



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

A report on

Hendre Junior School

**St Cenydd Road
Trecenydd
Caerphilly
CF83 2RP**

Date of inspection: October 2024

by

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

About Hendre Junior School

Name of provider	Hendre Junior School
Local authority	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	174
Pupils of statutory school age	174
Number in nursery classes	NA
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 22.9%)	34.5%
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 11.1%)	8.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	2.9%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	5.2%
Date of headteacher appointment	08/04/2013
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	06/11/2017
Start date of inspection	07/10/2024

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.

Summary

Leaders and governors at Hendre Junior School share a clear and successful vision that values all members of the school community and supports their well-being and learning. They support all staff to develop as strong leaders. This results in accurate self-evaluation and school improvement, and effective teaching and learning across the school.

High standards permeate nearly all aspects of the school's life and work. Teachers employ an effective whole-school approach to teaching and learning. As a result, pupils make notable progress in their work and in developing as independent learners. Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to influence their learning, and they engage well. Staff have a firm understanding of individual pupils' needs and adapt support effectively to meet them. Teachers skilfully plan lessons that build well on pupils' prior learning and set high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Nearly all pupils respond well to the challenge and, as a result, are keen to improve their learning quickly. Nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make strong progress.

Most pupils develop as competent mathematicians. They read and write effectively for a range of purposes and make effective progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. However, the range of opportunities teachers provide for pupils to develop and apply their digital skills is less consistent.

The school establishes a strong sense of belonging through its curriculum and wider work. Pupils benefit greatly from interesting and authentic learning experiences that motivate most pupils to succeed.

Hendre Junior School is highly inclusive. Nearly all pupils are happy, polite and well-behaved. All staff develop effective and respectful working relationships with pupils. Nearly all pupils behave well and interact with each other in a caring and supportive way. All members of staff act as positive role models and provide pupils with a nurturing environment. This ensures that pupils' well-being is supported exceptionally well. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school.

Recommendations

We have made one recommendation to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Strengthen opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their digital skills independently

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Hendre Junior School is a happy and successful school where the school's vision for high expectations, care, diversity and resilience is shared by all and underpins all aspects of the school's work.

The school has created its curriculum to align with the principles of Curriculum for Wales. Staff work together to plan exciting learning experiences that enable pupils to make the progress they are capable of in a safe, caring environment. As a result, pupils make notable progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding across the wide range of learning provided. Most pupils develop successfully as independent learners, able to influence what they learn.

The school uses trips and visitors well to enhance pupils' learning and raise their aspirations. For example, Year 5 pupils participated in an online meeting with the UK Space Agency when investigating possible careers. Teachers use the locality to provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales. Pupils visit and learn about local landmarks including Caerphilly Castle and, as a result, are proud of where they live.

Spotlight: Consistently high-quality teaching and learning across the school

Teaching is effective across the school. Teachers have consistently high expectations and deploy a wide range of highly effective approaches to teaching and learning. All teachers use agreed teaching strategies, which engage pupils in reviewing and reflecting upon their learning. They adapt their teaching skilfully to ensure that each pupil is supported and challenged to make notable progress. The consistent use of these strategies ensures that nearly all pupils make notable progress.

Nearly all pupils respond well to challenge and engage actively in lessons. They develop positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers' feedback to pupils is clear and purposeful and supports pupils to understand their next steps in learning successfully. They use high quality questioning to enable pupils to consolidate their thinking or to extend their learning. As pupils progress, they increasingly use this feedback to refine and improve their work and develop as increasingly independent learners. The school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is highly effective. Staff review the support in place regularly, making revisions when needed. As a result, nearly all pupils, including those with ALN, make strong progress in their learning.

Nearly all pupils' reading skills develop well and many older pupils show a passion for reading. Nearly all pupils acquire and apply their writing skills effectively. Many older pupils structure their writing well and choose interesting vocabulary for effect. Their progress in developing their speaking and listening skills is impressive. Most pupils speak with clarity using a wide range of vocabulary. Teachers provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to systematically develop their Welsh language skills. As a result, many pupils make suitable progress, and a few engage confidently in simple conversations with visitors.

Many pupils across the school develop as capable mathematicians. By the time they reach Year 5, most pupils use a wide range of mathematical skills competently. They apply their skills well across the curriculum, for example, when calculating the size of stalactites and stalagmites at a growth rate of 1cm per millennium during problem-solving activities.

Throughout the school, pupils have positive attitudes towards developing their digital skills. In general, teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to use digital technology to carry out research, present their learning and handle data. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop and apply a broad enough range of digital skills.

The school encourages pupils to take on a range of responsibilities and play a role in improving school life through their participation in pupil leadership groups. As a result, pupils develop a range of important leadership skills. For example, the pupil voice groups successfully ensure that pupils are fully aware of their rights and the rights of others. The school enjoys a long-time partnership with a school in Lesotho and this profitable partnership develops pupils' understanding of other people's lives and supports them to develop key attributes such as empathy.

The school is highly inclusive, and its provision to support pupils' personal development and well-being is effective. Staff create a caring and friendly ethos, underpinned by high expectations of behaviour, which ensures that all pupils thrive. Staff know their pupils well and have strong working relationships with them. They support pupils' spiritual, cultural, social and moral development successfully through learning and collective worship.

The school has a well-embedded and robust culture of safeguarding. Consequently, nearly all pupils, including those who may be affected by disadvantage, feel safe and happy. They behave well and demonstrate high levels of well-being. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe, including when online. The school addresses the very few instances of poor attendance successfully. As a result, attendance is improving.

Leaders ensure that all staff regularly access valuable professional learning opportunities that develop individuals and the staff team as a whole effectively. There is a beneficial whole-school focus on continually improving teaching and learning, which has resulted in consistently high-quality teaching and learning across the school. The focus on improving the quality of feedback to pupils ensures that most pupils use teachers' feedback capably to help them take the next steps in their learning.

Leaders and governors ensure that all staff contribute purposefully to self-evaluation, enabling a shared understanding of what the school does well and what aspects of its work need to improve. For example, leaders and staff accurately identified the need to improve outdoor learning opportunities. To address this need, the school developed the 'Hendre Haven', a worthwhile addition to the school's provision that provides all pupils with purposeful opportunities to learn about nature and the environment.

The governing body are highly effective in securing school improvement. Governors are closely involved in self-evaluation activities, enabling them to develop a secure understanding of the quality of provision and the progress pupils are making. The headteacher and governors monitor spending carefully to ensure that they use resources beneficially to support all pupils, including those from low-income households, to secure successful outcomes and well-being.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for site security do not give any cause for concern.

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

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

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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references 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 (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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