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

A report on

Barker's Lane C.P. School

Barker's Lane
Wrexham
LL13 9UN

Date of inspection: June 2024

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Barker's Lane C.P. School

Name of provider	Barker's Lane C.P. School
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	N/A
Number of pupils on roll	243
Pupils of statutory school age	197
Number in nursery classes	32
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%)	5.5%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 13.2%)	3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1.6%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2011
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	13/06/2016
Start date of inspection	24/06/2024

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

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

Overview

Pupils, staff and parents are proud of being part of Barker's Lane Primary School. By working together, everyone contributes to the caring ethos of the school. Under the effective leadership and direction of the experienced headteacher, all staff contribute to an environment where pupils are nurtured and encouraged. Relationships based on respect between staff, pupils and their parents are a key strength of the school. There are strong lines of communication between school and home and parents feel engaged in their children's education.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. As pupils progress through the school, they speak and write with confidence, developing a rich and sophisticated vocabulary. However, pupils do not make enough progress in developing their Welsh language skills over their time at the school.

Teachers monitor pupils learning well, using worthwhile strategies to assess progress both during and over the course of a series of lessons. They provide constructive feedback to pupils. As a result, most pupils know what they do well and how to improve their work. Teachers deliver learning experiences across the broad range of the curriculum. However, there is no coherent whole-school plan to ensure that pupils build on prior learning across every area of the curriculum.

Leaders, including governors, know their school well. Self-evaluation processes are robust and informative, ensuring that they have a good understanding of the school's strengths. There are systematic and realistic actions in place to address any identified areas for development. School leaders value professional learning, ensuring that their staff take advantage of opportunities to observe good practice both within and outside of their own school.

Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' Welsh skills

R2 Develop a whole-school approach to the planning for progression of the curriculum, which builds developmentally on pupils' previous learning and experiences

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time at school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those eligible for free school meals, make good progress in developing strong literacy, numeracy and digital skills from their individual starting points.

Many pupils enter the school with appropriate communication skills. By Year 2, many pupils listen well to each other, enjoy listening to stories and rhymes, follow simple instructions and take turns to speak. By Year 5, most pupils listen attentively to one another. They respect each other's views and speak articulately, using a wide range of sophisticated spoken vocabulary.

On entry to the school, pupils quickly develop a love of books and stories and readily share books with one another. In reception, many pupils have a good understanding of the sounds that letters make, and a few pupils begin to blend sounds to read simple words. Many Year 2 pupils read simple books and texts accurately and with good levels of understanding. Most older pupils are very enthusiastic about reading. They read challenging fiction and non-fiction texts fluently and with good levels of expression, varying voice and volume when appropriate. They use a range of higher order reading skills, such as skimming, scanning, inference and deduction.

Younger pupils' writing develops well. Many begin to write simple words in role play situations. For instance, reception pupils write lists of places they would like to visit in their travel agents play area. By Year 2, most pupils write simple sentences, and spell most words correctly and with accurate letter formation. Older pupils write skilfully in a range of genres. For example, they include figurative language to write interesting narrative poetry based on the experience of taking part in sporting activities.

Over their time at the school, most pupils make strong progress in mathematics. The youngest pupils have a good understanding of numbers and their values. They recognise, count and write numbers to 10 and apply their number skills well in practical situations. By Year 2, most pupils have a strong understanding of the value of numbers to 100 and measure with some accuracy. An example of this is when pupils measure their own wrists accurately in centimetres to make a watch strap. Most pupils count confidently in 2s, 5s and 10s and relate this to multiplication. Most pupils understand the value of coins to £1 and use this to calculate change in the role play Tuck Shop.

Older pupils develop a strong understanding of mathematics. By Year 6, most pupils confidently understand the value of numbers to one million and use systematic calculations for each of the four rules of number accurately. They apply their numeracy skills well. For example, when they compare the impact of acid rain on the growth of plants, they measure accurately using decimals and record their information on a line graph.

Across the school, many pupils are positive about the Welsh language and are willing to attempt simple words or phrases in Welsh. However, many pupils' Welsh oracy

skills are underdeveloped and, by the time pupils leave the school, they lack the skills needed to converse and understand simple Welsh sentences.

Most pupils' digital skills develop well over time. By the time their reach Year 6, they use a wide range of programs confidently to support, record and enhance their learning effectively. They apply their skills well, for instance using coding to programme a stop motion animation inviting people to a sports day.

Pupils' physical skills develop effectively as they move through the school. Younger pupils demonstrate a range of skills, such as skipping, hopping and riding bicycles. Older pupils take part in a wide range of sporting activities. They evaluate and improve their performance, such as through recording their own distances and times during athletic events.

When given the freedom to explore and create, many pupils demonstrate powerful artistic and creative skills. For example, older pupils use dance and drama to communicate how it feels to represent their country at The Olympics.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils take great pride in their school and enjoy learning in its calm and nurturing environment. Strong relationships, based on mutual respect, exist between pupils and all staff. Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school. They are keen to tell visitors about their school, talking confidently about being members of the 'Barker's Lane family'. Nearly all pupils feel safe and know who to talk to if they are worried. Pupils explain that staff deal with any of their concerns quickly and effectively.

