



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

**A report on**

**Llanhari Primary School**

**Aelfryn  
Llanharry  
Pontyclun  
RCT  
CF72 9LQ**

**Date of inspection: March 2024**

**by**

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

## About Llanhari Primary School

Name of provider	Llanhari Primary School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	178
Pupils of statutory school age	131
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%)	27.8%
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%)	15.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	2.2%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	6.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	03/09/2012
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	18/03/2024

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

Llanhari Primary School is an inclusive happy school. Leaders have created a clear vision and work purposefully to ensure a safe and inclusive environment where pupils and staff feel valued and supported. Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and show strong levels of well-being. Staff work well as a team and have high expectations of themselves and their pupils.

All staff at the school are committed to ensuring that pupils make the best progress possible. Dedicated staff support the learning and well-being needs of targeted pupils effectively through a range of interventions.

The school's curriculum promotes a sense of belonging, equity and diversity. Teachers provide rich and authentic learning experiences for the pupils that encourage them to engage enthusiastically with their lessons and activities. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and the skills to improve their own learning.

The headteacher actively encourages families to play a part in school life. For example, they hold regular parent workshops that focus on the school's improvement priorities and consult the Parent Council about how to make improvements.

Pupils develop their speaking skills effectively and most listen well to others. From an early age, they enjoy expressing themselves, sharing their ideas and talking about their experiences. The school offers a well-planned range of activities that enhance the pupils' creative skills, for example many pupils are encouraged to participate in performances using a range of different instruments.

The school monitors the progress of individual pupils carefully and senior leaders regularly discuss this with teaching staff and pupils. Teachers and support staff provide effective opportunities for pupils to develop a broad range of skills in their work across the curriculum. However, provision to develop pupils' skills in Welsh is less well-developed.

Governors support leaders well. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They visit the school regularly and carry out link visits with a clear focus. Professional development and learning for staff are a strength of the school and the school manages its resources well.

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' Welsh language skills
- R2 Provide further opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback and to develop as independent learners

## What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to performance development of all staff for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Most pupils start school with communication, numeracy and social skills at a level below those expected for their age. However, nearly all pupils, including those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), make good progress from their starting points.

Most pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well as they progress through the school. Many younger pupils speak with enthusiasm as they talk about the chocolate monster who has taken their easter eggs. Many pupils in Year 5 demonstrate empathy as they show understanding for others, such as those who face significant challenges in life in different parts of the world.

Across the school, pupils' development of their Welsh language skills is variable. Many younger pupils count to ten in Welsh and a few older pupils willingly respond to simple questions in Welsh. However, as they move through the school, pupils' progress in developing their oracy skills is too slow. Although most pupils use Welsh greetings enthusiastically and answer simple questions about the weather suitably, they do not make progress beyond this and are not confident to use their spoken Welsh in classes or around the school.

Many pupils across the school become enthusiastic readers. Many younger pupils know the sounds of letters and use their knowledge to read simple words such as 'park' and 'dark'. In Year 2, many pupils read with enthusiasm from a range of books. As they move through the school, most pupils read with confidence and expression using appropriate intonation in their reading. Many older pupils read an increasing range of fiction and nonfiction texts and explain what they enjoy about the books they read. They use their well-developed skimming and scanning skills to locate relevant information efficiently across the curriculum.

Pupils' writing skills develop well. Many pupils in the reception class find and copy words to help them construct simple sentences. As they move through the school, most older pupils apply an increasingly wide range of vocabulary to their writing. They use a range of strategies in their writing, such as conjunctions and imaginative adverbs, and use supporting evidence well to present a balanced argument. For example, they use effective adjectives and emotive language when composing meaningful poems, demonstrating a mature attitude and empathy for others less fortunate than themselves.

