



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

A report on

**Berriew C.P. School
Berriew
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 8BA**

Date of inspection: September 2019

by

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

About Berriew C.P. School

Berriew Community Primary School is in Berriew, near Welshpool in Powys. The school has 88 pupils aged between 4 and 11. Pupils are taught in four classes, three of which are for pupils of mixed-ages.

The school's three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals is around 8%. This is well below the average for Wales (18%). The school identifies that around 23% of its pupils have special educational needs, which is similar to the Welsh average (21%). Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity and come from homes where English is the main language.

The headteacher took up his post in September 2015. The school's last inspection was in 2014.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

The school is a friendly community that provides a caring environment for its pupils. Most pupils show positive attitudes towards learning and enjoy the broad range of experiences the school provides. Most make good progress in developing a suitable range of skills, particularly creative skills, which they apply confidently in their learning.

Many pupils are developing well as resilient learners. They collaborate well with others and make valuable contributions to improving the school through a range of effective pupil voice groups. Teachers form positive working relationships with pupils. Many plan stimulating activities that motivate the interest of most pupils successfully. They support the development of pupils' creative skills very effectively.

Staff share a strong commitment to securing improvement, but the quality and effectiveness of school self-evaluation is not as robust as it could be. The school makes worthwhile use of valuable partnerships, including with the pre-school setting, to support individual pupils well and to enrich the curriculum.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Adequate and needs improvement
Leadership and management	Adequate and needs improvement

Recommendations

- R1 Address the safety issues identified during the inspection
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching to provide a consistently high level of challenge for all pupils
- R3 Rigorously address those aspects of the school's work most in need of improvement
- R4 Improve the quality of pupils' written work in key stage 2

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Good

As pupils move through the school, most develop their skills appropriately and achieve good standards by the end of key stage 2. Many develop strong speaking and listening skills. Most pupils in the foundation phase talk enthusiastically, for example when they explain how they are building a boat or when exploring objects that float or sink. By Year 6, most pupils share their opinions confidently. They use interesting vocabulary and structure sentences well. Most listen well to instructions and to one another.

Most pupils make strong progress in developing their reading skills. For example, foundation phase pupils talk animatedly about the story of a lost penguin, describing the characters and expressing why they have enjoyed the story clearly. Most Year 2 pupils accurately recall the main points of a story they have read. They use their knowledge of letter sounds successfully to read words they are unfamiliar with and begin to use punctuation well to read expressively. Most key stage 2 pupils read with fluency and enjoyment. They use higher-order reading skills successfully, for instance to scan the text ahead to predict what will happen next.

In the foundation phase, most pupils achieve a good standard in writing. Reception pupils use mark-making confidently and begin to form letters correctly when they write their name or make labels for the classroom. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 write interesting reports on an arctic animal. Most present their work with care, use appropriate basic punctuation and include a wide range of interesting facts. In key stage 2, many pupils adapt their writing to suit a range of purposes effectively. For example, many pupils in Years 3 and 4 use well-chosen adjectives and similes in their descriptions of a scene in a rainforest. However, pupils in key stage 2 do not routinely redraft and improve their work and many take insufficient care with spelling, punctuation and the presentation of their writing.

Nearly all pupils develop strong numeracy skills as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, pupils build on their number skills quickly. For example, many pupils in the reception class count confidently beyond 20 and are beginning to count in twos. Most pupils use their numeracy skills confidently in a variety of practical activities. For example, Year 2 pupils use standard units to measure the distance cars travel down a ramp accurately. In key stage 2, most pupils use their number skills confidently. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 use a rainforest café menu to calculate the cost of their meal. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum and in practical situations well. For example, they measure the school field to explore length, width and perimeter as part of a creative project.

Most pupils display positive attitudes to learning Welsh and participate enthusiastically in short sessions and activities. In the foundation phase, most pupils respond confidently to simple questions and many use familiar phrases to request an item or to express thanks. Most extend their use of spoken Welsh successfully as they move through the school. By Year 6, many recognise and respond appropriately to a range of questions using the present and past tense. Pupils that are more able employ a wide variety of vocabulary to express their opinions appropriately.

In the foundation phase, most pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills purposefully as part of their daily activities. For example, pupils in the reception class use a simple graphing program to present results of a vote to select names for their class snails. Most pupils make independent and effective use of mobile devices to record their learning using video and photos. They upload their work to a cloud server to share with other pupils, staff and parents. In key stage 2, most pupils apply their ICT skills well. For example, they use a greenscreen app to support their performance of a Welsh dialogue about a visit to a football stadium. Pupils in Year 4 sequence instructions using a coding app to animate a conversation between two cartoon characters.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and know who to speak with if they need help or are worried. Most pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online, for instance by using confidential passwords. Pupils acting as digital wizards help to promote other pupils' knowledge of e-safety effectively.

