



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Clawdd Offa**

**Ffordd Clawdd Offa  
Prestatyn  
LL19 8AZ**

**Date of inspection: January 2024**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Clawdd Offa

Name of provider	Ysgol Clawdd Offa
Local authority	Denbighshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	N/A
Number of pupils on roll	359
Pupils of statutory school age	277
Number in nursery classes	44
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 23.7%)	37.8%
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 13.2%)	33.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.9%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2008
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/02/2016
Start date of inspection	22/01/2024

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.

## Overview

Ysgol Clawdd Offa is a calm and safe community for pupils and parents. Leaders and staff provide a warm welcome and offer valuable support for families. Pupils are respectful and well mannered and, in most instances, they behave well. While most enjoy learning, not all pupils attend school as regularly they should.

Pupils make good progress in developing their listening and speaking skills, and they talk confidently about the choices they make about how to present their work. In a few classes, there is strong teaching that helps pupils to make progress in most aspects of their learning. However, the overall quality of teaching and assessment is too variable. In the minority of classes where teaching is weak, staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and do not respond well enough to pupils' individual learning needs in the activities they plan. Too often, provision for pupils with additional learning needs, or for those pupils who require extra support, is not effective. As a result of these shortcomings, pupils do not make consistent progress as they move through the school.

For the youngest pupils, staff provide rich and varied learning experiences appropriate to pupils' stages of development. These engage them, develop their independence and offer challenge. However, the school has not ensured that it develops pupils' knowledge and skills systematically, or that all pupils have fair access to learning experiences.

Leaders have led improvements to a few areas of the school's work, such as the development of pupils' reading. However, self-evaluation processes and professional learning have not focused sufficiently on improving the quality of teaching or ensuring the curriculum supports all pupils to thrive.

## Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all pupils have equitable access to inclusive learning experiences that take full account of their individual learning needs and support them to make the best possible progress
- R2 Ensure self-evaluation processes and professional learning for all staff focus on securing improvements in pupils' learning through high-quality teaching
- R3 Improve provision for the systematic development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills
- R4 Improve attendance for all groups of pupils
- R5 Strengthen arrangements to promote pupils' healthy eating and drinking

## What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress about 12 months after the publication of this report.

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Many pupils begin school with skills and understanding below that expected for their age. During their time in nursery and reception, most pupils make strong progress in their learning. However, after this positive start, pupils' progress is inconsistent and, by the time they leave the school, a majority only make satisfactory progress overall in many aspects of their learning. Pupils eligible for free school meals, those with additional learning needs, and groups of pupils who receive extra support for their learning or personal development, often make only limited progress.

An area of strength across the school is the progress many pupils make in developing their listening and speaking skills. Due to adults' effective interactions with pupils, most nursery pupils improve their vocabulary quickly and begin to communicate well with each other, using words and gestures. Staff help them to share their feelings in positive ways in a safe and nurturing environment. By reception, most listen with interest and attention, and are keen to show and talk about what they are learning. Pupils sustain this progress as they move through the school, meaning that, by Year 6, many pupils are confident speakers who contribute well to group discussions. For example, they take turns when discussing the controversial flooding of the village of Tryweryn in 1965, and collaborate effectively to create interview questions for imagined residents as part of a role play activity.

Many pupils are enthusiastic about learning Welsh. They respond well to teachers' instructions and have a sound understanding of basic commands. Across the school, they make good progress in using a range of language patterns so that, by Year 5, pupils generally respond confidently when engaging in simple conversations about themselves. Older pupils also have positive attitudes towards learning other languages, such as French, German and Mandarin. They begin to draw useful comparisons between languages to support their understanding and broaden their vocabulary.

Following focused improvement work to improve pupils' skills, many make suitable or better progress in their reading. The youngest pupils enjoying choosing books to share with adults and each other. Many develop their knowledge of initial sounds and blends well and, by Year 3, they read with appropriate accuracy for their stage of development. Many older pupils read with suitable fluency and expression. They understand the organisational features of non-fiction texts and, when given the opportunity, use their skills successfully to support their learning across the curriculum. In Year 6, a few pupils read novels with challenging themes, such as

dementia, and begin to show appreciation for an author's choice of vocabulary. However, overall, pupils are not secure enough in using a range of reading strategies to support their understanding, and many are unsure of how to improve their reading.