Nearly all pupils show kindness and consideration, particularly when supporting others in class. Pupils understand and respond well to the school's procedures to encourage positive behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well and nearly all pupils settle quickly into class and are ready to learn.

Nearly all pupils have a strong understanding of the need to stay healthy by eating well and being active. Pupils explain why it is beneficial to eat a balanced diet and why it is important to drink lots of water, especially when it is hot. Nearly all pupils enjoy taking part in physical activities and enthusiastically attend a range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Pupils take part in physical exercise activities enthusiastically, such as using the gym trail during break times or completing their daily mile.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves and others safe, including when working digitally. Many older pupils recognise the dangers that may arise as a result of unsuitable use of the internet and create a set of helpful guidelines to keep learners safe while online.

Most pupils collaborate well in class. They speak confidently and clearly when discussing their work. They are eager to share their views and ask and answer questions. They co-operate well when working in pairs and in small groups and value the views and opinions of others.

Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude to their work. They remain engaged in their learning when taking part in suitably challenging activities. Most pupils respond well

to feedback from staff and their peers and use this constructively to improve their work. Most older pupils reflect on how well they are progressing with their learning, consider what their next steps should be and know whom to ask for help.

Pupils with positions of responsibility across the school have appropriate influence over the life and work of the school. They take on their roles conscientiously by conducting a range of tasks and feel that they play a positive role in the life of the school. Examples include the Eco School committee planting trees in the school grounds, digital leaders devising digital quizzes and the School Council organising events to raise funds for charities. Many older pupils are developing their enterprising skills well and apply them in different contexts, such as designing and marketing an eco-friendly soap.

Teaching and learning experiences

Teachers use clear instructions and explanations, which support pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding well. They have suitably high expectations of pupils and use a range of approaches and resources well to engage and support pupils to achieve. Teachers use skilful questioning to develop pupils' thinking and understanding. In most instances, teachers use teaching assistants well to support pupils' learning and wellbeing.

Teachers create engaging and stimulating classroom environments, which support pupils to learn effectively during their time in school. Teachers of younger pupils make good use of their outdoor spaces to plan and deliver purposeful and practical learning opportunities.

Teachers use consistent approaches to feedback, which support pupils to reflect on their learning and improve their performance effectively. For example, all classes clearly define 'Steps for Success' in each lesson and teachers provide pupils with 'Pit Stops' to share effective examples, to reflect on their learning and offer advice to their peers. Effective verbal and written feedback help pupils to know how well they are doing and what to do to improve. As a result, most older pupils have a clear understanding of their own strengths and areas for improvement.

The school's curriculum is sufficiently broad to meet the needs of their pupils and to capture their interests appropriately. The curriculum builds well on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding, and experiences in terms of developing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. However, the progressive development of learning across all areas of learning and experience of the curriculum is not yet in place, meaning that learning does not build coherently and systematically enough over time.

A range of visits and visitors to school enrich the curriculum and the school is beginning to use exciting authentic learning contexts to enhance learning. These opportunities allow pupils to develop their independence and apply their knowledge, skills and understanding well. For instance, older classes take responsibility for setting up a 'Through the Ages' Museum for the school community, using their visit to Wrexham Museum as a stimulus.

Teachers and leaders effectively assess pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and adapt the provision offered to ensure that they meet the needs of each pupil. By

reviewing the impact of provision, through termly pupil progress meetings, teachers and senior leaders know that pupils make at least expected progress in literacy and numeracy, in line with their ability.

The school's provision for the development of Welsh language communication skills is limited. A few staff act as good Welsh language models. However, opportunities for pupils to hear accurate pronunciation of Welsh are not consistent.

The school makes good provision for personal and social education, encouraging pupils' understating of their own well-being effectively. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of how to make healthy lifestyle choices, such as in relation to healthy eating and drinking, substance misuse and online safety. For example, pupils in Year 1 explore and list all the ways that they can keep themselves healthy, such as going to bed early and eating plenty of fruit and vegetables.

The school provides worthwhile learning experiences that inspire pupils and raise their aspirations around future careers and the world of work, such as having a digital marketing expert work alongside pupils as part of their Enterprising Engineers project.

The curriculum effectively reflects the nature of the local context, including the cultural, linguistic and diverse nature of Wales and the wider world. For example, the school celebrates diversity by arranging events, such as the 'Croeso Pawb' event, where pupils explore and value the diversity of their community through a worthwhile range of activities and workshops.