Most pupils understand the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise. They participate enthusiastically in fitness sessions that they have developed to enhance the daily mile. Most pupils eat healthy snacks, such as fruit, at break times and drink water to keep themselves hydrated. A minority of pupils attend an after-school club run by parents to develop pupils' netball and hockey skills. Most Year 6 pupils develop the appropriate skills to cycle safely on the roads in the local area.

Nearly all pupils display a very good attitude to learning. They enjoy lessons and are keen to participate fully. Pupils who arrive early for school start the morning's guided reading tasks straight away and settle quickly to their work without prompting. Many pupils co-operate effectively and develop independence in their learning. For example, pupils in the Reception class take turns to prepare healthy snacks at break time. Pupils in key stage 2 often assist their younger peers, for instance teaching them coding and listening to them read. Most pupils in Years 3 and 4 collaborate well with their partners to complete challenges linked to their topic on rainforests. They support one another to overcome difficulties in their work and solve problems together.

Pupil voice is a strong feature of the school. Pupils' views are respected by adults and contribute purposefully to decision-making. Most pupils volunteer relevant ideas about what they want to learn and make worthwhile suggestions to improve school life. For example, members of the school council have led assemblies, made a presentation to governors on the four core purposes of the new curriculum and have created a child-friendly development plan to help other pupils understand the school's current priorities.

Nearly all pupils behave consistently well in lessons and around the school. They are kind, polite and courteous towards adults and one another. Most pupils are enthusiastic about looking after their environment. They value the opportunities they have to use the extensive outdoor areas and are particularly proud of the new markings on the yard for football and netball.

Many pupils recognise that there are people in need of help. They organise activities to raise fund for specific charities, for example to support the caring work of Hope House, a local hospice. Many pupils take part in community events throughout the year, such as performances with the Berriew Music and Drama Society. This helps them to develop their confidence and to gain a strong awareness of their role as contributors to the local community.

Nearly all pupils arrive punctually. Most pupils show a strong understanding of the importance of good attendance. Overall rates of attendance over the last four years generally compare well to those of similar schools.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers plan effectively for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. They provide many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to use their skills in practical contexts linked to their topic work. For example, they give pupils in Years 5 and 6 useful opportunities to use their mathematical skills to construct tables and graphs to present findings from their science investigations. Teachers in the foundation phase make very effective use of outdoor learning to engage pupils actively in learning new concepts. For example, they use improvised stepping-stones on the playground to encourage pupils to 'jump' numbers when counting in twos. The school provides a wide range of valuable experiences to enhance the curriculum, including visits from a mini zoo and the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust. A local artist and poet are also regular visitors to the school. These visits support pupils to think creatively and provide a strong stimulus for learning.

Creativity is a strength of the school and this is evident in the display of children's work throughout the building. Through their participation in the lead creative school programme, teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills, for example to create a film involving local residents. Pupils presented the movie, 'Beast of Berriew', at a showcase conference in North Wales.

All teachers and teaching assistants have positive working relationships with pupils. They are respectful of pupils' efforts and create a supportive atmosphere that gives pupils the confidence to learn new skills. In many classes, teachers use engaging 'hooks' to capture pupils' interest at the start of lessons and to sustain their motivation successfully. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are excited to create posters asking for help to find a mysterious penguin who has been 'caught' on CCTV around the school.

Many teachers set precise objectives for pupils' learning and explain clearly what they need to do to succeed at a task. They make valuable links with pupils' previous learning that support pupils to build on their existing knowledge and experience well. In many classes, teachers and teaching assistants organise resources and structure activities efficiently to enable most pupils to work with independence. However, in a few lessons in key stage 2, the pace of teaching is too slow and expectations for pupils' work are not sufficiently challenging. As a result, older pupils in particular sometimes lose focus and do not make as much progress as they could.

Many teachers use questioning to extend pupils' thinking skilfully. For example, they prompt pupils in Years 3 and 4 to develop their ideas further when investigating the

suitability of materials for roofing a house in the rainforest. Many teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully. They give helpful verbal feedback during lessons and intervene to clarify misunderstandings sensitively. In the best instances, teachers adapt their plans to provide further opportunities for pupils to consolidate their progress and to learn from their mistakes.

Teachers promote pupils' use of Welsh consistently. They act as good role models for the spoken language and use short daily sessions to develop pupils' skills successfully. Teachers award certificates to Welsh speakers in a weekly celebration assembly led by members of the Criw Cymraeg. The school holds an annual Eisteddfod and makes good use of visits to local sites of interest to develop pupils' knowledge of their Welsh heritage.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

The school provides a warm, welcoming environment for pupils where staff value pupils and their families. This makes a significant contribution to the high quality of pupils' wellbeing and the standards they achieve. Staff know all pupils well and this helps pupils to be confident and willing learners who enjoy coming to school.