Many young pupils show enthusiasm for writing. Through exploration at an age-appropriate level using a wide range of tools and materials, they develop fine motor skills effectively. By the end of reception, most pupils have made rapid progress and have a secure grasp of writing for an audience. By Year 4, a majority of pupils write appropriately for their ability. They make plausible attempts at spelling unknown words and use basic punctuation correctly. Older pupils plan and redraft their extended writing successfully in a few genres. However, overall, the pace of pupils' progress in writing is too slow, and they rarely apply their skills at an appropriate level in their work across the curriculum. On too many occasions, pupils simply copy text into their books, and standards of handwriting and presentation are too variable.

In general, many pupils make steady progress in developing their number and reasoning skills. In the youngest classes, most understand how to count a group of objects to ten, such as the number of spots on a ladybird, progressing to a knowledge of the value of digits in three-digit numbers in Year 3. By Year 6, many pupils use a range of calculation methods appropriately. However, frequently pupils complete worksheets during their lessons. This means that they do not have sufficient opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems in different contexts, or to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum well enough. Pupils' skills in important aspects of mathematics, such as shape, space and measurement, are underdeveloped.

From a young age, many pupils use digital devices efficiently to take photos, often with narration, and store their written work. Pupils in the youngest classes develop good digital skills and use them purposefully. For example, they program a robot to move around a model of the school they have created. Pupils then build on these coding skills suitably through exploring different programming languages in the older classes. However, overall, pupils make limited progress, as they do not have enough opportunities to develop the range of digital skills as they move from class to class.

Pupils advance their physical skills well in PE lessons, during after-school clubs and by using climbing equipment in the outdoors, which they use to develop confidence and their appreciation of risk. Most pupils' creative skills progress appropriately through regular opportunities to engage with a variety of artistic activities and musical performances.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils feel safe and know who to turn to if they feel worried or upset. They appreciate that adults listen to their views and take these into account when considering decisions that affect them, such as how they timetable the school day. Many pupils talk confidently and enthusiastically about school life, and are proud to be part of a caring community.

Most pupils behave well. They are polite, courteous and respectful towards each other and adults. Many draw successfully on helpful approaches to support their emotional well-being. For instance, in the older classes, pupils make good use of

calming strategies that support them to regulate their own behaviour. Overall, pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and show strong interest in their work. Many listen attentively to teachers' instructions and concentrate well on their tasks during lessons. They collaborate successfully in groups and in pairs, and often make positive contributions to class discussions.

The youngest pupils display good independence. For example, they dress themselves for outdoor activities and use a range of equipment and resources confidently to explore their environment. When learning activities are appropriately challenging, many older pupils persevere well. They use familiar strategies to help them if they become stuck, and make good use of classroom resources, such as 'working walls', before they ask adults for support. In a few classes, where feedback from staff and their peers, is effective, older pupils respond eagerly, making successful improvements to their work. Pupils often enjoy 'challenges' that they complete on their own, or in pairs, and respond positively to having a choice in how they present their learning. However, from Year 1 onwards, these 'challenges' are often pitched at too low a level and do not support pupils to develop a range of independent learning skills, particularly thinking or problem-solving, well enough.

By Year 6, many pupils have a mature understanding of their rights and the rights of others across the world. They have an informed appreciation of how some children's circumstances affect how they live and the barriers they face. For example, they read the story of Malala Yousafzai, the youngest person to achieve the Nobel Peace Prize, and talk animatedly about the courageous stance she took to make sure she attended school. However, while pupils understand the importance of regular attendance, the number of pupils persistently absent, including those eligible for free school meals, continues to be a concern for the school. Pupils with ALN have a notably higher rate of absence compared with other pupils. Although pupils have roles and responsibilities through the recently formed school Senedd, the development of their leadership skills is at an early stage.

Many pupils are aware of how to eat healthily and the importance of keeping hydrated. They make good use of the school's healthy fruit snack trolley and are aware that packed lunches should include healthy choices. However, across the school, pupils often bring sweet snacks and drinks for playtimes and lunchtimes.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school's curriculum aligns appropriately to the principles of Curriculum for Wales and provides a suitable balance across areas of learning and experience for a majority of pupils. However, a minority, including those with additional learning needs and those experiencing poverty, do not have equitable access to an appropriately broad curriculum. They often spend considerable time receiving alternative provision that does not support them well enough to make progress in their learning.

Across the school, staff ensure they reflect pupils' interests and ideas in the learning experiences they provide. This helps to motivate and engage many pupils in their learning. The curriculum reflects the cultural, linguistic and diverse nature of Wales well. Younger pupils visit local areas, such as Prestatyn beach and Morfa Wood. This contributes successfully to their developing sense of belonging and their appreciation of the world around them.

There are beneficial opportunities for older pupils to develop their awareness of careers and the world of work, and to develop life skills. For example, they take part in cookery sessions at the local bakery and engage in enterprise activities, such as planning and hosting an afternoon tea for parents and carers. This real-life context helps them to develop valuable financial, organisational and teamworking skills.

