



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

**A report on**

**Oak Field Primary School  
Amroth Court  
Caldy Close  
Gibbonsdown  
Barry  
CF62 9DU**

**Date of inspection: September 2017**

**by**

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

## About Oak Field Primary School

Oak Field Primary School is in the Gibbonsdown area of Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan. Currently, there are 180 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11, including 22 nursery pupils who attend part-time. The number of pupils has increased since the last inspection. There are six classes at the school, three of which are mixed age.

About 62% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average of 19%. The school identifies around 15% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is below the national average of around 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Most pupils are from a white British background. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home and very few have English as an additional language. The local authority looks after a very few pupils.

The headteacher took up his post in September 2013. The school's previous inspection was in June 2011.

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 cares exceptionally well for its pupils, particularly those who are experiencing emotional or social difficulties. Pupils at Oak Field Primary School make strong progress from their starting points and achieve well by the end of Year 6. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Teaching is of good quality across most of the school. Teachers build systematically on the literacy and numeracy skills that pupils start to develop in nursery and reception, but learning in the foundation phase becomes too formal too quickly and pupils do not always have enough say in what or how they learn. The school benefits from strong leadership. Leaders have brought about many improvements in the past few years and have a clear vision for the school's future.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Extend the good practice in nursery and reception across the foundation phase, particularly in relation to outdoor learning and developing pupils' independent skills
- R2 Improve pupils' writing, particularly that of boys
- R3 Improve attendance

## **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 the excellent use of nurture provision to support vulnerable pupils for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Most pupils start school with skills and knowledge that are below the level expected for their age, particularly in speaking and listening. As they move through the school, most make good progress and achieve well by the end of key stage 2. Pupils with additional learning needs make particularly good progress.

Overall, most pupils in the foundation phase make strong progress in developing their literacy skills. They develop effective speaking and listening skills and are eager to talk to visitors about what they do in school, for example when describing how they look after the school guinea pigs. Most pupils show enjoyment in reading and are keen to read to adults. They use their knowledge of letters and sounds well to decode new words. A few pupils in Year 2 read fluently and discuss what they have read in detail. They can predict what will happen next in the story and identify features of different texts. Most pupils show increasing pencil control when writing, although a minority do not form letters correctly. They write interesting sentences about the topics they study across areas of learning, but they do not write at length often enough.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils express their opinions confidently and clearly. They listen carefully to the views of others and respond thoughtfully, for example when talking about their greatest fears and what they can do to overcome them. Pupils develop well as readers as they move through the key stage and begin to use higher order reading skills, such as skimming and scanning, effectively to find information quickly. When writing, most pupils use punctuation accurately and make good attempts at spelling unfamiliar words. More able pupils produce writing of high quality that engages the interest of the reader well. However, many pupils struggle to present their work neatly and boys in particular do not always write at length and to a high quality both in English lessons and when writing in subjects across the curriculum.

Most pupils develop a sound knowledge of mathematical concepts as they move through the school so that they are confident mathematicians by the time they reach Year 6. In the foundation phase, many pupils lack confidence when applying their knowledge of mathematics to new situations and are not always secure in their understanding of mathematical concepts. This improves in key stage 2 where pupils work out effective strategies to tackle complex word problems and calculate answers to written and mental problems quickly and accurately. In Years 5 and 6, most pupils have a good understanding of properties of numbers and apply this knowledge well in new situations. Throughout the school, pupils' ability to apply their numeracy skills effectively in work across the curriculum is less well developed.

Across the school, most pupils develop appropriate skills in information and communication technology (ICT). In the foundation phase, they access a range of applications with confidence and use tablet computers to support their learning well. In key stage 2, pupils use ICT to present their work in interesting ways. For example, they film each other during tasks and edit to include extracts in imaginative presentations. Many pupils are beginning to develop programming skills through

their use of coding. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of using spreadsheets and databases are limited.

Many pupils make good progress in developing their skills in Welsh. Pupils in the foundation phase respond appropriately to a range of instructions given in Welsh and can ask and answer simple questions. By Year 6, many pupils sustain a conversation in Welsh, extending their answers. They read simple texts with understanding and generally accurate pronunciation. They write short paragraphs about themselves that contain suitable detail.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and are very proud of their school. They feel well cared for and valued. They know whom to go to if they need help with their work or are worried. Most pupils behave sensibly in lessons and around school. A few pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour know where they can access support if they need a quiet space or time to talk to someone. This helps them to become more resilient when faced with challenges. Nearly all pupils are polite, have good manners and are eager to interact with visitors.

Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and play an active part in the life of the school. For example, a few pupils take on the role of peer mediators and support others well in resolving conflicts. They explain the importance of their role and take their responsibilities seriously.

Most pupils understand the need to eat and drink healthily and to take regular exercise. Many pupils improve their fitness by participating in a range of extra-curricular activities, such as dance club, and using the wide range of equipment available at playtimes.

Most pupils have a positive attitude to learning and are keen to discuss their work. For example, they talk in detail about how they have created a digital presentation about the 'Iron Giant'. They concentrate well and stay on task for appropriate lengths of time. Older pupils sustain their concentration, listen effectively and respect each other's contributions.

Attendance rates show gradual improvement for three out of the past four years but remain low when compared to those of similar schools and, last year, they declined. There is little difference in the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals and that of other pupils. Persistent absence showed a declining trend between 2013 and 2015, but rose in 2016. This was due to a small number of pupils who have health and emotional difficulties. Most pupils arrive in school on time.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers and support staff develop positive working relationships with pupils and have highly effective strategies to manage their behaviour. Generally, learning moves with pace and teachers plan activities that engage most pupils well and provide a suitable level of challenge for pupils of all abilities.

Many teachers give pupils purposeful oral feedback about how well they are doing during activities and provide useful reminders to keep their learning on track. This helps pupils to complete tasks successfully and to improve aspects of their work as they go along. Many teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to think about and to extend their learning.

Pupils in key stage 2 mark each other's work on suitable occasions and provide useful feedback about what they think they have done well and what they can do to make it even better. Pupils value the feedback from their classmates, and this helps them to be more reflective about their own work and to consider what they need to do to improve.

In the nursery and reception class, adults plan an exciting range of activities to develop pupils' skills in both the indoor and outdoor areas. For example, pupils taste exotic fruits when listening to stories about other cultures. In Years 1 and 2 teachers use structured programmes to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. These sessions support pupils in learning important skills, but pupils' work, particularly during morning sessions, is mainly organised and directed by adults. This limits pupils' opportunities to make choices about how and what they would like to learn and to develop their independent learning skills. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to work purposefully in the outdoor area.

In key stage 2, the curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers build systematically on the literacy and numeracy skills that pupils develop in the foundation phase to enable pupils to achieve at least the expected level by the time they leave school. There are interesting opportunities for pupils to develop these skills, for example when they measure ingredients accurately to make Egyptian flat breads.

In the foundation phase, many adults develop pupils' understanding of Welsh by using the language consistently for instructions and daily routines. In key stage 2, there is a daily ten minute session to practise language patterns in addition to focused teaching. This helps pupils to be confident in their use of Welsh. Teachers plan suitable opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of Welsh life and culture.

### **Care, support and guidance: Excellent**

Arrangements for the emotional and social development of all pupils are excellent. Staff work hard to embed a restorative approach to dealing with conflict. This means that nearly all pupils develop the skills to deal with challenging situations maturely.

The school has trained older pupils to be very effective peer mediators. These pupils deal with any minor incidents during break times successfully. Staff promote the school's values of self-respect, tolerance, collaboration and perseverance very successfully. They reinforce these values consistently to help pupils embody them effectively into their daily lives.

Pupils who need extra support with their emotional and social development receive very effective intervention within the exceptional provision called 'Nurture, Emotional, Wellbeing and Skills'. Staff in nurture groups ensure that all pupils, through carefully planned and monitored activities, have the opportunity to engage positively with other

pupils and the wider community. The very effective practice provided by nurture through tailored, individualised programmes improves pupils' self-esteem and social skills over time and enables them to access mainstream learning successfully. For example, pupils visit local shops and businesses regularly to enhance their social and numeracy skills. They recently visited a pizza restaurant to learn about the history of pizza and making healthy food choices. The school promotes its work in relation to nurture widely and shares its good practice with other schools.

