



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

A report on
Bancyfelin Primary School

Bancyfelin
Carmarthenshire
SA33 5ND

Date of inspection: June 2024

by

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

This inspection was undertaken as part of trialling our new inspection arrangements. As a result, this report may be slightly different in format to other published reports for providers in the sector.

About Bancyfelin Primary School

Name of provider	Bancyfelin Primary School
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	56
Pupils of statutory school age	38
Number in nursery classes	5
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 23.7%)</i>	9.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 13.2%)</i>	15.8%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	42.1%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language (categories A-C)	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	19/02/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	30/06/2015
Start date of inspection	03/06/2024

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from 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

Bancyfelin Primary School is a happy and welcoming learning community that lays a firm foundation for pupils to develop their basic skills. Pupils are caring and considerate of each other, which contributes to the family atmosphere. They feel that staff take their concerns seriously and know whom to approach if they need support. Pupils are treated fairly and respectfully. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are a strength and their behaviour is very good.

In a short period of time, the headteacher has identified the federation's strengths and has set purposeful procedures to address the areas for improvement, for example by training and supporting the assistant headteachers to act more strategically. The assistant headteachers across the federation work well together and promote a culture of sharing and emulating effective teaching and learning practices among staff to improve pupils' experiences and skills.

Many pupils make good progress at the school from their starting points. They develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills purposefully as they mature throughout the school. Teachers plan interesting activities to engage pupils' interests. However, teachers do not always plan systematically enough to provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills to the best of their ability. Staff have a productive working relationship with pupils. They ensure that activities are suitably paced and provide stimulating learning experiences for pupils. However, teachers do not provide regular opportunities for pupils to make independent choices about how to complete tasks and present their work.

Members of the governing body have an appropriate understanding of the federation's strengths and areas for improvement. They are supportive of the pupils, staff and the local community and are active in striving to reduce the impact of poverty on learning experiences. However, members of the governing body do not participate fully in the self-evaluation process to monitor the effect of provision on pupils' achievement thoroughly enough.

Recommendations

We have made 3 recommendations to help the school continue to improve

- R1 Develop leadership at all levels
- R2 Provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills to the best of their ability
- R3 Ensure regular opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills

What happens next

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

Main findings

The leaders of the federation have a clear vision that is based on creating a happy and caring learning environment to provide a firm foundation for pupils to develop their basic skills and to be 'federation friends growing the future'.

In a short period of time, the headteacher has a sound understanding of the federation's strengths and has begun to implement purposeful procedures to address the areas for improvement. For example, by ensuring purposeful professional development for the assistant headteachers to equip them to act more strategically and take a leading role in the self-improvement processes. The headteacher has high expectations of himself, pupils and staff.

Across the federation, the assistant headteachers work together purposefully and commit fully to the shared values. Over a period of recent instability, they have promoted a culture of effective co-operation between all members of staff. As a result, staff are keen to develop provision to improve pupils' experiences, skills and progress, for example in developing beneficial learning areas for the youngest pupils.

Over time, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make appropriate progress in their skills. Staff establish a purposeful working relationship with pupils and identify individual pupils' needs well. They use a good range of probing questioning methods which recall pupils' previous learning well and encourage them to think for themselves successfully. At times, teachers offer useful feedback and, on the whole, pupils have a suitable understanding of what they have done well and how to improve their work. However, these arrangements are inconsistent and, as a result, pupils are not always given regular enough opportunities to consider teachers' feedback and make valuable improvements to their work.

Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to influence what they learn within their termly themes. For example, pupils contribute ideas about what they would like to discover and learn at the beginning of their themes. As a result, pupils have a clear interest in their experiences and apply themselves purposefully to their learning. On the whole, teachers do not provide regular enough opportunities for pupils to make independent choices about how to complete tasks and present their work.

Leaders provide a suitable range of opportunities for staff to take part in professional learning activities and visit nearby schools, which links to some of the school's strategic priorities. For example, staff have attended training on how to improve pupils' standards of oracy. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their Welsh language skills. They are polite and respectful with their peers and staff and

use appropriate vocabulary and tone of voice in discussions and informal conversations.

On the whole, staff provide interesting learning experiences that support the development of many pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills suitably. Pupils' reading skills develop consistently. The youngest pupils acquire early reading skills well and recognise a wide range of sounds and the form of letters. By Year 3, they read confidently and use purposeful strategies to find the meaning of challenging or less familiar words. The oldest pupils show a suitable awareness of famous authors. They identify clearly what their preferences are in terms of different texts and justify their choice by giving mature reasons in both languages. Many pupils' writing skills develop soundly in Welsh and English. They write in a variety of genres across an appropriate range of contemporary contexts. For example, older pupils use persuasive language effectively when expressing their opinion on the speed limit on Welsh roads.

Over time, many pupils make appropriate progress in their numeracy skills. For example, the youngest pupils count to 20 confidently and show a sound understanding of the concept of '1 more' and '1 less'. Pupils build on these skills regularly and, by the top of the school, they predict the next number in a sequence of numbers successfully. However, teachers do not plan systematically enough to provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills to the best of their ability.

The school has a robust process for tracking and monitoring progress and the additional learning needs co-ordinator acquires useful information about pupils effectively. Staff work together effectively to identify pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and respond to any concerns in a timely manner.

Staff provide purposeful support programmes effectively for pupils who need additional support. Sessions are adapted skilfully to respond to pupils' specific needs. The school works effectively with a variety of other agencies to support pupils who have been identified as having specific needs. As a result, provision for pupils with ALN is sound and they make appropriate progress over time against their targets and their previous achievements.

The federation's staff have beneficial links with the local communities to provide valuable experiences for pupils. Leaders have established productive relationships with parents. For example, they have begun to seek parents' views about important aspects of their children's learning experiences. Recently, leaders have developed systems to promote communication between the school and the home.

Leaders are aware of the importance of trying to reduce the impact of poverty on pupils' achievement. They hold local events for the federation to raise money towards costs, for example by providing swimming lessons for pupils. Members of the governing body have a suitable understanding of the school's main strengths and some areas for improvement, in line with the priorities in the improvement plan. However, members of the governing body do not participate fully in the self-evaluation process to monitor the effect of provision on pupils' progress thoroughly enough.

There are purposeful opportunities for pupils to contribute to whole-school activities, for example when collecting goods for the local food bank. Members of the school council also present and discuss their work with the governors well as part of the termly meetings. However, there are few regular opportunities for pupils to voice their opinion about the school's wider provision. As a result, pupils are not given purposeful enough opportunities to develop their leadership roles.

Nearly all pupils are caring towards each other and give careful consideration to the needs of their peers. Regular opportunities are provided for the youngest pupils to spend time with the oldest pupils and this contributes beneficially to the school's familial atmosphere. Nearly all behave well and play together successfully. They make full use of the outdoor areas and the school grounds, which contributes effectively to developing their well-being and social skills.

Through a variety of effective methods to improve well-being, most pupils feel that staff take their concerns seriously and are willing to listen to what is important to them. They know whom to approach if something is worrying them. They are respected and treated fairly. The sense of respect and courtesy that most pupils have towards staff and visitors is a strong feature of the school.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are not a cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's funding appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

The school's arrangements for the safety of the site are not a cause for concern.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer questionnaires and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers, staff and the governing body/members of the management committee 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, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), 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 (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- 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 refers 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 (<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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Publication date: 05/08/2024