Nearly all pupils make strong progress with their mathematical and problem-solving skills. Most younger pupils' numeracy skills develop very well. For example, they use

the local shop to purchase ingredients for cooking Mexican food and weigh these accurately with support. In Year 3, many pupils enthusiastically use a range of standard and non-standard measurements to calculate the size of the footprints of the thief that stole their recipe. Many pupils in Year 4 make good use of the outdoor area to calculate the perimeter of a variety of shapes. By the time they reach Year 6, many pupils identify the characteristics of numbers, such as square and prime, and accurately solve a range of complex word-based number problems.

Most pupils develop confident digital skills and use these purposefully to support aspects of their wider learning appropriately. For example, in Year 3 many pupils successfully use an online art package to make the flag of Brazil. Many older pupils use a wide range of programs and applications effectively to support their work across the curriculum. For example, they use their digital skills suitably to undertake research and to create presentations on a variety of topics.

Many pupils develop effective problem-solving skills. For example, older pupils make predictions when planning a science experiment and use appropriate scientific language. Whilst investigating the length of shadows, pupils in Year 3 understand the importance of planning a fair test and make well-considered suggestions about which variables to change and which to keep the same.

Many pupils make good progress in developing their physical skills. Most younger pupils balance confidently when riding bikes around the well-developed outdoor area. In the older classes, most pupils develop their gross motor skills well through a range of dance and PE activities.

The development of pupils' creative skills is a strength of the school. For instance, many pupils of all ages confidently compose and perform a samba rhythm using a range of percussive and atonal instruments. A few older pupils can read music scores to perform different rhythms. Nearly all pupils develop their creative skills competently and demonstrate these skills superbly through dance, music, and art. Many younger pupils use techniques including the use of bold colours to develop brushing skills while studying the artist Romero Britto.

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

Well-being is a strength of the school. The school is a warm and welcoming community and relationships among pupils and staff are strong, and built on mutual respect, trust and fairness. As a result, nearly all pupils feel happy, safe and secure in school and know who to go to if they need help and support or have a problem. Most pupils know how to stay safe online.

Pupils feel that they are listened to and respected. Most pupils understand the need for healthy choices and the importance of regular exercise and are enthusiastic when given the opportunity to take part in physical activities. Many pupils also enhance their physical skills by taking part in a range of after school clubs.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of rules. They know and demonstrate the values that the school promotes, such as happiness, respect, perseverance, kindness, independence and confidence. Pupils across the school work collaboratively and show respect to each other. Nearly all pupils begin to

develop as ethical, informed citizens. They show this through their understanding of concepts such as fairness, equity and empathy during their topic work.

Most pupils who are part of pupil voice groups feel that staff listen to them, and that they are beginning to have an impact on the life of the school. For example, the 'Healthy Heroes' group runs a healthy fruit shop at breaktimes that encourages other pupils to make healthy choices about what they eat.

Across the school, most pupils listen attentively and participate well in lessons and enjoy their learning. Many pupils show a good understanding of how to choose the appropriate level of challenge. They are keen to talk about their work, explain what they are doing and show enthusiasm for learning. Many pupils understand what is expected of them and follow the class routines. Older pupils begin to show resilience in their work. They demonstrate empathy through their response to questions that arise within their topic work. For example, Year 6 pupils discuss issues and concerns about racism very maturely and respectfully when discussing Matthew Henson, the African American explorer. Most pupils are engaged in their work and many show good levels of concentration and perseverance.

Nearly all pupils behave very well in class, in the playground and around the school. Most pupils share resources responsibly and take turns when speaking in a group or to the whole class, for example in a group reading session they talk to each other and ask questions to help develop their reading skills.

Pupil attendance in school is improving and overall, most pupils are now attending school more regularly and on time, compared to this time last year.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

All staff have warm relationships with pupils that support the caring ethos that permeates the school. They consistently manage pupil behaviour positively and, as a result, nearly all pupils are polite, courteous and well behaved.

