



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

**A report on**

**Trowbridge Primary School**

**Brynbala Way  
Trowbridge  
Cardiff  
CF3 1SX**

**Date of inspection: October 2022**

**by**

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

## About Trowbridge Primary School

Name of provider	Trowbridge Primary School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	195
Pupils of statutory school age	147
Number in nursery classes	25
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 23.0%)	54.9%
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 16.1%)	23.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	11.6%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/02/2012
Start date of inspection	24/10/2022

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](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

## Overview

Trowbridge Primary School is part of The Oaks Federation and is a warm and welcoming school whose ethos of care and support permeates all it does. Pupils at the school are happy and the working relationships between pupils and staff are positive. As a result, standards of behaviour are good. Each morning, pupils are welcomed into class and settle quickly, ready to learn. However, too many pupils are frequently absent or late for school and miss out on important learning time.

During their time at the school, many pupils make solid progress from their varied starting points. They benefit from teaching by staff who know them very well and who listen to them, including when they make suggestions about what they would like to learn. Many pupils also benefit from purposeful teaching, although at times, staff are too eager to offer support to pupils. As a result, pupils become less independent in their approach to their work, hindering the development of important attitudes to learning, such as perseverance and resilience. Pupils are aware of their rights as a child and consider how to treat others fairly. They also understand that they have choices and many benefit from the wide range of after school clubs on offer throughout the week.

Leaders are keen to lead staff in supporting families and ensure that there is a strong emphasis on equality and inclusion across the schools in the federation. Consequently, pupils feel safe and are keen to learn, including those with additional learning needs. Despite leaders' best efforts to promote regular attendance, too many pupils are absent too frequently and a significant number arrive at the school late. Therefore, these pupils miss out on too much valuable learning time.

All staff across the schools of the federation work hard to ensure that pupil well-being is good and as a result nearly all pupils are happy and proud to attend Trowbridge Primary School.

## Recommendations

- R1 Sharpen monitoring and evaluation processes to focus on improving pupil outcomes
- R2 Strengthen teachers' feedback and opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work so that they know what to do to improve
- R3 Ensure that teaching challenges all pupils, including the more able, to develop independence in learning
- R4 Improve standards for older pupils in Welsh

## **What happens next**

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Many pupils join the school with communication and numeracy skills below those normally found. Over their time at Trowbridge, many make strong progress to leave with skills in line with those expected for their age.

Many pupils develop their oracy skills well over time. They develop strong speaking skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 confidently present their research about the rainforests to their peers, and pupils in Year 5 modify the tone of voice they use to speak to visitors, compared with the familiarity of speaking to their peers. Generally, across the school, many pupils listen well to their peers and adults.

Many pupils make strong progress in developing their reading skills and by Year 6, many are competent readers. Older pupils use their knowledge of the sounds that letter strings make to work out unfamiliar words and respond to literal questions about the text. A minority of pupils make rapid progress in developing their reading, as a result of the well-focused support they receive. However, despite the additional support, a few pupils make slower progress and do not read well enough by the time they leave the school.

Most pupils make appropriate progress in developing their writing skills. They write exciting, creative texts for a suitable range of audiences. For example, Year 6 pupils use well-chosen vocabulary to design posters to advertise a scary Halloween event. However, by the end of their time at Trowbridge, only a few pupils develop a legible, flowing style of handwriting, and too many find the process of writing by hand very labour intensive. Many struggle to punctuate correctly, especially when using punctuation mid-sentence, and to spell common words correctly. More able pupils do not have the opportunities to develop their independent writing skills well enough.

Despite the limited opportunities for pupils to use Welsh during the pandemic, many pupils are keen to regain their skills, and develop their ability to speak basic Welsh appropriately. For example, pupils in the younger classes sing Welsh songs enthusiastically, respond to instructions and ask and respond to simple questions in Welsh. However, as they move through the older classes, many pupils do not build on these firm foundations well enough to make the progress they could in learning the Welsh language.

