



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

**A report on**

**Tongwynlais Primary School  
Merthyr Road  
Tongwynlais  
Cardiff  
CF15 7LF**

**Date of inspection: December 2017**

**by**

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

## About Tongwynlais Primary School

Tongwynlais Primary School is in the north of Cardiff local authority. There are currently 209 pupils on roll aged three to eleven, including 24 children who attend the nursery part-time. There are seven single-age classes from reception to Year 6.

The rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is nearly 17%. This is below the national average of 19%. The school identifies about 23% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is just above the national average of 21%. Around 14% of pupils come from a minority ethnic background. Most pupils speak English as a first language and very few speak Welsh at home. Approximately 9% of pupils are learning English as an additional language.

The headteacher took up her post in January 2013. She became acting executive headteacher at another local primary school, in addition to Tongwynlais Primary, in September 2016. The deputy headteacher became acting head of school at the same time. The last inspection was in March 2012.

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 provides a friendly, caring environment that enables nearly all pupils to feel happy and safe and enjoy learning. Most pupils make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and their thinking skills are particularly strong.

Pupils contribute their own ideas regularly to the relevant, interesting learning experiences teachers plan for them. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, with some particularly strong teaching in science. Nearly all lessons take good account of individual pupils' needs.

The executive headteacher has a clear vision for the school that focuses successfully on the wellbeing of staff and pupils and achieving good standards. Governors have a wide range of relevant, valuable expertise, which they use well for the good of the school.

<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>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Clarify the roles and responsibilities of leaders at all levels to maximise their impact on the school's priorities for improvement
- R2 Improve standards in Welsh
- R3 Increase the impact of pupil representative groups, such as the school council, on school life

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Most pupils begin school with skills that are around the level expected for their age. Nearly all pupils make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well by the end of key stage 2. Pupils with additional learning needs, and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points.

Most pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well. The youngest pupils listen carefully as the teacher explains their activities and talk animatedly about the footprints left by Father Christmas outside their classroom door, for example. During key stage 2, most pupils appreciate increasingly the importance of listening to the ideas of others as well as expressing their own opinions. They use a widening, more imaginative vocabulary in their group discussions, which supports their writing well. For example, in a lesson about the Tudors, a pupil in Year 6 suggests the simile, 'curved like a smile', to describe a crown. In the nursery, most pupils make a very good start in speaking Welsh. Older pupils in the foundation phase and key stage 2 have positive attitudes towards Welsh, but do not speak it often enough outside Welsh lessons to develop confidence in using the language.

Most pupils read a rich range of fiction and non-fiction confidently and mainly accurately. Most pupils in the foundation phase apply their phonic skills well to work out unfamiliar words such as 'dazzling'. In Year 2, pupils read a poem about a grasshopper enthusiastically, showing appreciation of rhythm and rhyme. During key stage 2, most pupils give a good resumé of the plot of a novel and discuss the motivation of main characters. They use the contents and index pages of information books effectively to locate specific information. In both key stages, most pupils read simple Welsh texts competently, with good pronunciation. However, many find it difficult to translate the text and have only partial understanding of the content.

Most pupils write for many different purposes, to a good standard. In the foundation phase, many write independently in 'real life' contexts, such as when compiling lists for Father Christmas or creating their own story books. By Year 2, most pupils achieve good standards of handwriting, spelling and punctuation. During key stage 2, most pupils plan, draft and edit their writing well and write at increasing length. They write in a wide range of genres, including newspaper reports, letters and biographies. For example, pupils in Year 3 write imaginative diary extracts of an astronaut travelling through space. More able pupils produce writing that engages the reader's interest successfully. By Year 6, most pupils use punctuation accurately and make good attempts at spelling unfamiliar words. However, their handwriting is not always clear and joined. During key stage 2, many pupils develop satisfactory writing skills in Welsh, within a limited range, but they do not write in Welsh often enough across all areas of learning.

Most pupils' progress in mathematics is good and they apply their numeracy skills well across the curriculum. By Year 2, many pupils work with, and understand, numbers and place value to a hundred. They use standard units, including centimetres, to measure in activities such as finding out who can jump the furthest.

Most pupils in Year 5 enjoy learning through practical activities and in real-life contexts to develop their understanding of ratio. In science experiments in key stage 2, pupils' efficient application of numeracy skills, such as accurate measurement, is particularly strong. For example, most pupils in Year 6 measure air resistance correctly.

Most pupils develop good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and use them effectively, particularly in relation to numeracy. By the end of key stage 2, they use spreadsheets confidently and navigate packages that allow them to gather data and interrogate line graphs, for example about how a toy car moves with a small and big spoiler. However, most pupils' use of ICT for communication purposes, such as word processing, is less well developed.

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

Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe in school. They understand how to stay safe online and know whom to go to if they have a concern. The positive working relationships they have with adults enhance their sense of wellbeing effectively.

Most pupils have a developing understanding of their responsibilities as global citizens through, for example, their work in supporting a school in Rwanda. They have a strong sense of the importance of fairness and equality for all. Nearly all pupils are courteous and welcoming to adults and visitors.

