



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

**A report on**

**Crickhowell C.P. School  
Oakfield Drive  
Crickhowell  
Powys  
NP8 1DY**

**Date of inspection: February 2020**

**by**

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

## About Crickhowell C.P. School

Crickhowell Community Primary School is in the town of Crickhowell in the Brecon Beacons National Park in Powys local authority. There are 192 pupils on roll aged from 4 to 11 years. The school has seven mixed-ability classes.

About 4% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average of 18%. The school identifies about 12% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is notably below the national average of 21%. No pupils speak Welsh at home. A few pupils have English as an additional language and a very few come from an ethnic minority background.

The headteacher took up his post in January 2017. The school's previous inspection was in in May 2014.

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

Nearly all pupils develop as creative and confident learners, make strong progress and achieve well. They listen attentively, behave maturely and are enthusiastic about their learning. Most pupils discuss their ideas and value each other's contributions consistently. Nearly all pupils show care and respect for each other in an inclusive learning environment.

Staff have supportive and effective working relationships with pupils. Most teachers have high expectations and use questioning techniques effectively to encourage pupils to explain their thinking and to deepen their learning. They plan a range of interesting activities that develop most pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well across the curriculum. Teachers and learning support assistants collaborate effectively to support pupils' learning.

The headteacher provides strong, effective leadership with a clear focus on the wellbeing of pupils and raising standards across the school. He has high expectations and shares his vision effectively with pupils, governors and parents. The school's systematic and inclusive approach to self-evaluation supports leaders to have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school's current targets for improvement link appropriately to its developmental needs. Leaders support staff at all levels to develop their own leadership skills. All staff make purposeful and beneficial contributions to school improvement.

<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 Improve standards of Welsh across the school
- R2 Provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in more challenging contexts in order to stretch them further and to help them to develop as more ambitious learners
- R3 Ensure regular opportunities for foundation phase pupils to make choices about their learning in order to develop their independent learning

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Many pupils enter the school with language and numeracy skills that are slightly below the level expected for their age. Nearly all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make strong progress as they move through the school.

Across the school, nearly all pupils listen exceptionally well to adults and to each other. Nearly all pupils in the foundation phase express their ideas and opinions enthusiastically and respond to questions confidently. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 use partner talk effectively to participate in lively dialogue about their work, for example when discussing the local Green Man Festival. They use rich vocabulary and give extended answers when discussing their activities. By Year 6, most pupils are articulate and mature speakers. When expressing opinions, they provide thoughtful reasons to support their views, for example when discussing animal welfare.

Most pupils in the foundation phase make steady progress in learning to read. They develop a secure understanding of letters and sounds and decode unfamiliar words successfully. Many are beginning to read expressively, for example when reading about Brazil. In key stage 2, most pupils develop their reading skills effectively. Pupils make good use of picture cues to help them understand their stories, and older pupils use context appropriately to aid their understanding of the text. They read aloud clearly and with good expression, occasionally adding interest by adopting characters' voices. They use the internet to collect and collate information successfully, for example when writing about the Antarctic.

Most pupils in the foundation phase write suitably for a range of purposes. They use basic punctuation skilfully and spell familiar words correctly. Many pupils include effective descriptive vocabulary in their writing and make sensible attempts at spelling more difficult words, such as when writing a carnival poem. In key stage 2, most pupils develop their writing skills effectively, and show a growing awareness of how to match their style to suit their purpose. They apply their literacy skills beneficially in other subjects, for example when creating a character profile about men landing on the moon. By Year 6, most pupils develop their use of language by using rich vocabulary and more complex punctuation successfully, for example when writing a myth of their own. The majority of pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. However, a minority of pupils do not always use legible handwriting or think carefully enough about how best to present their work.

