relationships. Provision for this is in the early stages of development.

Safeguarding is a priority, and staff ensure pupil safety by teaching them about the risks of social media and online activities. The school has developed strong relationships with external agencies, such as the school nurse, to support pupils' physical and personal development. The school has recently introduced a range of intervention programmes for pupils with ALN along with termly progress review meetings. It is too early to identify the impact of this work.

Staff have positive relationships with many parents. Leaders are beginning to enhance the relationship between home and school, break down barriers and improve the quality and frequency of opportunities that parents have to engage with the school. The school has good systems for monitoring pupil attendance and works closely with external partners to support families. The school records attendance effectively and analyses attendance rates appropriately. However, the number of pupils persistently absent continues to be a concern for the school.

The school provides a few appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about future careers and the world of work. Parents and community members visit the school to discuss their jobs, which helps pupils develop aspirations for their future. The school organises a variety of trips to help engage pupils in their learning and older pupils benefit from residential visits to help them build trust and engage in teamwork. However, there are currently no after-school activities, and limited opportunities to develop as active citizens through their role in pupil voice groups.

Leaders at all levels engage in self-evaluation but, at this stage in the school's development, this work lacks rigour and often gives an over-generous view of the quality of teaching and classroom provision. This work has a limited influence on school improvement. In a very few instances, improvement work has been successful. This includes recent work to begin to improve standards of reading. To bring about these improvements, staff received appropriate professional learning. However, in general, professional learning does not support staff well enough to improve teaching and learning. Over time, leaders have not communicated high expectations for teaching and learning, especially in classes for older pupils.

Governors are supportive but lack a clear understanding of the school's financial challenges and priorities for improvement. They are over-reliant on information from leaders regarding pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and the school's approach to curriculum design. As a result, they do not hold leaders to account in relation to these important aspects of the school's work.

Although leaders and governors use the pupil development grant appropriately to fund a suitable range of support to vulnerable learners, they do not review spending regularly and take suitable action where necessary. Arrangements to manage the school's finances lack clarity and rigour. As a result, the school is in a deficit budget.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any 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 do not manage the school's finances appropriately to support the SDP and school improvement. The school had no plans in place to address this deficit budget. However, the pupil development grant is used to support vulnerable learners.

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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