Care, support and guidance

All staff contribute successfully to developing a welcoming, happy and inclusive school at Barker's Lane. The warm and caring working relationships between staff and pupils underpin the school's ethos. Staff consider pupils' emotional well-being to be a priority and they have developed a wide range of effective strategies to ensure that pupils are ready and able to learn. Adaptations to the school's environment, by creating calm spaces around the school and using music and softer lighting within classrooms, provide the atmosphere to help pupils learn.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) is highly effective and ensures that there are comprehensive arrangements in place to swiftly identify pupils' needs. The ALNCo works well in partnership with staff to ensure targeted interventions are in place. Through specific programmes, staff are able to provide effective support and monitor the impact of these actions in addressing the individual needs of pupils. The school makes good use of specialist external agencies to support pupils and their families. As a result of all of these actions, most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress against their individual targets.

Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on their moral and spiritual beliefs, and those of others through whole-school and class assemblies. Staff provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on and consider how they would apply key values, such as kindness, respect and resilience. Teachers plan a range of purposeful activities for pupils to explore their rights as children and compare these to other

children's experiences from around the world, such as those children currently living through a conflict. The school promotes equality, diversity and inclusion effectively through a range of creative activities. For example, while learning about equality, older pupils create posters and leaflets about significant people such as Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King and Betty Campbell.

Teachers ensure that there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their self-confidence, such as through performing school concerts and creating topic related dances to perform to parents. Teachers plan worthwhile opportunities and activities for pupils to develop their sense of a Welsh identity, including holding a school Eisteddfod and by exploring the work of famous Welsh artists. The school provides opportunities for pupils to influence their own learning and share this with the wider school. For instance, Year 6 pupils choose the most appropriate information and format to use to present information on the Olympics to the whole school as part of an assembly.

The school's policies and processes for promoting positive behaviour throughout the school are successful in ensuring that pupils behave well in lessons, breaktimes and as they move around the school. The school has effective systems to monitor and promote attendance. Staff are positive role models and advocate the school's values well. This consistent approach from all staff promotes good behaviour and means that nearly all pupils develop respect, understanding and tolerance towards others.

The school has developed a very strong safeguarding culture, with staff conscientiously carrying out their roles in keeping pupils safe. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides strong and compassionate leadership. She has worked in collaboration with pupils, staff, governors and parents to establish a clear vision for the school and create an inclusive culture where pupils feel safe and valued. The headteacher sets high expectations for herself and her staff to provide high quality care and education for all pupils. As a result, staff have high aspirations for their pupils. There are strong lines of communication between the school and parents, including sharing quality information with parents about their child's activities. Consequently, nearly all parents say they feel engaged in their child's learning. Parents, pupils and staff speak proudly of being members of the 'Barker's Lane family'.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong strategic leadership, creating an environment where staff feel valued and respected. Through the clear communication of expectations by senior leaders, all staff understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities well. Senior leaders have created a positive working culture where all staff work together well as part of a team. Teachers have good opportunities to observe each other teach in small groups and, as a result, staff feel comfortable to have professional discussions and share their practice, resulting in improved provision. For instance, peer observations have ensured that there are consistent approaches to assessment for learning used effectively across the school to assess pupil progress within lessons.

Through effective self-evaluation processes, school leaders know their school well. They use a range of information, such as pupil assessment data and internal monitoring, to evaluate pupil progress effectively. Monitoring reports, completed by senior leaders and governors, are informative, and clearly evaluate the impact of provision on learning and how pupils improve. The school links professional learning effectively to self-evaluation outcomes. For example, following recent monitoring by senior leaders, foundation learning staff have had the opportunity to visit another local school to observe effective practice in developing more pupil-led learning.

Robust analysis of first-hand evidence allows the school to establish clear rationale for each of their improvement priorities. All staff understand the school improvement priorities and contribute to suggestions for actions to address these areas. Through a clear process of actions and success criteria, school leaders identify and plan the steps to address each priority well. Plans to address many of the national priorities are evident and have led to successful developments in keeping learners safe and implementing ALN reform. The school continues to develop their approach to the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, having initially focused on progression in literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Senior leaders identify the need to focus on the progression of pupils' learning across all Areas of Learning Experience as their next area for improvement.

Effective performance management ensures that the school meets the developmental needs of the whole school and individual staff. The headteacher values professional learning opportunities for all staff, creating a culture where they feel comfortable and willingly to discuss and seek support to address their own professional development needs. The opportunities to work collaboratively with other local schools is strong. Staff visit to see effective practice in other schools and share experiences across their own school. These experiences ensure that all staff benefit from the opportunities to take part in and share effective professional learning.

Governors understand and discharge their duties effectively. They conduct monitoring observations alongside staff and join pupil progress meetings. These first-hand experiences ensure that they have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas of improvement for the school. The governing body fulfil their statutory responsibilities in relation to healthy eating and drinking. Working alongside senior leaders, they promote a strong culture of safeguarding.

Governors have a strong understanding of the school's financial situation. They collaborate constructively with senior leaders to prioritise spending to ensure that they use resources effectively to support the needs of their pupils. They make effective use of grant funding, such as the pupil development grant, to support the most vulnerable pupils. For example, the school ensures equality by offering access to extra-curricular provision for music.

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) 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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