A minority of pupils develop their speaking skills appropriately in Welsh. In the foundation phase, many pupils discuss the weather and personal facts using basic vocabulary. As they move through the school, a few pupils develop their basic sentence patterns suitably. In upper key stage 2, the majority of pupils read simple texts and discuss content appropriately. Many pupils develop their writing skills to a suitable standard, for example when writing a description of a day in a child's life in Lesotho. However, many pupils do not converse effectively in Welsh as their vocabulary and basic sentence patterns are limited. As a result, the majority of pupils do not develop their oral Welsh skills to a high enough standard as they progress through the school.

Most pupils develop strong numeracy skills. By Year 2, most pupils carry out simple calculations purposefully using number bonds to 20 and they use analogue and digital clocks to tell the time in hours accurately. Many pupils in key stage 2 develop strong mathematical skills and discuss methods they use to carry out calculations confidently. In Year 6, many pupils carry out a variety of written and mental calculations with accuracy, and they multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals well. They find, collect and draw accurate line graphs, for example when representing the difference in temperature between the north and south poles. When given the opportunity, pupils apply their numeracy skills purposefully to solve more challenging problems. For example, pupils use a range of information they have gathered to calculate the cost of a family trip to a local music festival.

Many foundation phase pupils use a suitable range of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and software appropriately. Most use electronic devices confidently, for example when directing a programmable toy to move around a map of Brazil. They use word-processing software successfully and use graphics to enhance their writing. Most pupils across key stage 2 make strong progress in their ICT skills and use a suitable variety of equipment to enhance their learning. They save and retrieve their work confidently. Most lower key stage 2 pupils use databases effectively to find and display information, for example about myths and legends of Wales. They use presentation software successfully, for example when displaying facts about the arctic wolf. They present historical information using green screen technology purposefully, for example when presenting information about evacuees during the Second World War.

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

Nearly all pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and feel proud and safe in school. They appreciate the support and guidance they receive from staff. Many pupils adhere to the school rules consistently and socialise with their friends in a considerate and caring manner. Nearly all pupils work together successfully, showing respect and kindness towards each other.

During lessons, nearly all pupils engage well with the tasks set by their teacher. They settle to their work quickly, behave well and show a positive attitude to their learning. They listen attentively and respond beneficially to each other, for example when pupils in the reception class emulate different rhythms while playing recyclable musical instruments. Many pupils show high levels of motivation and pride in their work. They persevere on tasks on their own and work successfully as a member of a group. As a result, most pupils maintain concentration to complete tasks successfully.

Many pupils respond well to opportunities to contribute their own ideas, for example when foundation phase pupils make suggestions about what they would like to do during 'rainbow time'. They participate competently in these activities, though mostly following the guidance of an adult. Most key stage 2 pupils help plan class activities through 'everyone planning in class' time. They choose activities that promote their learning successfully, for example when developing their creative skills as part of an eco-forest art project supported by a local gallery. As a result, most pupils engage well in class activities and develop as increasingly creative and confident learners.

Most pupils develop their leadership roles and responsibilities effectively as members of different groups, for example the school council and eco committee. They take their responsibilities seriously, support the school conscientiously and share information with their classmates effectively. For example, members of the school council participate in classroom observations and 'book looks', which result in improvements to classroom displays to support pupils' writing. Members of the eco committee raise pupils' awareness effectively of the need to look after the school by carrying out regular litter picks and by encouraging the use of recycling bins.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices. For example, they hold a healthy lunchbox competition which is successful in encouraging pupils to make healthy choices. Most pupils understand the importance of keeping physically active. They engage well in pupil-planned challenges in the playground, such as when taking part in 'Theme Thursdays'.

Many pupils enjoy taking part in after-school clubs, such as football, netball and cricket. They also take part in a variety of clubs designed to develop their skills further and to promote their wellbeing, for example those focused on art, nature, newspapers, coding and singing. As a result, most pupils understand the benefits of taking a full role in school life and they respond positively to the variety of opportunities provided for them.

