



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

A report on

**Cynffig Comprehensive School
East Avenue
Kenfig Hill
Bridgend
CF33 6NP**

Date of inspection: October 2017

by

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

About Cynffig Comprehensive School

Cynffig Comprehensive School is an English-medium 11 to 19 mixed comprehensive school and is maintained by Bridgend local authority. Currently there are 712 pupils on roll, which is slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection when there were 723. The number in the sixth form is much lower at 66 compared with 110 in 2012.

The school serves the villages of Cefn Cribwr, Kenfig Hill, Pyle and North Cornelly. Around 27% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average of 17%. More than 21 % of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales. Most pupils are white, British and a very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Nineteen point three per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register and 1% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. This is lower than the national averages of 25.1% and 2.4% respectively. The school has a specialist resource centre for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

The headteacher, took up post in October 2013. The senior leadership team also includes a deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers. An extended leadership team consisting of two learning directors supports the senior team.

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

Cynffig Comprehensive School has a caring, inclusive and supportive ethos that promotes pupils' wellbeing and encourages them to be involved in the life of the school and the wider community. A majority of pupils make strong progress in lessons developing their knowledge and understanding. In many lessons, pupils behave well although, in a few lessons, a minority of pupils disrupt learning with loud and boisterous behaviour.

Leaders at all levels have a clear sense of purpose and communicate their vision for the school successfully to staff and parents. The school has a suitable programme of quality assurance procedures but these do not always identify aspects of provision and performance in need of most improvement well enough. Leaders have not had enough impact on the quality of teaching or the progressive development of pupils' skills.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the progress made by all pupils in lessons and, in particular, their development of reading and writing skills
- R2 Improve pupils' behaviour in lessons
- R3 Improve the quality of teaching
- R4 Improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

The school has secured strong outcomes in many performance indicators at the end of key stage 4 for two of the last three years. Although outcomes at the end of Year 11 in performance indicators are strong, pupils' standards and progress in all year groups across the curriculum is more limited and almost a half of pupils have weak reading and writing skills.

In lessons, the majority of pupils make strong progress and a very few pupils make very good progress. They show secure recall of prior work and are able to apply that knowledge and understanding suitably in different situations. However, a significant minority of pupils do not make enough progress.

Most pupils listen attentively and with respect to the teacher and their peers. As a result, they are able to follow instructions well and conduct discussions that lead to conclusions that improve their understanding. The majority of pupils speak confidently and clearly when answering teachers' questions. During pair and group work, nearly all pupils make appropriate contributions and communicate their reasoning effectively using suitable subject specific terminology. For example, in English, pupils work well together to discuss materials from a beach as part of the stimulus for their first person description about being stranded on an island. A very few pupils offer well-developed and thoughtful extended verbal responses with considered reasoning, for example when discussing events that led to the rise of the Nazis. However, a minority of pupils provide only brief, underdeveloped verbal responses in response to teachers' questions.

Most pupils show sound basic reading skills and are confident in skimming and scanning a range of texts to locate and extract useful information. A few pupils are able to use basic inference and deduction well to enhance their understanding of literary texts, for example when studying Bram Stoker's 'Dracula'. However, almost a half of pupils have limited higher order reading skills that allow them to reason and synthesise texts effectively. This restricts their ability to make progress in different subjects.

The majority of pupils write competently for a suitable range of purposes and audience. A few pupils write well at length especially when given specific success criteria and structures, for example when writing about protecting the environment of Antarctica in geography. A minority of pupils have underdeveloped writing skills. They make too many basic errors in spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. In addition, they are too reliant on support materials provided by the teacher that hinder their ability to develop technical accuracy through extended writing.

When given the opportunity, most pupils use basic number skills appropriately, for example when measuring in science and technology and when calculating fractions and percentages in mathematics. However, pupils do not apply their numeracy skills often enough in subjects other than mathematics. Most pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) skills competently across the curriculum. They use their skills well to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations, where they have retrieved information and created images.