Teachers monitor and track the progress of all pupils carefully using a range of regular assessments. They use this information effectively to ensure that most pupils achieve well, but pupils in key stage 2 do not always receive enough challenge in their work to make as much progress as they could.

The school's arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs are effective. Teachers set clear targets for pupils' individual progress and provide extra support to help pupils achieve well. They involve pupils fully in agreeing their targets. This helps pupils to recognise the progress they are making and what they need to do in order to improve.

The school website gives parents a wide range of helpful information including copies of an informative weekly newsletter. Parents regularly attend weekly celebration assemblies, workshops and information evenings. These events enable parents to share in their child's success and provide useful guidance about how they can support their learning at home. Teachers keep parents well informed about the progress their child is making through detailed termly reports.

Teachers work closely with a wide range of specialist agencies to support pupils' personal development. They have established very strong links with the onsite pre-school. For example, staff in both settings have shared training to develop a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. This valuable partnership helps pupils to settle quickly into the reception class and to make swift progress.

The school has successfully played a lead role in projects that enable pupils to develop their creative skills. Most recently, this has supported the development of outdoor learning for mathematics. The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe, for instance when they use the internet. Teachers plan appropriately for pupils' social and moral development. They use a range of activities in classes and assemblies to develop pupils' understanding of values, such as honesty and fairness, appropriately. They make constructive use of links with local churches to support pupils' spiritual development.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements. However, inspectors shared issues relating to the safety of pupils with school leaders during the inspection, for example a lack of clarity about traffic management procedures for vehicles accessing the school grounds.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The headteacher and governors have managed appropriately the temporary changes in staffing that have resulted from the recent secondment of senior leaders. This has enabled teachers to gain additional skills and experience that enhance the capacity of the current staff team. However, the turnover of staff in recent years has impeded the school's progress in taking forward key priorities. The current staff have clearly-defined responsibilities. They share a strong commitment to making progress on the school's objectives for improvement.

Leaders use information from a suitable range of sources, including observations of teaching, test results and scrutiny of pupils' work to make an honest assessment of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders at all levels contribute purposefully to this process. For example, the teacher leading the development of pupils' ICT skills has completed audits with staff and pupils to determine appropriate next steps to enhance the quality of provision. This has led to beneficial improvements in the opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in their learning across the curriculum. However, overall, the school's self-evaluation processes place too much emphasis on quantitative data about pupil performance and do not focus strongly enough on identifying shortcomings in the school's provision. For example, leaders have not identified clearly the impact of inconsistency in the quality of teaching on pupils' progress.

Plans for improvement focus on a pragmatic number of objectives identified through the self-evaluation process. Leaders allocate appropriate resources to implement actions effectively and they set specific criteria to measure progress. The school has made progress in securing specific improvements against a number of priorities in recent years. For example, actions to improve the teaching of reading and to develop pupils' use of spoken Welsh have resulted in improvements in the standards achieved by pupils. However, plans do not always prioritise accurately those aspects of the school's provision most in need of improvement.

The governing body meet regularly and carry out their duties diligently. They play a useful role in monitoring the quality of provision and the standards pupils achieve. For instance, members of the governing body's monitoring committee meet with groups of pupils to discuss the work in their books and in classrooms. This supports their role as critical friends of the school and helps governors to provide constructive challenge to senior leaders. However, staffing and budgetary issues have recently occupied much of governors' focus and limited the opportunity for sustained first-hand monitoring of standards.

Leaders provide useful opportunities for staff to develop their professional expertise. They use a range of activities including whole staff training, visits to other schools and local network meetings to develop the capacity of staff to deliver improvements in specific areas. Teachers provide effective peer support within school that ensures individual teachers' knowledge and expertise benefits the wider staff team. For

example, the school has used the assistant headteacher's experience to begin implementing changes that reflect the four core purposes of the new curriculum for Wales.

The school manages its finances prudently. The headteacher and governors monitor spending closely and plan appropriately to manage forecast pressures on funding and expenditure carefully. They allocate funds to key priorities appropriately. Leaders use additional income generated through fundraising to improve resources effectively, for example, to install touchscreens that staff use skilfully and beneficially in their teaching. They focus the valuable contribution of volunteers on supporting the development of pupils' skills. This impacts well on the progress that pupils make. However, the present level of staffing in the foundation phase does not meet the learning needs of all pupils fully. The school uses its pupil development grant appropriately to support the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent 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 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' wellbeing, 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)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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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