Most pupils make strong progress in mathematics and make at least the progress they should, often from low starting points. They use their mathematical and numeracy skills well to help them in other subject areas. For example, pupils in the older classes analyse the mortality rates in different coal pits across south Wales.

Younger pupils develop sound digital skills. For example, in Year 3, pupils use virtual reality goggles to 'visit' the rainforest, and this inspires their classwork. Older pupils have plentiful opportunities to develop these skills in communication through, for example devising digital presentations to share with the class. However, the provision does not allow older pupils to develop their wider IT skills well enough, and, as a result, they do not use their IT skills confidently to support their learning.

Most pupils make secure progress in developing their physical and creative skills. For example, pupils in Year 6 create a sophisticated, moving dance routine based on their topic of World War 2, that they perform to their peers.

Across the school, pupils who are eligible for free school meals make strong progress that is at least as good as their peers. Pupils who have additional learning needs make strong progress from their individual starting points. Pupils who learn English as an additional language often make rapid progress once they have acquired communication skills in the English language.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure at school and know the staff have their best interests at heart. As a result they know who to talk to should they have any concerns. Pupils behave very well throughout the school day and show respect to each other. They feel staff treat them with respect and listen to the suggestions they make about their school. Consequently, the working relationships between staff and pupils are strong.

The school council lead discussions with their peers on the school's rights charter, for example they discuss the current right of the month. Consequently, most pupils understand the school's values well. The Criw Cymraeg lead a weekly assembly and they are enthusiastic about the importance of their role, for example by encouraging pupils in the younger classes to use their Welsh language skills more frequently. Most pupils explain how their ideas contribute to the work they complete in lessons and independent learning tasks.

Most pupils understand what a healthy diet is. They discuss the importance of regularly eating fruit and vegetables and talk knowledgably about the initiatives in place at school to help them access this, such as the fruit trolley. However, a minority of pupils do not use this understanding and still choose unhealthy alternatives to water in the classrooms. Most older pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and understand the dangers of sharing information with strangers.

The majority of pupils enter the school day ready to engage in their learning and complete the tasks set for them. Throughout the day, pupils sustain their concentration and avoid distractions successfully. However, too many pupils do not always arrive to school promptly and as a result they do not have enough time to complete the tasks they are set at the very start of the day. Nearly all pupils engage well with the experiences their teachers plan for them. They are proud of their school and discuss confidently how much they enjoy the activities they do. They particularly enjoy the learning tasks in the afternoon, for example pupils in Year 3 produce models of the layers of the rainforest in the creation station. However, only a few pupils demonstrate independence, resilience and perseverance in order to overcome challenges as they rely too heavily on the supportive scaffolds from the staff around them. For example, when exploring the features of writing they are unable to work independently enough to structure the text on their own. As a result, pupils do not use a broad range of strategies to support themselves when completing a challenging activity and turn too quickly to staff for help.

Nearly all pupils respond to the feedback given by adults and other pupils. They answer the questions their teachers pose at the end of their work. However, they do not use this feedback often enough in order to move their learning forward.

There is a small improvement in pupils school attendance this year compared to last year, when the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact nationally on school attendance. However, currently too many pupils are absent for a considerable part of the school term.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Leaders and staff work very well together to develop an engaging curriculum that encourages an enthusiasm for learning in pupils and adults across the school. Staff think carefully about the core purposes and the principles of the Curriculum for Wales and how these can be applied in their practice. As a result, many teachers often design interesting learning experiences that stimulate pupils' curiosity about the world around them, for example the school's approach to supporting pupils to gain a basic understanding of different languages around the world, such as Mandarin.

The curriculum provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Staff plan thoughtfully for pupil progression, for example when developing writing skills over time and applying them in rich creative tasks. Leaders and staff further develop an understanding of progression in learning by working well in partnership with other staff in local schools on projects to share knowledge and expertise.

Teachers plan a range of interesting independent tasks and enhanced activities for pupils to apply and strengthen their knowledge and skills. A strength of this approach is the use of pupils' ideas to influence and shape activities, and as a result pupils engage more readily and enthusiastically with their learning. However, in a minority of lessons teachers guide too much of these activities. This limits the opportunities for pupils to deepen their thinking when working independently.