Between 2013 and 2016, performance in key stage 4 was well above the average for similar schools. Over the same period, pupils made strong progress from the end of key stage 2 to key stage 4. Very few pupils gain five GCSE or equivalent grades at A*-A and performance has been lower than in similar schools for the last three years.

At key stage 4, the performance of boys has been above the average for boys in similar schools between 2013 and 2016. The performance of girls for the same period has fluctuated and has been better than the average for girls in similar schools for two of the last four years. Boys' and girls' performance in English compares very well with that in other schools. However, girls generally perform lower than the average for girls in similar schools in mathematics.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved over the three years up to 2016 and is above the average for the same group of pupils in similar schools. Pupils with additional learning needs make very good progress overall.

At the end of Year 11, most pupils remain in full-time education or training.

In the sixth form, pupils have made mixed progress compared with the average for pupils in similar schools. Since 2014, there has been an improvement in the average wider points score and the percentage of three A*-C grades at A level or equivalent. In 2016, performance in these indicators was above the Welsh average for the first time in three years. The proportion of pupils achieving the level 3 threshold has been above the Welsh average for three of the last four years. However, the proportion gaining three A*-A grades has been consistently below the Welsh average up to and including 2016. In lessons, most sixth form pupils make suitable progress. They talk maturely about their work, their strengths and their targets. They have well-developed reading and writing skills. For example, in history, pupils use inference and deduction well and draw appropriate conclusions to write about society prior to the French revolution. A few pupils demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of challenging concepts such as standard solutions in chemistry.

Most pupils make appropriate progress in developing their Welsh language skills. Most pupils are entered for a Welsh language qualification and their performance has improved year-on-year. In 2016, the proportion of pupils gaining a level 2 qualification in Welsh was above the national average having been below for three years. In lessons, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their Welsh language skills. Most pupils have a sound vocabulary but lack confidence in speaking out loud.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement

Almost all pupils feel safe and secure in school. Most pupils understand clearly the benefits of a healthy diet. A minority of pupils take part in a suitable range of extra-curricular activities, especially team sports such as rugby, football and netball.

In many lessons, pupils behave well. Many pupils settle quickly and work enthusiastically. However, in a minority of lessons pupils do not always engage suitably with their learning and are easily distracted. When this occurs, it impacts negatively on their work and the work of others. In a few lessons, a minority of pupils disrupt learning with loud and boisterous behaviour. Nearly all pupils in the sixth form show a strong commitment, enthusiasm and a mature attitude towards their studies.

Pupils with additional learning needs play a full part in the life of the school. This includes pupils from the 'Specialist Resource Centre' being members of the school parliament where they develop their confidence and resilience well.

In a minority of lessons, pupils develop their independent learning suitably. In the sixth form, most pupils develop well as independent learners, for example through researching tasks before lessons on internet safety and secure websites. In a majority of lessons, they are able to sustain concentration without distraction. Pupils work purposefully and are able to persevere to find solutions to problems. However, a majority of pupils are over reliant on the teacher and have limited interest in their work. As a result, they do not always make sufficient progress.

Most pupils move quickly and purposefully between lessons and are punctual. They are polite and well mannered around the school, although a few do not show enough respect for others.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Overall, the quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement.

Most teachers have good subject knowledge and many establish positive working relationships with pupils. They provide clear instructions and explain new concepts and ideas well.

The majority of teachers plan lessons to build appropriately on pupils' prior knowledge and use resources that stimulate their learning. An example of this is in religious education, using Jewish artefacts to recall prior learning and develop pupils' oracy skills. In many cases, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, including the more able and talented. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan well enough for the progressive development of pupils' literacy skills or, when appropriate, pupils' numeracy skills.

Many teachers manage pupils' behaviour appropriately. However, in a few lessons, teachers are inconsistent in their application of the school behaviour policy and this has a detrimental effect on pupils' learning.

