



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

**A report on**

**Hafod - y - Wern Community Primary School**

**Deva Way  
Caia Park  
Wrexham  
Wrexham  
LL13 9HD**

**Date of inspection: February 2024**

**by**

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

## About Hafod - y - Wern Community Primary School

Name of provider	Hafod - y - Wern Community Primary School
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	288
Pupils of statutory school age	229
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 23.7%)	60.8%
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%)	9.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	7.9%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2007
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/05/2015
Start date of inspection	26/02/2024

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](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

At Hafod-Y-Wern Community Primary School, leaders, staff, and governors create an environment where pupils feel safe, make good progress in their learning and access a wide range of engaging activities. Most pupils are courteous and welcoming. They show respect for each other and for staff and engage well in learning. The school's support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), including those in the Resourced Provision, is a strength, enabling nearly all pupils with ALN to make good progress in learning and well-being.

In an area of high socio-economic disadvantage, the school ensures that cost is never a barrier to learning. Leaders and teachers provide a rich and varied curriculum, including opportunities for all to take part in a range of sporting and musical activities as well as purposeful and enjoyable visits and outdoor education experiences. The school's teaching and curriculum meet pupils' needs well.

Teachers plan a broad range of stimulating lessons, often following pupils' interests. Across the school, pupils are beginning to develop their confidence as independent learners. The youngest pupils develop their curiosity as they explore learning freely indoors and outdoors. Older pupils are beginning to work together in pairs and small groups to solve problems. They respond well to feedback during lessons to improve their work but are less sure about how to improve and maintain the quality of their work over time. Teachers plan valuable experiences that enable pupils to develop aspirations for their future careers, for example through links with the local university.

Pupils develop their literacy skills well and make suitable progress in Welsh. Most pupils develop sound mathematical knowledge and understanding. However, teachers do not plan carefully enough for pupils to apply their numeracy skills or to develop their digital skills in authentic contexts at an appropriate level.

Leaders and teachers know the school's strengths and areas for development well. They use monitoring and self-evaluation processes purposefully to identify priorities for school improvement. They ensure that professional development for all staff is suitably linked to school improvement and monitor the impact carefully. Leaders have high expectations for staff and pupils. They focus successfully on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve the quality and consistency of feedback to ensure pupils understand how to improve their work.
- R2 Develop opportunities for pupils to apply a wider range of numeracy and digital skills at an appropriate level in their learning across the curriculum.

## **What happens next**

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

The school serves a community where socio-economic disadvantage is significantly higher than average. Most pupils start school with communication and social skills below those expected for their age. During their time at school, most pupils, including those with ALN and those eligible for free school meals, make good progress in many aspects of their learning.

The youngest pupils develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. They listen carefully to others and follow instructions when engaging in their learning. As they move through the school, pupils continue to develop their listening skills well. Pupils in Year 4 consider each other's views maturely when discussing the effects of pollution on rainforests. Many pupils in the school's Resourced Provision are beginning to communicate their thoughts and ideas well.

Most pupils develop their reading skills well. Younger pupils are beginning to read simple texts and join in with familiar stories. As they move through the school, pupils develop a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. By Year 5 most pupils read stories, poems and biographies with increasing fluency and accuracy. They have a sound understanding of the key features of texts and discuss the events and characters in the books they read with confidence.

Younger pupils develop their early writing skills well when mark-making freely in their learning environment. As they move through the school, most pupils' writing skills develop well, as they write competently for a range of purposes. Pupils transfer their literacy skills confidently, for example to present information on the use of long boats during Celtic times and to create useful glossaries, including key words they have discovered in their Rivers topic.

A majority of pupils make good progress in developing their Welsh speaking skills. The youngest pupils respond appropriately to simple instructions and repeat familiar words and sentence patterns, for example when singing familiar Welsh songs. By Year 5, pupils are beginning to use a wider range of sentences to describe their feelings, likes and dislikes.