The school's vision for its curriculum is clear and places a strong emphasis on preparing pupils to become resilient and creative learners. The school gives pupils appropriate opportunities to have an input into their learning. Teachers explore a range of curriculum ideas ensuring breadth and balance. When planning activities, they consider the expected progress pupils should make in their knowledge and understanding, which informs their approaches to teaching. The school celebrates Welsh culture in the local community and Wales with pride. A broad range of extra-curricular clubs and trips and visitors to the school enhance pupils' learning. For example, visits to Big Pit and Cardiff Bay, along with visits from local historian, David Francis, provide engaging contexts for learners.

Teachers plan meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider world, including comparing Wales with South America. They provide exciting opportunities for pupils to make and taste traditional foods and study the culture and music of the region. For example, many pupils enthusiastically compose and perform a samba using a range of percussion instruments.

There is a systematic approach to developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills, and this includes the progressive development of pupils' phonics and grammatical skills in English. However, the effectiveness of the provision for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills in both Welsh lessons and informal situations is variable. As a result, many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Early years provision builds effectively on pupils' starting points using a play-based approach that enables them to explore and develop at their own pace. Teachers are reflective and adapt their practice according to the needs of the pupils. Well planned provision develops pupils' skills and knowledge successfully and is usually purposeful and engaging. For example, teachers provide younger pupils with meaningful opportunities to develop their curiosity and understanding of volume when comparing different quantities of water using a variety of measures.

Staff make full use of the school's extensive and well-maintained outdoor area. Teachers plan meaningful opportunities and experiences for pupils that allow them to learn effectively through a practical, hands-on approach outside. For example, pupils use natural materials within the school grounds to develop a collage that represents their well-being and self-esteem. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their independence.

The school places a strong focus on supporting pupils' health and well-being. They develop pupils understanding of staying safe online and encourage them to make healthy choices around food and drink.

Teachers plan and deliver learning experiences that build well on pupils' prior knowledge. These engage and challenge many pupils and support them to make the best possible progress. Older pupils develop their resilience in overcoming challenge in their work. For example, pupils in Year 5 recapped their work on subtraction before developing these skills further to systematically solve complex problems.

Staff demonstrate good subject knowledge and communicate clear objectives to promote effective learning amongst pupils. Teachers explain the purpose of tasks clearly and engage most pupils' well. They ensure that learning moves along at a good pace and challenge pupils at a suitable level.

Across the school, nearly all staff create stimulating and attractive learning environments. Classroom displays celebrate pupils' work whilst also providing useful scaffolding to prompt pupils' learning. Staff use a range of high-quality resources to support pupils' learning and experiences successfully.

Most teachers provide effective verbal feedback during lessons that encourage pupils to remain on task and focus on improving aspects of their work 'in the moment'. The quality of most teachers' written feedback is consistent with the school's marking policy. However, teachers do not consistently provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback and to review and make improvements to their work.

The school has effective systems to track the progress of pupils. Nearly all staff collaborate well to identify pupils in need of additional support and, overall, most teachers use assessment effectively to inform next steps in learning.

## **Care, support and guidance**

The school has a caring ethos that enables it to target its provision effectively to meet the wide range of pupils' individual needs. There is a robust whole school system in place to identify the learning needs and track the well-being of pupils. Strong links with parents support this work.

The school has addressed Welsh Government's additional learning needs reforms effectively. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) and other staff have a good understanding of the differing needs of the pupils. Dedicated and skilled support staff provide beneficial support for targeted pupils. They use a range of approaches and interventions consistently well to support the development of pupils' well-being and their literacy and numeracy skills. Comprehensive tracking systems ensure that most of those who require extra support make good progress from their starting points.

The school's Senedd has six different pupil groups and these give nearly all pupils a good opportunity to make an active contribution to the school. Teachers plan well for the spiritual, moral social and cultural development of pupils through classroom activities, collective worship and creative art. For example, a project on Mexico gave pupils the opportunity to reflect on different beliefs and to explore the culture of the country through a range of creative experiences.