Many teachers question pupils appropriately to test their knowledge and provide suitable feedback to the whole class and individuals. A minority of teachers question skilfully to encourage pupils to expand their answers and develop their understanding.

The majority of teachers follow the school assessment guidance and give pupils valuable written feedback that shows the pupils clearly how to improve their work. A few teachers set helpful supplementary tasks that require pupils to reflect and act upon this feedback. An example of this is the "Now try this" questions posed in mathematics following an assessment. However, a minority of teachers provide comments that are superficial that do not help pupils to make suitable improvements to their work.

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils and builds well on previous stages of learning. The school has established arrangements with local schools and a local college to provide nearly all pupils with an appropriate learning pathway at key stage 4 and sixth form. The school provides vulnerable groups of pupils with suitable alternative provision that is matched well to their needs.

There is a broad range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, including sport, art and cultural trips, to extend opportunities for most pupils.

The school provides relevant discreet literacy and numeracy lessons for all key stage 3 pupils, a useful immersion program for Year 7 pupils and a literacy and numeracy toolkit to help teachers support the development of pupils' skills. However, provision for the purposeful and systematic development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects is not sufficiently co-ordinated or evaluated.

Opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills across the curriculum are suitable. For example, pupils in key stage 4 use a variety of programmes to scan and manipulate imagery in art, and pupils in key stage 3 produce fact files in science.

Provision for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills is appropriate. The school provides a variety of suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of Welsh culture and the benefits of bilingualism, such as the school Eisteddfod, assemblies, 'Diwrnod Shw Mae/Su' Mae', visits to a Welsh pantomime and visits from prominent Welsh language speakers. The school has beneficial links with the community to promote bilingualism, for example through 'Urdd Gobaith Cymru', and coffee mornings with Welsh bingo. Although there are strengths in this provision, it has limited impact on the use of Welsh by pupils outside Welsh lessons.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has a caring, inclusive and supportive ethos that suitably promotes pupils' wellbeing.

There are effective procedures in place to track and monitor the progress of individual learners and groups of pupils, through all key stages. Senior leaders make beneficial use of this information to identify learning needs early and to provide valuable interventions, which impact positively on pupils' progress. Teaching and non-teaching staff provide useful mentoring support to groups of pupils in key stage 4. This has a positive impact on their progress and achievement in key performance indicators. However, the school does not provide work that extends more able pupils well enough. The school monitors the progress of pupils who access off-site learning provision well, through regular partnership meetings, web-based shared documents and first-day absence calls.

The school communicates with parents effectively, and the 'Cynffig app' is a useful tool to keep parents updated about day-to-day events as well as upcoming activities such as school trips, revision sessions or parents' evenings. Timely interim and full reports give parents valuable information on their child's progress. Subject reports also provide useful comments and subject specific targets, which give worthwhile guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

The school encourages pupil involvement effectively in the life of the school and the wider community through the school parliament. The school responded well to suggestions from the school parliament, for example in implementing a pre-ordering system in the canteen and installing outdoor table tennis facilities. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development suitably through 'thought of the week', assemblies, registration periods, personal and social education days and the 'COPE' qualification.

Beneficial restorative strategies in the 'reflection zone' enable pupils to reflect on their behaviour and learn to manage their emotions. A behaviour specialist teacher and school staff work well together to support pupils. The 'learning house' provision provides strong emotional, learning and social support for vulnerable pupils such as young carers.

Most teachers apply the school's strategies for dealing with pupils' behaviour well. However, a few teachers do not apply the behaviour policy consistently enough and, as a result, a few pupils do not behave appropriately. The school has recently reviewed the rewards system and it is developing suitably in an attempt to encourage positive behaviour.