Most younger pupils develop a good understanding of number. Reception pupils count, order and recognise numbers to 20. By Year 2, they have a sound understanding of number facts to 100 and by Year 3, pupils develop their understanding of measure as they predict and measure the weight and length of a variety of classroom items. By Year 6, many pupils add and subtract three-digit numbers confidently. They calculate the area of compound shapes and represent data in a variety of graphs and charts. Many pupils in the Resourced Provision develop their mathematical skills well. They order and sequence numbers to 20 on a number line and count forward in 2s. However, across the school, pupils do not develop and transfer their numeracy skills in authentic contexts often enough.

Generally, most pupils make suitable progress in developing their digital skills. Younger pupils programme digital toys confidently and use simple databases to

collect and interrogate information. Older pupils use publishing packages, including green screens to create purposeful presentations on a range of topics. Most pupils select appropriate programs to enhance and support their work across the curriculum. However, across the school, pupils do not develop their digital skills appropriately in their learning across the curriculum. As a result, they do not make progress in a wide enough range of skills.

Most pupils' physical skills develop appropriately. The youngest pupils use a range of materials to develop their fine motor skills, such as when cutting and threading to make collage. They demonstrate their growing dexterity when playing a range of percussion instruments. From a young age pupils develop control, balance and co-ordination in their sporting activities when riding bikes, playing cricket and practicing posture and breathing techniques.

Many pupils are beginning to develop their thinking, problem-solving and creativity suitably. Younger pupils demonstrate their curiosity when freely exploring their indoor and outdoor environment. They begin to make links in their learning, recalling concepts such as light and heavy, big and small. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 make informed decisions about how to create dens from a variety of natural and man-made materials. Older pupils engage well in activities that enable them to discuss, reach conclusions and justify their thinking, for example when explaining why others' solutions to mathematical problems are wrong. The oldest pupils demonstrate their growing independence and resourcefulness when selecting resources to support their learning.

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

The supportive and friendly working relationships between pupils and staff is a significant strength of the school. Pupils trust that staff will listen carefully to their concerns and support their social and emotional needs sensitively. Pupils behave well and treat their peers, staff and visitors to the school with courtesy and respect.

Most pupils develop as conscientious and enthusiastic learners. They engage well in their learning, listening attentively to teachers' explanations and following instructions appropriately. Many pupils respond suitably to immediate feedback during lessons and most older pupils understand how to correct mistakes, for example to amend spelling errors. However, pupils do not always know what their next steps are in their learning or how to improve the quality of their work over time.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Pupils understand the importance of taking part in regular exercise and eating a variety of fruits and vegetables. They understand the importance of talking with others to share their worries or concerns. Many pupils participate in the clubs available after school that support their physical and emotional well-being. They especially enjoy the many outdoor and residential experiences on offer. Through the school's mentoring scheme, pupils enjoy fishing trips to the local lake and team building activities in the school's woodland.

Nearly all pupils feel that staff listen to their views and consider them when making decisions. Pupils value opportunities to influence what they learn, sharing their ideas enthusiastically at the start of topics. They contribute effectively to the wider work of

the school. For example, pupils across the school designed an eye-catching illustrative mural displaying the school's motto 'Dream, Believe, Achieve'. The Criw Cymraeg actively improve Welsh language experiences, and the School Council refine school policies in partnership with staff and governors.

Most pupils develop well as ethically informed citizens with a sound understanding of the importance of caring for their locality and the environment. For example, they investigate the impact of human activity on the environment and learn how the destruction of habitats has led to an increase in the number of species of animals that are endangered. Pupils enjoy participating in community events. They provide support for those in need by raising money for the local foodbank and discover the diverse nature of their locality through cultural and religious celebrations and festivals.

Many pupils understand why attending school regularly is important. However, attendance rates remain too low at present.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school's curriculum is developing well to reflect the principles of Curriculum for Wales, the local context, and pupils' interests. Teachers plan a varied and stimulating range of topics across most areas of learning and experience. They often creatively weave history, geography, and science together, supporting pupils to make relevant links in their learning. Older pupils, for example study the impact of climate change on flood plains in the locality. Teachers often develop learning experiences that enable pupils to consider issues that affect people and places across the world, such as the effects of pollution on rainforests. Opportunities for pupils to influence what they learn, engage, and motivate nearly all pupils.

