



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

**A report on**

**Marshfield Primary School  
Marshfield Road  
Castleton  
Cardiff  
CF3 2UW**

**Date of inspection: November 2017**

**by**

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

## About Marshfield Primary School

Marshfield Primary School is on the outskirts of Newport in Newport local authority. The school serves the village of Marshfield and three other villages nearby. There are 455 pupils on role, aged between 3 and 11 years, including 32 part-time nursery pupils. The school has 16 single-age classes.

Just over 3% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is considerably lower than the national average of 19%. The school identifies around 9% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is well below the national average of 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A very few pupils are looked after by the local authority.

Most pupils are white British and speak English at home. A very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. A very few speak Welsh at home or have English as an additional language.

The headteacher took up her in post in September 2017. The school's last inspection was in March 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

Marshfield Primary School is a stimulating learning environment, in which most pupils thrive and make good progress. Many pupils are articulate and mature for their age; they enjoy learning and have positive attitudes to school life. The recently appointed headteacher has involved the whole school community in creating a strong vision for the future of the school, based on securing pupils' wellbeing, providing a stimulating curriculum and achieving high standards. The quality of teaching is good, but a renewed sense of direction has given teachers the confidence and autonomy to develop more creative approaches to learning. These are already beginning to challenge pupils' thinking and improve their outcomes.

<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 Provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to communicate frequently in Welsh throughout the day
- R2 Enable pupils to develop as independent learners who make choices about how and what they learn and contribute effectively to decision-making
- R3 Ensure that learning activities match pupils' needs closely so that pupils of all abilities make the best progress they can
- R4 Develop governors' role in monitoring the quality of provision and pupils' progress

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Many pupils start school with relatively strong communication and personal and social skills for their age. They settle well and become inquisitive learners as they explore the interesting learning opportunities in the nursery. As they move through the foundation phase, most pupils build well on this strong start. They use their growing literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and thinking skills to investigate the outdoor and indoor environment eagerly. Most listen attentively, talk excitedly about their activities, and communicate confidently with others. Most key stage 2 pupils are articulate and express their ideas and opinions maturely. They listen to the views of others respectfully and adapt their speech and style to suit the audience and the situation.

Pupils' enjoyment of books and reading is clear and pupils respond enthusiastically to a range of texts from an early age. For example, Year 1 pupils build their understanding of chronology and the use of connectives by practising their oral story-telling skills as a class. By the end of the foundation phase, many read fluently and expressively for their age. In key stage 2, the reading skills of most pupils enable them to access all aspects of the curriculum successfully. Many read and interpret information in books and on the internet, and skim and scan texts efficiently when carrying out research for their topic work. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils discuss their favourite books and authors maturely, referring knowledgeably to the books they share in class during guided reading sessions and the school's 'reading fortnight', when each class studies a specific book in depth.

Most pupils write well for their age. Foundation phase pupils create pieces of a good standard across a wide range of genres, including recipes and potions, dialogue, descriptions and news reports. Many transfer these skills effectively in other areas of learning. For example, Year 2 pupils learn about the features of instructional writing in literacy sessions and use these to explain how to make a mousetrap to catch the mouse in one of their favourite stories. Many pupils in key stage 2 write fluently and at length in English lessons and in other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils write detailed comparisons when learning about the history of Marshfield, and Year 6 pupils use the features of formal report writing to create a police report. They describe the crime scene, the victim and the main suspects in detail and explain the investigation accurately. When writing a story, the most able pupils use particularly interesting vocabulary and punctuate passages carefully to capture the imagination of the reader. Throughout the school, many pupils spell accurately and use a good range of punctuation for their age. However, the standard of handwriting and presentation varies too much from class to class and does not always reflect the capabilities of the pupils.

The numeracy skills of most pupils develop well and are at least in line with expectations for their age. For example, most reception pupils have a secure understanding of one-to-one correspondence and create number sentences to five competently. In Year 2, pupils read numbers to 100 confidently and apply their knowledge of number bonds to ten to help them to add hundreds. Lower key stage 2 pupils perform complex mathematical calculations systematically. For example, they

partition and recombine three figure numbers to add money, and convert easily between pounds and pence. Pupils of all ages transfer their numeracy skills effectively to other areas of the curriculum, particularly when handling data and solving real-life problems, such as planning a complex building project in Year 5.

Many pupils develop an appropriate range of skills in many areas of ICT. Foundation phase pupils enjoy using electronic toys and devices and this helps to develop their understanding of the importance of technology in everyday life. For example, nursery pupils use walkie talkies purposefully to communicate with their friends, and operate a toy coffee machine with dexterity in the role play area. Older foundation pupils and those in key stage 2 use tablet computers competently to research topics and present their findings appropriately. Their skills in collecting, storing and manipulating data in databases and spreadsheets are beginning to develop appropriately, but they are not as strong as their skills in other areas of ICT.

A majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in developing basic skills in Welsh lessons. Foundation phase pupils learn vocabulary and simple sentence patterns linked to their topics, for example, through songs and games. In designated Welsh lessons, key stage 2 pupils ask and answer simple questions related to their topics and a few are beginning to extend their sentences. However, pupils do not engage in Welsh conversation outside these lessons and many struggle to recall the Welsh they have learnt previously.

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with complex additional learning needs, attain at least expected standards. However, the rate of progress of a very few pupils, particularly those who sometimes find aspects of their work challenging, is not always good enough.

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

Nearly all pupils enjoy attending school and have positive attitudes to learning. Many pupils in the foundation phase concentrate particularly well for their age and show interest in activities in all areas of learning. Most pupils across the school show pride in specific pieces of work and can explain why they are special to them. Older key stage 2 pupils understand the benefits of working hard to succeed, and a few discuss their ambitions and aspirations for the future with enthusiasm, showing a determination to succeed. In most cases, pupils thrive on challenge and persevere well when tackling problems. However, a few pupils of all ages are reluctant to take risks. These pupils seek reassurance and sometimes find it difficult to maintain focus when working without adult encouragement.

Behaviour in classes and around the school is very good. Pupils are polite and considerate, and show respect to one another and adults. Their understanding of their rights and responsibilities is strong and helps them to appreciate the importance of supporting one another to feel safe in school. Most pupils are confident that the school supports them well if they have worries or concerns. They know where to go for guidance and help and they find this support reassuring.

Many pupils take on responsibilities willingly and pupil groups, such as the Rights Knights, school council, eco committee and playground buddies, are keen to make a difference to the lives of pupils in the school. The Digi-bots, a relatively new pupil

group, is particularly active. Its members recently presented their ideas for improving ICT to the governing body, and their plans are an important element of the current school development plan. However, except in a very few cases, pupils do not have enough say in what and how they learn.

To support their physical wellbeing, many pupils take part enthusiastically in the wide range of physical education lessons and extra-curricular activities on offer, including yoga, fitness clubs and team sports. They develop a good understanding of healthy eating and enjoy healthy snacks and lunches. In the nursery, for instance, pupils go to the running snack bar every day to choose from different fruits, cheese and other healthy options.

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The school's thematic approach to planning the curriculum excites pupils and encourages them to investigate the indoor and outdoor learning environments and learn new things. In most classes, teachers and support staff engage pupils well and foster positive attitudes to learning. Nursery pupils, for example, follow picture clues to find a mouse that is said to be hiding in the woods, and Year 6 pupils work with a forensic scientist to learn how the police solve crimes.

Teachers are developing the confidence to try new approaches to their practice, including trialling a range of strategies in Year 3 to build on pupils' foundation phase experiences and enhance pupils' independent learning skills. This approach, which is partly in preparation for the new curriculum in Wales, has led to the development of role play and problem solving areas in Year 3 classrooms. It ensures a smoother transition from foundation phase to key stage 2 and meets pupils' needs and interests appropriately.

A programme of valuable visits to places such as local castles and mountain centres, and regular visitors to the school support the curriculum well. Pupils benefit from these first-hand experiences and interesting follow-up activities, such as creating their own television broadcast about a tiger who came to tea. As part of the key stage 2 curriculum, the school offers pupils an enhanced variety of music and sporting opportunities, including Taiko drumming and yoga. These diverse activities motivate pupils who might otherwise lack enthusiasm in some lessons.

Teachers establish productive working relationships with pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour. Most adults question pupils well to gauge their understanding and move their learning forward. Nearly all teachers use an appropriate balance of techniques, including practical activities, paired and group work, to maintain pupils' interest. In many classes, teachers plan a range of learning activities that challenge pupils of most abilities. Occasionally, however, work does not challenge pupils well enough, or limits what they can achieve.

Most teachers capture pupils' imagination well. Topical projects, such as Black History Month, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) weeks provide insight into the real world and raise pupils' aspirations. They inspire pupils, who benefit from this more open-ended approach to the curriculum. However, in general, adults tend to lead the learning too much, and pupils have limited opportunities to make choices about how and what they learn.

The school's agreed approach to giving pupils' feedback about their work helps most pupils to improve. Sometimes, however, younger pupils and those with additional learning needs, who benefit from teachers' good verbal support, cannot read the detailed written feedback they receive. This means it has a limited impact on the quality of future work.

Teachers' planning links appropriately to the literacy and numeracy framework. They plan a broad range of opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes across the curriculum and develop their speaking skills in meaningful ways, for example by presenting in assembly. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects, particularly in topic work and science, where they record and interpret data competently in graphs, tables and charts.