Pupils with additional learning needs are supported well and make good progress. They are involved in all aspects of school life, for instance the school parliament, choir, sports teams and the 'Duke of Edinburgh' award. The school provides an appropriate range of helpful interventions to support pupils with additional learning needs. For example, programmes such as 'Talk About', the 'Social Use of Language' and 'emotional literacy support assistant' programmes develop pupils' social, behavioural and communication skills well. The annual review process satisfies statutory requirements and individual education plans are informative and effective.

Pastoral transition arrangements between key stage 2 and key stage 3 are strong, and learning and teaching links are well established in subjects such as mathematics, ICT, design and technology, music, Spanish and Welsh. This ensures that pupils who transfer to the school settle in quickly and it provides continuity in learning experiences. Appropriate advice and guidance are available for pupils at key transition points to help them make informed choices about their learning and career pathways.

The school has suitable provision for promoting healthy eating and wellbeing and there are a range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' experiences in school.

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

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

Leaders at all levels have a clear sense of purpose. This has had a positive influence on the way that staff work together and demonstrate a strong commitment to school development. However, the school does not identify areas for improvement precisely enough. As a result, leadership has not had sufficient impact on important aspects of the school's work, such as teaching or supporting the development of pupils' skills.

Leaders communicate the vision for the school suitably through policy documents and school publications. Leadership decisions are aligned to this vision, to create an environment where pupils and staff feel supported and valued. There is a well-considered rationale for the distribution of leadership roles, and beneficial opportunities for all staff to take on responsibilities to develop their leadership skills. Senior leaders work closely together and support one another well across areas of

responsibility. This collegiate approach extends to middle leaders, who work purposefully to support the school.

Leadership meetings have been reorganised to engage staff appropriately in professional dialogue. They focus on suitable areas for improvement and generate helpful discussion. However, records of meetings do not focus robustly enough on specific areas for development. This means that teachers do not identify exactly how improvement may be achieved, and senior leaders do not hold staff securely to account.

There are appropriate arrangements for performance management, and these link well to suitable professional learning opportunities. However, performance objectives are not clear enough to enable teachers to plan for or measure their improvement successfully.

Governors take an active part in the life of the school. They use their expertise to contribute to specific areas of the school's work, such as undertaking mock interviews or supporting the pupil parliament. Governors have a sound understanding of pupils' performance data and challenge the school appropriately.

The school has a suitable programme of quality assurance procedures that are understood clearly by most staff. This includes frequent, relevant opportunities to gather first hand evidence. However, the school's view of this evidence is often insufficiently evaluative and lacking rigour. As a result, the school has an overly generous view of important aspects of its work, such as the quality of teaching and the development of pupils' skills.

Most leaders have a sound understanding of their roles in quality assurance. They make suitable use of data to analyse pupil outcomes and trends in performance. However, monitoring activities, particularly lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work, do not focus sharply enough on the impact of provision, specifically the progress pupils make and the development of their skills. Most departmental evaluation reports make little reference to what they have seen in lessons and in pupils' work when evaluating pupils' progress within their respective areas. This makes it very difficult for the school to identify precisely the aspects that are most in need of improvement.

The school has a sound culture of collaborative learning where all staff are involved in professional learning. The school works suitably with other schools to learn from the practice of others.

The 'Collaborative Learning Groups' provide valuable opportunities for staff to work on small-scale improvement projects that are related to the school's priorities. This enables teachers to develop their understanding of research in education, and a few projects have made a difference to the school's work, for example in restorative approaches. In addition, the school has a well-planned programme of development sessions that allows teachers to share and explore their professional knowledge. Although these opportunities have been very beneficial to teachers' professional knowledge, they have not had a sufficient impact on provision and practice.

Senior leaders consider expenditure carefully and monitor it regularly against school priorities. The governing body exercises its role well in relation to the school's budget, monitoring financial activity carefully and holding school leaders suitably to account.

The school budget is used successfully to promote an appropriately resourced learning environment.

The school's plans for the use of specific grants are appropriate and suitably detailed. In the case of the pupil development grant, this has led to much improved outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals over time.

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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