Teachers develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Welsh culture and identity through a range of purposeful learning experiences. Pupils enjoy exploring the lives of influential people and investigating the events that have shaped modern Wales. For example, older pupils learn about Hedd Wyn, the Welsh language poet and Bard, when researching the effects of World War I and II on the people and landscape of Wales.

The school's work on world religions, diversity and European languages supports pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural understanding appropriately. They enjoy celebrating Diwali and Eid al-Fitr and develop their understanding of Christianity through visits to their local church. Teachers plan suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of LGBTQ+ inclusivity and the impact of racism, including time to share their own experiences.

Leaders and teachers enhance the curriculum through a range of beneficial links with the community. Visits to Wrexham University, for example deepen pupils' understanding of the world of work and the skills needed for different career paths. Pupils build on the knowledge gained, for example, when creating their own businesses, discussing sales, profit, marketing, and production. The school provides a wide and varied range of clubs that enable pupils to develop new skills and talents.

Across the school, teachers create calm, purposeful learning environments. They develop warm and positive working relationships with pupils, provide high levels of care and manage behaviour well.

Many teachers have high expectations of pupils and articulate these throughout lessons. They often adapt their teaching approaches effectively to meet pupils' needs. In many classes, including the Resourced Provision, teachers and teaching assistants use questioning well to assess and extend pupils' understanding, for example to enable them to think about and offer suggestions to problems. They recall previous learning and provide clear learning intentions and success criteria to support pupils' progress.

Teachers and teaching assistants generally use observation and verbal feedback well during lessons to support pupils to improve aspects of their work. For example, staff in the Nursery and Reception classes communicate effectively with the youngest pupils to develop their curiosity, extend their understanding, and ensure swift progress in learning. A team of skilled teaching assistants supports pupils, including those with ALN to make good progress in many aspects of their learning. Staff in the Resourced Provision use observation effectively to evaluate pupils' progress and accurately identify their next steps in learning. However, teachers in the mainstream classes do not always ensure that pupils understand how to improve the quality of their work over time.

Teachers generally plan effectively for pupils to develop their literacy skills. For example, pupils in Reception recall familiar tales in their small world play and pupils in Year 1 and 2 practice their early writing skills in the role-play area of the classroom. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 listen carefully to each other and respond appropriately when discussing the possible locations for the source of a river and a tributary on a map. Teachers model and develop pupils' Welsh language skills well, enabling pupils to make sound progress. However, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy and digital skills in authentic contexts at an appropriate level.

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

The school's inclusive and caring ethos is a strength. Its nurturing approach ensures that most pupils, including those in the Resourced Provision, enjoy being part of the school's community and feel valued.

Nearly all staff have a sound understanding of pupils' individual needs. They work closely together to adapt worthwhile approaches to meet these needs successfully. Staff ensure that pupils in the Resourced Provision have beneficial opportunities to integrate with mainstream pupils and staff, for example during collective worship and outdoor learning experiences.

The ALN co-ordinator has established robust processes for early identification of pupils' additional needs and includes parents, staff and pupils in planning individual learning and support. Leaders carefully monitor the progress that pupils with ALN make. Teachers and teaching assistants use a range of information effectively to make decisions about the next steps in learning and well-being for pupils. As a result,



many pupils with ALN make good progress in many aspects of their learning during their time at school.

The school provides pupils with worthwhile opportunities to lead on aspects of school life. For example, the Sports Council recently attended a coaching course, developing the skills needed to teach other pupils how to play games during break times. Teachers work together with pupils to plan learning experiences. At the beginning of each term pupils contribute their ideas about the knowledge and skills they want to develop through the topics chosen.

Across the school, staff develop pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles well. They provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities that encourage pupils to be active, including gardening, football, and fishing. Staff plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to improve their resilience and self-regulation, including activities that encourage pupils to work collaboratively.

The school provides pupils with a rich curriculum that gives them a strong sense of belonging. Nearly all pupils develop a sound understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales, learning about the lives of influential people past and present. They are beginning to learn about the diverse nature of modern Wales. Younger pupils sing songs in different languages and older pupils explore world religions through celebrations and stories.