In all classes, staff create welcoming and attractive indoor environments with helpful displays to support learning. The outdoor learning environment for younger pupils has a wide range of well-chosen resources that enables them to explore and learn purposefully through play. Effective learning opportunities in the woodland area support nursery and reception pupils to develop their physical, creative and imaginative skills successfully.

In general, most staff manage pupils' behaviour well. Teachers and support staff have good relationships with pupils that help many to feel relaxed and ready to learn. As a result, pupils are happy and often confident to attempt new learning. In a few classes, where teaching is consistently effective, teachers have strong knowledge of the areas of learning and experience. They identify clear objectives for pupils' learning that build incrementally on their classes' prior achievements. Focusing on specific skills that pupils need to develop, they move learning forward at a good pace and encourage pupils to explain their ideas and extend their thinking, through insightful questioning. However, overall, adults do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not use assessment information well enough to plan for pupils' next steps in learning and focus too much on what pupils will do, rather than what they should learn. In a minority of classes, where teaching is weak, pupils' learning lacks purpose, the pace is too slow, and consequently pupils make limited progress. Too often, adults do not plan suitably to meet the needs of ALN pupils or challenge those who are capable of achieving more.

Provision for the development of pupils' reading is improving. The school offers a stimulating library with a wide selection of books and other reading material. This is helping to develop a positive culture of reading. Staff have been successful in raising the profile of the Welsh language and helping pupils to realise the benefits of being multilingual by exposing them to other international languages. There is good provision for the progressive development of pupils' Welsh language skills. Staff model vocabulary and language patterns well. They integrate languages purposefully into morning routines and, where appropriate, into lessons across the curriculum.

In the nursery and reception classes, staff take an integrated approach to developing pupils' communication, numeracy and digital skills, through use of multi-sensory approaches and authentic contexts for learning. As pupils move through the school, there are a few worthwhile opportunities for them to apply their skills in their work across the curriculum. For example, older pupils use their digital and reading skills appropriately to research information linked to their topic work. However, overall, the school's provision for the systematic development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills and opportunities for them to apply these across the curriculum are underdeveloped.

## Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring community with a supportive and friendly ethos that helps most pupils settle easily into school life and contributes much to their happiness. There are strong arrangements to support pupils' safety and well-being at school and when they are at home. Staff make good use of the whole-school approach to promoting an anti-bullying culture and most take a positive approach to managing pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils have confidence that staff will act in their best interests.

The school has worked appropriately to implement the requirements of ALN reform. It has suitable procedures in place to identify pupils with ALN and to involve them in the planning process. The ALN co-ordinator collaborates with staff, parents, and external services, when appropriate, to design support programmes for pupils. For example, the school works effectively with the Occupational Health service to provide successful specialist input for identified pupils to improve their fine motor skills. However, too often, pupils' learning or well-being targets are not sufficiently precise, and individual development plans do not focus well enough on what success will look like for each pupil. This makes it difficult for staff to provide suitable support and to assess pupils' progress. As a result, the school's provision for pupils with ALN and, for those who receive extra learning or well-being support, does not always meet their needs well enough. In general, communication between teachers and support staff about the learning needs and progress of individuals and groups of pupils receiving support is not strong enough.

Teachers provide an interesting range of opportunities for pupils to understand issues relating to equality, inclusion and diversity. For example, older pupils have a well-considered understanding of different types of families and loving relationships. They challenge stereotypes, discuss scenarios with ease and respect, and emphasise that it is perfectly all right to be different. The school's provision helps many pupils to appreciate and understand the needs and rights of others, both locally and as members of a diverse world. For example, older pupils learn about the Windrush Generation and discuss these circumstances maturely.

There are suitably planned opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of Welsh heritage, culture and the creative arts, through their involvement in events, such as the 'Urdd World Cup Jambori'. Pupils join their peers across Wales online to sing Welsh songs, and develop a range of beneficial musical skills in samba workshops with support from visiting musicians. Staff provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy lifestyles and to develop their physical and wider skills through an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, crafts, languages (German and Mandarin), reading, chess and choir.

School assemblies provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to reflect on their beliefs and values. Staff enable pupils to make suitable contributions to the life of their community and these experiences help pupils to respect others and develop empathy and compassion. For instance, pupils visit a local residential home for the elderly to sing carols at Christmas time and hold fundraising events, with the support of local businesses, to help those in need. However, in general, provision to support pupils to contribute to the life of the school through its leadership groups is limited.