Most pupils develop their understanding of children's rights through the effective work of the pupil ambassadors. For example, they raise awareness of their rights by carrying out presentations to their classmates. Many pupils develop a sound understanding of their own culture, as well as cultures from around the world. They take part in the school eisteddfod and Welsh week activities and learn about festivals in other countries in their topic work. Most pupils are developing well as ethical and informed citizens, such as when taking part in a march to raise awareness of family poverty in Zimbabwe.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online and take part successfully in special events, such as the safer internet day. 'Digital wizards' raise pupils' awareness of online safety well, for example by emphasising the importance of securing passwords while completing work online.

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

Staff have effective working relationships with pupils and foster a positive and calm learning environment. Teachers plan a good range of interesting and stimulating activities that engage most pupils successfully. The enriched activities enhance pupils' experiences successfully, for example when famous authors and artists come to school to develop pupils' literacy and creative skills. Teachers use the local area purposefully to engage pupils, for example when pupils visit the Brecon Beacon National Park Visitor Centre to enhance their understanding of the countryside. Teachers support pupils beneficially and encourage them to persevere on tasks for extended periods of time. As a result, most pupils make strong progress in developing their skills across the curriculum.

Teachers share learning intentions with pupils consistently, take lessons forward at a suitable pace and challenge the majority of pupils purposefully. Most teachers use

questioning techniques effectively to encourage pupils to explain their thinking and to deepen their learning. In most classes, staff have high expectations of pupils and challenge most of them to apply their skills in a variety of challenging activities. Teachers and learning support assistants work well as a team and collaborate effectively to support pupils learning, for example in developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and social skills.

Staff give pupils valuable oral feedback on their learning during activities. They encourage and support them effectively to improve their work. Teachers use assessment strategies appropriately so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they can do to improve. Most pupils are confident to act on their targets to make progress in their own learning. They respond to their own work and the work of others purposefully. Nearly all pupils respect each other's efforts and provide their peers with constructive suggestions to improve their work. Teachers give pupils useful written feedback, which generally helps pupils to know what they need to do in order to make progress.

Staff develop pupils' skills consistently in the foundation phase and provide purposeful activities in classrooms. Teachers are beginning to plan appropriate activities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills in the school's outdoor learning area. However, staff often direct pupils to activities in class too much and this restricts pupils' ability to make independent choices about what and how they would like to learn.

Teachers ensure that they incorporate the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills successfully into their planning. Staff collaborate well to map the development of pupils' skills effectively across the curriculum and make suitable use of purposeful schemes of work. However, staff do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in more challenging contexts in order to stretch them further and to help them to develop as ambitious and independent learners.

Staff place appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' awareness of Welsh history and traditions, for example when learning about the local castle and stone bridge. They visit local events to develop pupils' understanding of Welsh culture and local food. Teachers promote correct Welsh pronunciation effectively while singing a variety of traditional and folk songs harmoniously in assembly.

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

School leaders track and monitor pupils' progress purposefully. Staff use the information effectively to identify pupils who require additional support. They provide appropriate educational and personal support for them through a suitable range of learning programmes that meet the needs of learners well. Teachers deploy learning support staff effectively across the school to support individuals and groups successfully. Staff work closely with a wide range of professional agencies to plan effective interventions for identified pupils. For example, staff provide emotional learning support for identified pupils, which has a positive effect on their wellbeing. All pupils with individual development plans have suitable targets that staff, parents and pupils review regularly.



Teachers make effective provision for developing pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyle choices. The school makes purposeful use of the police liaison officer to support pupils in developing their knowledge and understanding of a variety of personal safety issues, for example on how to keep safe online. The extensive outdoor play areas and the wide range of extra-curricular activities provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to undertake regular exercise.

Teachers plan a variety of interesting activities to develop pupils' physical and creative skills that contribute successfully to their enjoyment of the outdoors. For example, in the foundation phase, teachers ensure that all pupils participate regularly in 'wild walks' activities in the local area. Pupils work collaboratively to build a den, retell and discuss a story and measure different sticks accurately.