Most pupils have positive, enthusiastic attitudes towards learning. For example, one pupil explained how much he looks forward to coming to school on Monday because by Sunday he is bored. Most pupils co-operate well when working in pairs and groups. They are considerate when listening to the views of others and share their own thoughts and ideas readily. Nearly all pupils settle to their work purposefully and show resilience when faced with problems and challenges.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their thinking and independent learning skills well. For example, in 'busy bee' planning sessions, they contribute their own ideas about what and how they will learn. This has a very positive impact on their engagement in their learning. During key stage 2, most pupils increase their capacity for making choices about their learning and are keen to talk about their work.

Nearly all pupils behave well in class. However, a very few do not behave as well at break times or always follow school rules appropriately. Most pupils have a secure understanding of the school's guidance on how to deal with any bullying, including the 'step-by-step' approach.

Many pupils contribute enthusiastically to the wider life of the school. A minority are developing leadership skills through working with pupil representative groups. For example, members of the newly elected 'CriwCymreig' encourage pupils with rewards for using Welsh during the day. 'Digital leaders' record videos that help others to develop their ICT skills. School council members discuss issues such as how to spend money on resources and arrangements for recycling their uniforms for the school in Rwanda. However, pupils do not have a strong enough voice in decision-making at whole school level. Although groups such as the school council and eco committee hold meetings and make some decisions, their effectiveness in seeking and representing the views of all pupils, and communicating the impact of their work on the life of the school to them, is limited.

Nearly all pupils enjoy physical activity and are aware of the need to keep fit through exercise and healthy eating. For example, most classes take part in a 'daily mile' walk or run, which aids their health and fitness. Many pupils enjoy participating in a wide range of extra-curricular physical activities, such as karate and football, which enhance their mental and physical wellbeing.

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

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well. It enables them to become confident learners with very well-developed thinking skills. A thematic approach to curriculum planning makes learning experiences relevant and interesting for pupils. Teachers are skilled at adapting their planning to respond to pupils' excitement at unexpected events, such as the appearance of snow.

In the foundation phase, adults and pupils plan an exciting range of learning activities together, which develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in class and outdoors. For example, pupils make videos promoting health and fitness and engage in imaginative play in a 'small world' snowy landscape. Staff encourage pupils to make choices about what and how they learn. They then design activities that take account of their choices and develop their independent learning skills effectively.

In key stage 2, the thematic curriculum continues through topics such as World War 2 and The Tudors. The recently updated science curriculum engages pupils particularly well. Stimulating and enjoyable practical activities in science provide highly effective opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy, ICT and literacy skills. For example, in Year 3, pupils use mirrors and torches to find the angle needed to locate toy tanks they have made. All teachers build systematically on the literacy and numeracy skills that pupils develop in the foundation phase. The school has begun to consider the digital competency framework carefully and identify gaps in its current provision, which teachers are beginning to address.

In the foundation phase, adults develop pupils' understanding of Welsh by planning creative activities that engage them successfully. For example, in the nursery, pupils learn new vocabulary by exploring Siôn Corn's sack and practise familiar phrases through songs and games. In key stage 2, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to practise language patterns and read a range of Welsh books regularly. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length, or to use Welsh outside the classroom. The school promotes Welsh traditions, but the curriculum does not always ensure that pupils develop a deeper understanding of Welsh life and culture.

Most classes access the on-site forest school in all weathers. Planning for its use enables pupils to use their skills purposefully and grow in confidence and resilience. The school uses visits and visitors effectively. For example, in Year 4, a visit to Cardiff Castle's air raid shelters provided a good stimulus for pupils' writing.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan well-timed and structured lessons that capture pupils' imagination and enable them to apply their knowledge and skills successfully in real-life situations. There is usually a good balance between teacher input and pupils learning independently in groups or individually. A particular strength is the use of team teaching pairs to deliver highly effective science lessons throughout the school.

Working relationships between pupils and staff are strong. As a result, there is a positive climate for learning in all classes. In class, members of staff implement the school's positive behaviour management policy well and teachers deploy the skills of teaching assistants effectively to support pupils with specific needs. As a result, nearly all lessons proceed smoothly and take account of individual pupils' needs effectively.

Teachers observe pupils' learning perceptively, question them and check their understanding throughout the lesson to enable them to make good progress. Their oral feedback helps pupils to understand what they are doing well and how they could improve. Teachers' written feedback is constructive, proportionate, and consistently effective. Pupils pay good attention to their comments and improve their work as a result. Teachers also give pupils beneficial opportunities to evaluate their own and other pupils' work.

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

The school provides a friendly, caring environment for all pupils. It promotes pupils' sense of fairness and appreciation of diversity well. For example, pupils explain how a recent assembly on the theme of 'All different, all equal' helped them to understand that people have the same needs and should receive equal treatment, whatever their background or circumstances. Anti-bullying procedures are generally effective and the school communicates its expectations clearly to pupils.