The school's curriculum provides useful opportunities for pupils to use their skills across Areas of Learning and Experience (AOLEs), for example when applying their numeracy skills to design and build Anderson shelters. Staff plan and organise a good range of trips and visits to support pupils' learning. These are successful in widening pupils' experiences, for example when taking part in residential trips. Most teachers use the indoor classroom effectively to enhance the curriculum and create engaging environments for pupils. However, in a few instances, teachers do not plan to use the outdoor environment purposefully enough to extend pupils' learning and stimulate their curiosity.

Staff across the school develop strong working relationships with pupils. They show care, humour and kindness and as a result, almost all pupils are comfortable at seeking help and asking for support. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour in lessons. Often, teachers encourage pupils to develop their thinking collaboratively, for example through activities to promote pupils to articulate their thoughts and listen well to each other.

Overall, teachers and support staff know their pupils well and in the majority of lessons adjust teaching suitably to meet the needs of learners. Teachers often ensure that all pupils access the curriculum at an appropriate level. In the majority of lessons, staff provide opportunities for pupils to select the correct level of challenge for their independent activities. Support staff work diligently to integrate pupils with additional learning needs into the classroom and assist the teachers well. However, in a minority of lessons, pupils have insufficient challenge to develop their thinking, they are over-reliant on support staff and as a result do not always engage well enough in their learning activities.

Many teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they are teaching and provide clear explanations to help pupils to understand what they are supposed to do. In the majority of cases, they model good approaches to learning and provide useful resources to support pupils during their lessons. Overall, the majority of lessons have a lively pace where pupils are engaged and enjoy their learning activities. Many teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and check for understanding.

Many teachers monitor pupil progress suitably during lessons and provide useful verbal feedback to help move their learning forward. Teachers written feedback often develops pupils' thinking by encouraging them to extend their ideas or express their opinions. However, feedback does not always help pupils understand exactly what they have done well or how they can improve their work. In a few cases, teachers do not ensure that pupils correct their basic spelling and grammar errors and, as a result, pupils often repeat mistakes.

Teachers provide useful opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own learning and that of their peers. Many pupils are beginning to identify and understand what they are doing well and what they need to do next to improve. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils' self-assessment has a sharp enough focus on the intended learning or challenges them to improve and extend their work.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school is caring and inclusive and this contributes to the happy and nurturing ethos pupils experience across the school. Staff manage pupils' behaviour positively and consistently and provide a safe and secure learning environment for pupils to flourish. As a result, pupils are well-supported in the development of their personal and social skills.

There are robust processes in place to identify pupils with additional learning needs, using a wide range of data and evidence. The school's additional learning needs co-ordinator, along with class teachers, ensures that there is prompt identification of pupils with additional learning needs and that suitable support is put in place.

The school offers a wide range of intervention programmes to support literacy, numeracy and emotional needs by deploying a number of efficient staff to deliver these interventions. Staff work closely and effectively with a wide range of external agencies to support individual pupil needs. The school measures pupil progress of those in receipt of intervention programmes and they generally make strong progress



in literacy, numeracy and emotional development. However, there is insufficient evaluation of the evidence of the progress of these groups of learners over time.

Teachers listen to pupils' ideas when planning the learning experiences. This helps to engage pupils and encourages them to make appropriate progress. However, these activities do not focus well enough on developing resilience and independence. As a result, when facing challenges, pupils are reluctant to apply the skills they have and rely too quickly upon the support of staff.

The school makes appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Staff provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. The wide range of after-school clubs enriches pupils' physical development successfully and contributes well to pupils' well-being.

The school is inclusive and provides opportunities for pupils to contribute their views, such as through the Criw Cymraeg, school council and well-being council. These groups help to broaden their understanding of the importance of being active citizens as well as promoting the culture, identity and language of Wales. For example, the Criw Cymraeg lead assemblies and promote a deeper understanding of the Welsh language by introducing and demonstrating a sentence pattern of the week. They promote the Welsh identity through songs and reflect on what it means to be Welsh.