The school has appropriate strategies in place to promote good pupil attendance, including daily monitoring, regular communication with parents and follow-up work, with support from outside agencies. However, the impact of the school's work to improve attendance is inconsistent.

## **Leadership and management**

Leaders provide sensitive and supportive leadership for the school. The headteacher is committed to ensuring that Ysgol Clawdd Offa is a safe and happy place for pupils and staff. Through the opportunities and learning experiences it provides, the school aims to develop its pupils as caring individuals who lead successful and fulfilling lives. It is effective in ensuring a strong culture of safeguarding for all pupils. However, there are important shortcomings in leadership, which mean that pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders establish strong partnerships with parents, carers and the wider school community. The school knows its families well and communication with them is good. It provides many beneficial opportunities for parents to visit classrooms to engage in learning activities alongside their children and to look at their work during informal social events. Parents appreciate the chance to talk to staff regularly about their children's progress and to find out about the school's curriculum. Leaders provide compassionate support for those families experiencing poverty. This includes provision of a food bank that parents access during school holidays, as well as during term time. Families also benefit from a parenting support programme that offers them the valuable opportunity to share experiences and seek help from health professionals and other practitioners for their own emotional well-being, as well as their children's.

Professional relationships between leaders and staff are strong. Leaders value the contribution staff make towards ensuring that the school is a welcoming community for its pupils. Together, they have been successful in establishing an effective team ethos. This has helped to bring consistency to aspects of the school's work, such as how teachers plan for pupils' learning experiences, the organisation of classrooms and resources, and the sharing of expectations for pupils' behaviour. As a result, the school is a calm and orderly environment in which many pupils develop positive attitudes to their learning.

In general, staff have an appropriate understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Leaders encourage them to engage in professional learning that supports the school's priorities and their own personal career aspirations. Within the local cluster of schools, there is a well-established culture of collaboration. This helps teachers to reflect on their professional practice, to work together on new initiatives and consider how they might improve provision in their own classrooms. In particular, staff value 'professional dialogue' meetings, where they meet with teachers from corresponding year groups in other schools to look at pupils' work, and discuss common areas for improvement, such as developing pupils' ability to use feedback to progress their own learning. However, professional learning does not always meet individuals' development needs well enough to enable them to carry out their roles and responsibilities for teaching and pastoral support successfully. In addition, leaders do not monitor the work of learning support assistants closely enough or provide

sufficient developmental feedback to help them to meet pupils' well-being or learning needs consistently.

There are useful processes that involve all staff and a wide range of partners, including pupils and parents, in reviewing the school's work. The school identifies a manageable number of areas for improvement and takes appropriate account of national priorities in its strategic planning, such as the development of pupils' Welsh language skills. Often, leaders set clear aims and actions for the school's improvement work, with realistic timescales. They allocate resources and responsibilities suitably, and staff responsible for leading these improvement activities carry out agreed actions diligently. Subsequently, leaders work appropriately with staff to review what the school has achieved and consider whether further developments are needed. In a few instances, they check that improvements have been sustained over time. A good example of this is the improvement to the indoor and outdoor learning environments for the youngest pupils, which have had a positive impact on their communication, physical and independent learning skills.

Despite the varied calendar of self-evaluation activities that provide leaders with first-hand evidence about many aspects of the school's work, leaders do not have a secure understanding of the school's most important areas for development. This is because monitoring processes do not focus well enough on identifying the impact actions have on pupils' learning, progress and skills development. In general, leaders' evaluations are overly positive and do not identify or address variability in the quality of teaching or shortcomings in the school's curriculum. Leaders do not pay close enough attention to monitoring the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils' personal development or the progress of pupils who receive learning support.

Governors are supportive and experienced. They visit the school regularly and contribute helpfully to school improvement priorities, for example by supporting the remodelling of the school library and working with staff to develop strategies to improve pupils' attitudes to reading. Prior to the pandemic, they gathered useful first-hand evidence of pupils' learning and progress through activities, such as learning walks, to help them fulfil their role as critical friends. However, they have been slow to resume these and this makes it difficult for them to question and challenge leaders about the standards pupils achieve.

Leaders and governors monitor the school's finances appropriately and take action to balance the school's immediate and longer-term needs during a time of economic uncertainty. However, during the inspection, inspectors brought an issue of non-compliance with statutory requirements in staffing arrangements to leaders' and governors' attention. While the school uses the pupil development grant suitably to provide support for eligible pupils to progress their literacy, numeracy and life skills, arrangements to monitor and evaluate its impact are not robust. Governors do not ensure that arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking are effective enough.

Overall, since its last inspection, the school has struggled to secure improvements in important areas of its work, such as ensuring high-quality teaching for all pupils.

## 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

## 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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