Staff provide pupils with regular opportunities to revisit and discuss the school's rules and values. They explore each value with pupils in detail over the year through lessons and acts of collective worship. As a result, children routinely demonstrate these important values. The school ensures that pupils from all backgrounds can access the full range of activities on offer, for example residential trips and visits linked to topics.

The school actively promotes the importance of healthy eating and encourages physical fitness and mental well-being through a range of activities and clubs. For example, the youngest pupils benefit from purposeful opportunities to use outdoor areas to develop their physical skills. There are opportunities for the older pupils to take part in a fitness club, football and gardening club.

The school creates and maintains a safe environment for all pupils. There is an established system to report safeguarding concerns. Staff at all levels understand their roles in keeping pupils safe. The school works closely with outside agencies to respond effectively to any concerns and provides support to pupils and their families where necessary. An effective system is in place for tracking attendance and robustly following up absences.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher provides effective leadership for the school. She is knowledgeable, and passionate about how the school can make a difference in the local community. She has a clear vision which is shared by all staff and governors, ensuring that Llanhari Primary School is a happy and inclusive school.



Leaders set high expectations for themselves and their colleagues. They model effective collaboration and promote a cooperative approach to all they do. This collaboration includes a wealth of opportunities for productive professional learning, and the sharing of good practice between leaders, teachers and support staff. This has a positive impact on teaching and learning across the school. There are robust arrangements for managing staff performance and there is a logical link between the school's improvement priorities and staff's individual development targets.

The headteacher has worked with numerous educational groups and organisations including the Welsh Government. She uses these experiences and skills to ensure high-quality professional learning, coaching and mentoring for all staff and this is a strength of the school. For example, most professional learning takes the form of a coaching, research and enquiry-based approach that encourages all staff to question, explore and improve their practice and develop their leadership skills.

There is a clear senior leadership structure with an effective balance of defined roles and shared team work. All members of the senior leadership team have a good understanding of the work of others and support as needed. Similarly, staff across the school have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They share a joint ambition to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils at the school.

Family engagement is a strength of the school. The school has developed a range of valuable partnerships with families that contribute positively to raising standards. Leaders encourage parents and carers to play an active part in school life. They ensure that the school engages with families in meaningful ways that make a positive difference to provision and experiences. Leaders frequently ask parents for their view of the school's provision and act upon their suggestions. For example, the Parent Council are working with the headteacher on a school communication strategy following leaders' analysis of parent questionnaires.

The school uses specific grant funding effectively to ensure beneficial support for identified pupils. For example, leaders use the pupil development grant well to provide a range of intervention strategies to support pupils to improve their well-being, and literacy and numeracy skills. The school makes good use of external grants to develop the areas of learning and experience, provide additional support to specific groups of pupils, enhance professional development and purchase resources. For example, the school recently received grant funding to facilitate parental workshops focussing on the teaching of numeracy and to provide parents with a range of numeracy resources to use at home to support their children's learning.

The school's monitoring, self-evaluation and improvement processes are effective and involve all stakeholders. For example, leaders invite governors, parents and staff to an annual summer event, focussing on school improvement that feeds into the priorities for the following year.

Leaders have clear aims and strategic objectives, which focus appropriately on school improvement and on national priorities. For example, the school's work on Curriculum for Wales, well-being and numeracy is developing effectively. However, the provision for the Welsh language is underdeveloped.

The governing body brings together people from a broad range of backgrounds with a wide skill set that leaders use effectively to inform the work of the school. Governors work well with the headteacher and staff, providing effective support to the school. They know and represent the school and community well. Governors have a good knowledge of the work of the school and its impact in ensuring positive outcomes for pupils. They engage in the first-hand gathering of evidence, for example, taking part in link visits and learning walks. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and are beginning to identify areas for development and to challenge leaders appropriately. They work well with staff to ensure effective arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking amongst pupils.

## 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:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

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Publication date: 23/05/2024