Purposeful activities enable most pupils to understand the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, the school's Eisteddfod provides valuable opportunities for many pupils to participate in various competitions, such as writing a Welsh poem, or using a range of media to create artwork with a Welsh theme. In addition, the school provides pupils with opportunities to work with local artists, for example a graffiti artist when creating a mural of their local area.

The school curriculum provides rich opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of equality and diversity. For example, pupils participate in anti-racism day and explore cultural celebrations, such as Hannukah, by making a Menorah and considering its symbolism in Judaism.

Leaders and staff communicate appropriately with parents through newsletters, termly meetings and annual reports and, overall, this contributes to the harmonious ethos of the school. However, despite the school's efforts and strategies to promote good attendance, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough or arrive at school on time.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding, and all staff contribute to this. There are robust policies in place and all staff know the procedures to follow. The school's curriculum supports pupil safeguarding, such as enabling pupils to know how to stay safe online and whom they can turn to if they are worried.

## **Leadership and management**

The federation's headteacher has created and developed a clear vision for equality and inclusion across both of the schools and has high expectations of staff and pupils. At the school, the deputy headteacher provides appropriate support for its strategic and day to day functioning. Close working between the two schools began

prior to their formal federation in January 2019 and has gathered pace thereafter. The headteacher has created a very strong and positive culture of collaboration across the federation for the benefit of all at the schools. For example, when developing the Curriculum for Wales, teachers work in parallel pairs to share knowledge and expertise when planning purposeful activities for their pupils. This supports each teacher's professional learning and helps the drive for consistency and equality across the two schools. As a result, most pupils make solid progress from their individual starting points. This way of working promotes a constructive culture of professional learning and helps to support the positive well-being among teachers and support staff.

Leaders have developed a strategic plan for the gathering of first-hand evidence to inform self-evaluation across the work of each school and the federation. This draws upon a range of activities, such as looking at pupil books, learning walks, lesson observations and pupil progress meetings. However, these monitoring activities are not effective enough in identifying a few of the shortcomings within classes, across schools and across the federation as a whole. As a result, leaders are not always aware of the gaps in provision or priority areas for development.

The federation's improvement plan has an appropriate focus on developing national and local priorities, including important aspects of the federation's work in need of refining. However, these targets lack a sharp enough focus on strategic action for improving pupil outcomes. As a consequence, there is too much variation in these approaches, and this results in inconsistencies in pupil progress across the schools and their classes.

Beyond the federation, staff work well with their local partner schools to take forward curriculum developments and approaches to supporting pupils with additional learning needs. Leaders and staff collaborate with other schools and headteachers within a local school improvement group and this strengthens staff professional learning opportunities as well as broadening experiences for pupils. As a result, collaboration and professional learning are a strength of the school. This links well to the performance management all staff receive and the targets of the federation improvement plans, individual classes and personal development.

The federation's governing body demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting the schools and their progress. Governors frequently visit the schools and are knowledgeable of the federation's key strengths and areas for development. Through their role as a critical friend, they challenge leaders, by for example enquiring how the school will spend its surplus finance. They understand their duty to promote healthy eating and drinking and strive to ensure the school complies with legislation. However, despite strong encouragement from leaders, parents do not always support the school in this matter and provide unhealthy snacks and drinks for their children to take to school, for example squash and processed snacks.

Leaders and governors promote a positive culture of safeguarding that permeates the work of the school. A system of robust policies underpins this ethos and all members of staff follow these. Staff undergo regular and purposeful professional learning to support their work. The school's finances are well-managed and they ensure that there are suitable resources to support pupils' learning. Leaders have

focused on keeping staff ratios high this year. However, this does not always assist the promotion of pupils' independent learning skills.

Leaders encourage good relationships between the schools and their parents. Many parents value the support the school provides for their children. Leaders and staff communicate well with parents who attend the school to watch events such as the harvest festival or family picnics during sports day sharing the extensive grounds at Greenway. However, despite informing parents of the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school, too many pupils have poor attendance or are late and as a result they miss out on too much of their important learning time.

## 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

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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