The school provides beneficial learning experiences that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. For example, pupils learn about the lives of Mary Jones and Santes Dwynwen, and they compare and contrast Christian and Hindu creation stories successfully. Teachers give pupils valuable opportunities to reflect and to share their experiences when discussing different topics, such as respect and friendships.

Pupils perform regularly in the school and the local community, for example through the school's harvest and Christmas services at the local church. Teachers give pupils suitable opportunities to develop as creative learners, for example by their participation in the Young Voices project where they perform with pupils from other schools nationwide. This develops pupils' awareness of different cultures and fosters their self-confidence successfully.

The school gives pupils purposeful opportunities to develop leadership skills and to become active citizens. Staff encourage pupil groups to contribute to whole-school decision making well. For example, pupils have created their own playground rules to encourage their peers to treat each other with care in the different playground zones.

The school has strong working relationships with parents and encourages them to take part in the life of the school, for example by supporting reading and sporting activities. The 'friends of the school' organise inclusive fund-raising activities, which have a positive impact on the education of their children. For example, they have contributed towards the school purchasing a reading scheme and supported the development of ICT provision. The school invites parents into school to share their expertise and career experiences to strengthen pupils' understanding of the world of work. The school keeps parents well informed by sharing relevant information about school life and their children's learning, for example by holding a mathematics workshop. The weekly newsletters, messaging app and social media websites ensure that parents receive all relevant information in a timely manner.

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

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

The headteacher provides strong, effective leadership with a clear focus on developing the wellbeing of pupils and raising standards across the school. He communicates this vision effectively to staff and parents. Members of the senior

Leadership team support the headteacher purposefully. Together with the headteacher, they provide clear strategic direction for the school and set appropriate professional standards. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities and work well to support each other and to meet the needs of pupils. Leaders work diligently to develop a shared approach to leadership at all levels across the school, for example in developing opportunities for all teaching staff to contribute to curriculum development teams.

Leaders ensure that there is a regular programme of self-evaluation activity. The school's systematic and inclusive approach to self-evaluation ensures that current targets for improvement link appropriately to the identified strengths and areas for development within the school. All teaching staff take part in scrutinising work, carrying out lesson observations and discussing priorities for improvement. Pupils also contribute to this process by carrying out learning walks and producing their own school improvement priorities. Leaders ensure that there are opportunities for parents to contribute to the self-evaluation process through questionnaires and informal discussions. As a result, the school has improved communication to parents and refined the pupils' end-of-year reports in response to parental feedback.

The governing body carries out its duties effectively through a suitable range of sub-committees which focus on specific areas, such as leadership, standards and wellbeing. Governors engage well in the school's self-evaluation processes and undertake a valuable range of monitoring activities. As a result, they have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and this enables them to provide effective challenge to the leadership of the school. For example, governors have highlighted the consistency of pupil and teachers written feedback as an area for development. As a result, the school is developing more effective approaches to support pupils' understanding of the next steps in their learning.

Leaders ensure that staff have a suitable range of professional learning opportunities that link well to school priorities and performance management arrangements. For example, staff have received suitable training to develop effective questioning techniques in order to extend pupils' thinking. Staff collaborate well together and with staff in other schools to develop their own skills. For example, in Year 3, staff have collaborated well to design learning activities to build effectively on foundation phase provision.

Staff have developed a well-organised indoor environment for pupils. Most classrooms and learning areas have a good level of resources and are engaging spaces for pupils. The school grounds are well developed and provide children with exciting and stimulating opportunities. Many foundation phase pupils have regular access to the outdoors, but staff do not always use this effectively to challenge and to support pupils to develop their independent learning enough.

The headteacher and chair of governors monitor the school budget carefully and make appropriate decisions about spending specific grant funding, such as the pupil development grant, to support the literacy and numeracy skills of targeted pupils.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent 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 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' wellbeing, 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

## 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.

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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