The school has started to plan for the implementation of the digital competence framework. This work is relatively recent, but it has already improved opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning through technology. There are generally appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in specific Welsh lessons. However, the school does not do enough to encourage pupils to practise the language throughout the school day.

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

The school has effective arrangements to support pupils' wellbeing and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils benefit considerably from caring and encouraging working relationships with staff. This helps to ensure high levels of mutual respect and pupil behaviour, based within a clear moral framework. Provision for supporting the emotional and social needs of vulnerable pupils and their families is good. The strong partnerships between designated staff, pupils and their families has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and raises their confidence and self-esteem. Close links with local places of worship and their leaders, thoughtful collective worship, and opportunities to take part in yoga sessions, for example, enable pupils to explore their own spiritual development well.

There are valuable opportunities for pupils to develop a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet, and live a healthy lifestyle. Clubs, such as Let's Get Fit and rugby, support pupils' physical wellbeing. An extensive range of interesting extra-curricular clubs, including 'Newsletter Bloggers', 'Art Attack' and chess, provide opportunities for nearly all pupils to engage in an extra-curricular activity that interests them. Visits by the police to discuss the dangers of cyber-bullying, and to take part in role-play activities about bullying, help pupils to deal confidently with any incidents of bullying in school or in the community and support most pupils to make sensible choices and keep themselves safe. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school ensures good opportunities for pupils to be active in the local community. Pupils improve the environment by litter picking, and develop their understanding of citizenship and their responsibilities to others through attending a training session on the use of the village defibrillator. A recent whole school theme week, supported financially by the parents and friends association, helped to raise pupils' awareness of careers and the world of work. Representatives from occupations in science,

technology and mathematics worked with pupils to promote understanding of their jobs. Opportunities to take on responsibilities as part of a pupil group are good, and develop pupils' leadership skills well. However, pupils have limited chances to develop as independent learners and to contribute to decision making in the school.

Staff provide useful opportunities for older pupils in particular to think critically about their attitudes to equality, discrimination and stereotyping. A good example of this is Black History Month, when pupils research the lives and importance of black personalities such as Rosa Parks and Barack Obama.

The school has a comprehensive system for tracking the progress of all pupils and identifying those in need of additional support or extension activities. There is suitable provision for most pupils identified as having additional learning needs and for those who are more able and talented, including a wide range of focused interventions. However, the co-ordination and overview of this provision are not always clear enough. The support pupils receive enables most to make appropriate progress towards their individual goals.

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

The newly appointed headteacher provides effective leadership. She very quickly involved all stakeholders in creating a vision based securely on improving pupil outcomes and ensuring high standards of wellbeing. Staff work together successfully and carry out their duties conscientiously. The headteacher distributes responsibilities suitably and teachers are aware of their specific roles to deliver strategic plans for improvement.

The headteacher, senior leadership team and staff have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They identify priorities for improvement based on the outcomes of the self-evaluation report in combination with the findings of recent monitoring. The school development plan is clear and identifies most areas requiring further improvement accurately. It focuses well on improving pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, but does not identify the need to improve pupils' use of the Welsh language.

Leaders ensure that funding links suitably to each priority and staff understand their responsibilities for delivering actions and monitoring progress. Effective systems for managing staff performance support school improvement successfully. Leaders arrange relevant professional learning opportunities to develop staff expertise and knowledge. These have a positive impact on the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils. For example, staff training to implement a specific programme to develop pupils' communication skills has led to improved standards in speaking and listening across the school. Teachers are becoming reflective practitioners and welcome opportunities to develop their professional expertise. A notable example is the introduction of an effective transition plan for pupils moving from the foundation phase to Year 3. The changes to curriculum planning and teaching styles in Year 3 this term are helping pupils to engage more easily in the key stage 2 curriculum and are beginning to contribute to their development as independent learners.

The school has enough suitably qualified, experienced teachers and support staff to deliver the curriculum. Leaders make good use of the expertise of specialists to

enrich pupils' learning experiences successfully, for example in music and physical education. Financial management is strong. The business manager provides regular, detailed reports to governors, which enable them to monitor the budget carefully and ensure that expenditure is used effectively to raise standards. The pupil development grant is used effectively to improve the wellbeing and attainment of identified pupils. Staff make particularly good use of the learning environment to stimulate pupils' learning. They use space creatively inside and outside their classrooms to form areas for group work, interventions and play activities, and make the most of the school's extensive grounds to explore nature and develop pupils' physical skills.

The governing body is supportive and knows the school and the community very well. Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is performing when compared with similar schools. However, their role in holding the school to account for the quality of its provision and pupils' progress throughout the school is at an early stage of development.

## 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.

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