



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

**A report on**

**Ty Isaf Infants & Nursery School**

**Mill Street  
Risca  
Caerphilly  
NP11 6EF**

**Date of inspection: October 2024**

**by**

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

## About Ty Isaf Infants & Nursery School

Name of provider	Ty Isaf Infants Nursery School
Local authority	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Infant
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	114
Pupils of statutory school age	47
Number in nursery classes	37
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%)	21.8%
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%)	14.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	7.8%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/03/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/04/2018
Start date of inspection	14/10/2024

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](https://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

Since her appointment, the headteacher has demonstrated strong leadership, developed effective teamwork and secured a clear focus on improving pupils' learning and well-being. As a result, Ty Isaf Infant and Nursery School is an inclusive, nurturing environment, where all staff foster trust and positive working relationships with the school community, and provide effective support to ensure that all pupils thrive.

Teachers use a variety of approaches to support pupils' learning successfully. Outdoor learning opportunities, for example, enhance pupils' creativity and develop their independence well. Learning environments are inviting and support pupils to develop positive relationships, behave well and engage effectively. Overall, teaching is effective, enabling most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals, to progress well.

All staff have suitably high expectations for all pupils and are successful in developing pupils' speaking, listening and numeracy skills. Teachers use questioning effectively to guide learning and provide regular feedback to pupils about their work, addressing misconceptions quickly. Pupils develop their writing skills well and many older pupils become confident writers. Although the school is focused on improving pupils' reading skills, too often older pupils struggle to read unfamiliar words. Staff focus successfully on developing pupils' creativity, such as their musical skills. Overall, many pupils are beginning to improve their Welsh speaking skills appropriately.

The school's curriculum offers a suitable breadth of learning experiences, and develops pupils' understanding of the history, cultural and linguistic heritage of the local area well. The school is beginning to develop its curriculum to support pupils' progress, but this work is at an early stage.

Leaders include all staff in evaluating the school's performance. However, self-evaluation processes are not always focused sharply enough on identifying shortcomings in the quality of teaching and learning. Governors undertake their roles successfully. They take an active interest in the school's improvement priorities and monitor the use of resources appropriately.

## Recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Strengthen self-evaluation processes to focus closely on the impact of teaching on learning
- R2 Develop the school's curriculum to ensure all pupils make progress in all aspects of their learning and make effective progress in reading

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

Since her appointment, the headteacher has demonstrated thoughtful and determined leadership. By acting swiftly to strengthen and add capacity to the school's leadership team, she has established stable leadership, robust teamwork, and an assured approach to improving outcomes for all pupils. Staff work together effectively to create an inclusive and nurturing environment for all pupils, where there are high levels of respect.

The school has a robust safeguarding culture. Staff ensure that pupils know how to keep safe, including when working online and all staff address any concerns that affect pupils' welfare promptly. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They feel staff care about them and talk readily to their teachers about any worries. The youngest pupils settle well into school life and learn the routines of the classroom quickly. A strong focus on developing their independence encourages behaviours that enable these very young children to get the best out of their early school experiences.

Across the school, staff create calm and inviting learning environments that help to foster positive relationships with pupils. As a result, most pupils engage well in their learning, behave well in class and around school. Overall, teaching ensures that pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress in many areas of their learning. In most lessons, teachers communicate clear learning intentions and provide helpful instructions for pupils. They use a range of purposeful teaching approaches such as paired and group work, play and exploration that maintain most pupils' interest successfully.

In many cases the pace of learning is effective, and staff engage pupils well. Most staff make effective use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and extend their learning further. They use of a range of beneficial resources to gain pupils' interest and develop their understanding. For example, natural resources such as conkers, leaves, and rainbows ignite pupils' curiosity and creativity and support their learning across the curriculum effectively. All staff provide opportunities for pupils to learn through hands on experiences. In many cases, this enables pupils to make useful choices about their learning and develop their imagination and independence further.

### **Spotlight 1: Developing pupils' skills in the expressive arts**

Across the school, staff successfully develop pupils' musical skills. All pupils learn to play a range of tuned and untuned instruments and develop their understanding of music. They grow in confidence as they regularly perform for their peers and parents.

The school provides regular, valuable opportunities for outdoor learning. This includes opportunities for pupils to grow flowers and herbs, build campfires and create interesting artwork from nature. In most cases teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils when learning outdoors. However, at times staff do not challenge pupils as well as they could and, as a result, a few pupils do not always make the progress they could during these activities. Overall, staff generally provide regular, worthwhile feedback to pupils to address misconceptions or to deepen pupils' thinking productively.

Across the school, staff focus well on developing pupils' oracy skills. They introduce new vocabulary appropriately and model language for pupils successfully. Many pupils are beginning to make progress in developing their reading skills, but they do not have a secure enough understanding of the range of strategies they could use to help them read unfamiliar words. Overall, pupils across the school make good progress in developing their writing skills. Younger pupils quickly learn to form letters and write simple words. Many older pupils become confident writers who write for a range of purposes and extend their ideas appropriately. The school's consistent approach to teaching mathematics helps many pupils to develop secure skills and apply their mathematical knowledge successfully across the curriculum. Overall, many pupils are beginning to improve their Welsh speaking skills appropriately.

The school has developed a broad curriculum that aligns with Curriculum for Wales and teachers plan learning experiences in all areas of learning and experience (AoLEs). They plan useful opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the world around them and engage a range of visitors, such as a local author, who help raise their aspirations. In addition, staff ensure that there is a suitable focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development celebrating those people who reflect the school's values. Teachers are beginning to consider progression across the school in their planning, but this work is at an early stage of development. The school develops pupils' leadership skills well and provides opportunities for all pupils to influence the life of the school through its pupil councils. Through these leadership roles pupils have improved recycling across the school and share important online safety messages. Many pupils speak confidently about the importance of keeping fit and eating healthily.

Leaders collaborate effectively with staff and external agencies to meet the needs of pupils. The school organises support for pupils with ALN effectively and leaders ensure that staff receive regular training to support this work. Staff create effective individual pupil development plans and monitor and review targeted pupils' progress and provision regularly. Teaching assistants support pupils' emotional well-being, concentration and literacy skills well through a range of effective interventions. Consequently, most pupils with ALN make at least appropriate progress towards their targets.

The school places a high priority on improving attendance and punctuality. Leaders have appropriate systems in place for monitoring pupils' attendance and act quickly to engage with families. This work is making a positive difference to attendance levels. The school's partnership with families is developing well and parental engagement with the school has increased noticeably. Leaders regularly seek parents' views and act on feedback promptly. They ensure that the school is a welcoming space where parents feel comfortable to learn alongside their children.

### **Spotlight 2: Supporting pupils' well-being and attendance**

The school is highly effective in supporting pupils to develop values, positive relationships and self-awareness. For example, daily well-being sessions ensure that pupils are calm and ready to learn. All teachers undertake effective, daily 'check-in' times with pupils, and skilled teaching assistants offer tailored support for pupils who face additional challenges. This work helps pupils to feel comfortable coming to school and has a positive impact on their attendance.

The headteacher has focused successfully on building leadership capacity across the school. All staff understand their roles and responsibilities well. Leaders and staff generally carry out a suitable range of monitoring activities that enable them to evaluate the effectiveness of aspects of the school's work. However, leaders do not always focus carefully enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Governors work effectively with leaders to establish a robust safeguarding culture. They have a good understanding of the school's improvement priorities and monitor the school's finances carefully to ensure that spending is focused on pupils' outcomes.

### **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](http://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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