The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge. For example, during collective worship, pupils discuss important social values such as equality and consider how this knowledge supports them to develop as confident citizens of Wales and the world.

Teachers enrich the school's curriculum through a range of stimulating visits linked to the topics they plan. Pupils benefit from visits to the River Trust, a local adventure playground and a tennis academy. Leaders act thoughtfully to reduce the impact of socio-economic disadvantage, supporting all pupils to enjoy the full curriculum including visits, residential experiences, sport and music.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and the actions they need to take if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance robustly and identify those pupils whose attendance falls below an acceptable level. As a result, attendance is improving.

## **Leadership and management**

Leaders have established a highly inclusive culture at Hafod-Y-Wern, where all pupils, including those in the school's Resourced Provision, feel safe and heard. Leaders and staff approach the considerable challenges they face positively and resolutely.

The headteacher provides assured and determined leadership. He has been successful in developing a vision for the school focussed on equity of experience and high aspiration as an entitlement for all pupils. This vision is clearly embodied by leaders, staff, and governors and is reflected in all aspects of the school's work.

Leaders understand the needs of the local community and the challenges many of their pupils and families face. The school's tireless focus on providing for pupils' basic, well-being and learning needs puts them firmly at the centre of all decision-making. Staff are committed to improving outcomes for pupils from their very first school experiences through to their transition to secondary school.

Staff work thoughtfully and collaboratively to build a curriculum that reflects the school's context. Leaders work closely with staff to develop the skills pupils need to access learning during their time at the school and for the future. Staff feel supported to trial approaches to find the most effective teaching methods and interventions. Leaders and staff carefully consider innovative approaches to raising aspiration for pupils and provide them with stimulating activities that improve their well-being.

Leaders involve staff, pupils, and governors in reviewing the school's work through a well-established self-evaluation and improvement cycle that draws effectively on a wide range of evidence. This feeds purposefully into annual and termly action planning, and professional learning for staff. The school's focussed approach to improvement, considers staff workload and well-being appropriately.

The school has a strong track record of continuous and sustained improvement. Leaders implement robust processes to monitor pupil progress and respond promptly to ensure teaching meets pupils' needs. The rigorous focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, enriching the curriculum, and providing high levels of care and support has a significant impact on pupils' progress in many aspects of their learning and well-being. The current focus on enhancing the environment, experiences and pedagogy in Nursery and Reception, for example, has a significant impact on engagement, learning and the pace of progress for the youngest pupils.

Leaders are committed to developing staff effectively. All staff form a strong, supportive, and reflective team. Teachers provide valuable support to colleagues new to the profession, for example through modelling and team teaching. Middle leaders carry out their roles successfully to strengthen the effectiveness of the school's evaluation processes. Senior leaders build leadership capacity successfully at all levels. They plan bespoke programmes of learning to support and nurture staff development. As a result, many teachers and teaching assistants, develop as highly skilled and effective practitioners.

Leaders provide worthwhile opportunities for staff to visit other schools, and to reflect on how the practice observed could be used to improve their own. This focus on sharing effective practice has improved the school's approach to developing pupils' mathematical skills, enabling them to secure sound progress.

Hafod-Y-Wern recognises initial teacher education as one of its core responsibilities. The school provides a model of worthwhile pedagogical practice for students and newly qualified teachers.

The school manages its budget effectively. The headteacher and business manager work with the governing body and all staff to ensure that costs arising from school do not act as a barrier to learning and life experiences. The school's work to minimise the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on pupils is a strength. Leaders use the pupil development grant, for example, to employ a pastoral support worker to support

pupils' well-being, improve attendance and develop trusting relationships with families.

Governors are well informed and take an active role in the life of the school. They have a sound understanding of the progress the school is making towards achieving its current priorities as well as implementing national priorities. They act effectively in their role as critical friend and their input often has a positive impact on school improvement, for example in contributing to transition arrangements and to improving consistency in the quality of teaching and learning experiences.

The governing body ensures the school complies with its statutory requirement to promote healthy eating and drinking and supports the headteacher and senior leaders well to promote a strong culture of safeguarding.

## 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.

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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