Acts of collective worship promote pupils' spiritual and moral development well. The school improves pupils' understanding of Christianity and other faiths, including Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism, effectively through assemblies, visits to places of worship and religious education. The school promotes pupils' cultural development well through the arts curriculum, where they study the work of artists such as Picasso, and through extra-curricular activities, including drama club, choir and the school band.

There are appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. The school promotes the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and a balanced diet well. Many pupils participate in the wide range of extra-curricular sports on offer, in addition to physical education lessons. The school raises pupils' awareness of the dangers of smoking, drugs and alcohol abuse effectively.

The school offers many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities in roles such as house captains, 'Criw Cymraeg' and digital leaders. However, it does not exploit the full potential of such opportunities to enable pupils to become active citizens by, for example, electing representatives to the school council and ensuring they are involved in making decisions about the life and work of the school.

The school has effective systems to track and monitor all pupils' progress and wellbeing. Teachers use information from their assessments well to set challenging targets for pupils to achieve. Regular meetings between teachers and the headteacher about pupils' progress have a clear focus. They have a very positive impact on the way teachers plan and adapt activities to help individual pupils improve in specific areas of their work. This robust system and its effective implementation by staff support pupils' progress as they move through the school.



Arrangements for identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with additional learning needs are rigorous. The additional learning needs co-ordinator leads teachers and support staff well in tailoring provision to meet the needs of individual pupils, including a wide range of effective intervention programmes. For example, support staff work closely with pupils to improve a range of skills, including speech and language, literacy and numeracy skills. The additional learning needs co-ordinator monitors the progress of pupils who receive interventions conscientiously and adjusts support sensitively. All pupils with additional learning needs have an individual education plan that includes measurable and challenging targets. Teachers review progress towards these targets regularly with pupils and their parents to ensure that they achieve well.

Teachers communicate well with parents and inform them about their child's progress through discussions and annual reports. Parents receive useful information about events and topics through the school's website and through social media. They appreciate opportunities to spend time in classes, where they gain an insight into how their children learn, and to attend useful workshops on ways to support learning at home. Many parents support fundraising activities and a few parents extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world by giving interesting talks about their culture or the work they do.

There are effective arrangements to ensure that pupils are happy and safe in school. For example, pupils appreciate the support of 'buddies' who befriend them if they sit on the special bench in the playground and who monitor any concerns they post in the 'buddy box' in the hall. The school's safeguarding arrangements are suitable and give no cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The executive headteacher has a clear vision for the school. There is a strong focus on ensuring the wellbeing of pupils and staff and achieving good standards. This means that staff, governors and pupils have high expectations of themselves and each other. Staff work together very well to create a caring and respectful ethos throughout the school.

Governors have a wide range of relevant, valuable expertise and visit the school regularly. Pupils know many governors and appreciate the contribution they make to school life. For example, one governor often leads enjoyable, interesting assemblies that aid the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development. Other governors give helpful practical support, such as listening to readers and running extra-curricular activities. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities from these first-hand experiences and from their discussions of data on the school's performance. They challenge the school and expect leaders to account for any dips in performance.

Many leadership roles have changed recently. The school has not yet clarified roles and responsibilities, or developed fully the strategic and distributed leadership skills of all leaders. However, the science leader provides an excellent role model for her colleagues and helps them to develop their skills in the teaching of science. This is a recent initiative, which is beginning to have a very positive impact on pupils' achievement in science.

Procedures for evaluating the school's standards are comprehensive, wide-ranging and thorough. The self-evaluation report gives an accurate and honest picture of the school's performance. It provides a good overview of the standards and provision of the school. There is a clear link between the self-evaluation report and the school improvement plan. This plan identifies relevant improvement priorities, actions, timescales and resources. The plan identifies suitable success criteria, and the individuals responsible for monitoring progress through classroom observations, scrutinising teachers' plans and pupils' work, and analysing data.

Teaching and support staff receive worthwhile opportunities for professional development in relation to the curriculum. They often commit to 'school to school' work in order to share and benefit from best practice. For example, the school is a professional learning hub and has developed a programme of activities to share with other schools. It delivers workshops at national level on the development of thinking in schools. This work reflects the long established strength of the school in developing pupils' thinking skills and their ability to apply them successfully across the curriculum.

Teachers use their planning, preparation and assessment time effectively. They plan in pairs so that they can share their ideas and expertise and ensure consistency in the quality of the planning and assessment of pupils' work.

The school manages its budget efficiently. For example, it evaluates the effectiveness of support programmes for pupils with additional learning needs, and it uses the pupil development grant carefully to ensure value for money. As a result, it uses the skills of support staff effectively to help meet pupils' needs.

The building is old and in need of repair in some places. However, staff are creative in their use of available space and resources, both inside and out, to support curriculum developments. For example, they created 'digital learning zones' in the main corridor and transformed an area of the school grounds into a stimulating 'forest school' and garden area, which have a very positive impact on pupils' achievement and their enjoyment of learning.

## 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))

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<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.

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