The school has a detailed tracking system to monitor pupils' achievements and levels of wellbeing. School leaders and teachers use the information very effectively to plan activities and provide targeted support to address the needs of individuals and specific groups of pupils. Teaching assistants work conscientiously within the classrooms to support pupils' learning. They are highly effective in implementing a wide range of appropriate intervention programmes that enable pupils to make sound and consistent progress.

All pupils with additional learning needs have an education plan that includes measurable and challenging targets. Staff review these plans regularly with parents and their children. The school has very strong links and works innovatively with a range of specialist services and outside agencies, such as the local health board, to secure additional, timely resources to support pupils with a range of needs. These arrangements ensure that targeted pupils make strong progress in relation to their abilities.

The school uses a wide range of strategies to improve attendance. For example, pupils receive a special wristband for 100% attendance over a ten day period. The school monitors the effectiveness of these strategies carefully and introduces new ones when they become stale and fail to motivate pupils to attend regularly.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Staff provide a wide variety of regular physical activities, including after school clubs that help pupils to become fit and active.

Staff develop pupils' spiritual and cultural attitudes well. They arrange varied opportunities for pupils to reflect in collective worship sessions and pupils have a sound understanding of religious and moral issues. The school offers very effective opportunities to promote pupils' social and moral development through different pupil groups. These have a very positive effect on pupils' ability to work together and their respect for each other's views in an inclusive and caring environment.

There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in performances at school, in the local community and beyond. These help them to develop their self-confidence, their pride in themselves and their ability to work with others. The school engages regularly with expressive arts groups to enhance the pupils' experiences. For example, key stage 2 pupils wrote songs and poems and performed them in St David's Hall in Cardiff.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

## **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher, supported ably by the deputy headteacher, provides the school with strong leadership. Together, they have developed a clear vision and ethos that promotes wellbeing at the heart of the school community. They lead by example, demonstrating professional values and behaviour that reflect the school's vision. The whole school community shares this vision. Leaders have developed a successful team, in which all staff have clear roles and responsibilities and understand their role in securing improvements in pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The governing body is supportive of the work of the school and over time has developed its ability to challenge and support more effectively. The governing body has a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors analyse a range of information provided to them and hold the school to account in terms of progress in areas such as boys' writing or managing the schools finances and staffing. Governors have a clear understanding of the day-to-day working of the school and make termly visits where they meet pupils and staff. A few governors use their own skills to improve provision and have helped secure additional funding and developed areas of the curriculum such as the promotion of healthy relationships.

The school community uses a wide range of first-hand evidence to evaluate its current performance and to identify its strengths and weaknesses accurately. Leaders have refined their processes over time to ensure that they focus school improvement planning on areas most in need of development. They create good quality plans that have clear targets, detailed actions and allocated resources. They monitor these plans effectively to bring about improvements in areas such as behaviour and reading.

Leaders provide valuable professional learning opportunities for all staff. Senior leaders, middle leaders, teaching assistants and pupils receive a range of appropriate training. Staff take part in a number of professional learning experiences within and beyond the school, including the development of the digital competency framework and the teaching assistant development programme. Staff share good practice within the school by visiting lessons and have developed their ability to analyse data. They visit local schools to see or share good practice. The school's nurture provision is a strong feature and staff lead networking meetings across the local consortia to share their effective practice. Close partnerships with universities in London and Cardiff promote professional learning by helping staff raise the aspirations of pupils. Performance management is robust and develops staff knowledge and skills. It addresses any issues of underperformance when necessary.

The school focuses appropriately on national priorities including the development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT, the introduction of the digital competency framework, improving attendance and reducing the adverse effect of poverty on pupils' standards and wellbeing. The school has been less successful in securing improvements in attendance, despite a number of innovative strategies developed by pupils and staff.

The school makes good use of the pupil development grant to ensure the needs of pupils eligible for free school meals are met effectively. The development of the NEWS provision is highly successful in supporting pupils with a range of social, emotional and behavioural needs. The school manages its budget well, and with careful financial planning secures improvement in provision, pupils' wellbeing and standards. Leaders work creatively to enhance provision by securing a number of additional grants. Positive partnerships with businesses and arts organisations help secure additional funding that enhances opportunities for learning, such as the construction lab, the pond area and most recently funds to develop a community woodland area and to work with a local artist.

## 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))

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

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	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:

Publication 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: 27/11/2017