



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

A report on

Burry Port Community Primary

**Elkington Park
Burry Port
Carmarthenshire
SA16 0AU**

Date of inspection: May 2023

by

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

About Burry Port Community Primary

Name of provider	Burry Port Community Primary
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	213
Pupils of statutory school age	187
Number in nursery classes	26
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 23.0%)	38.8%
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 16.1%)	21%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.5%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	4%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2013
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	11/11/2014
Start date of inspection	22/05/2023
*	

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

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Burry Port Primary school is a caring, inclusive school at the heart of its community. The school collaborates well with all staff, parents, governors and members of the community, and this has helped to shape the school vision and motto “Guiding Brighter Futures.” Nearly all pupils feel well supported by staff, and many older pupils undertake their leadership roles with enthusiasm and dedication. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) including those in the specialist provision classes, make good progress from their starting points, especially in literacy and numeracy. However, provision to develop pupils’ Welsh oracy skills across the school is inconsistent.

The school actively engages with a range of external partners to improve support for pupils, share practice and to develop provision. Parents and the governing body are very supportive of the school and value the information they receive. There is a strong culture of safeguarding and the school effectively supports vulnerable pupils, thereby fostering an inclusive environment.

Learning is particularly successful where the teaching and feedback to pupils are purposeful and challenge pupils to perform at their best. This helps many pupils to make strong progress in developing their listening, speaking, reading and number skills. However, the quality of teaching and feedback is too variable across the school. Overall, teachers do not always plan activities which are engaging or matched to the needs of the pupils in the older classes and this tends to lead to low level disruption.

Leaders share responsibilities effectively among staff and provide beneficial opportunities for professional learning. This contributes to a progressive whole-school ethos, where staff and pupils feel valued for their contributions to the life of the school. A majority of self-evaluation activities are robust and identify well a range of strengths and areas for improvement. However, leaders do not always focus well enough on specific areas for improvement, such as to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching across the school.

Recommendations

- R1 Address the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and provide appropriate challenges for pupils to achieve to the best of their ability
- R2 Ensure that monitoring activities focus on improving the quality of teaching and assessment
- R3 Improve pupils’ Welsh language skills in the older classes and pupils’ digital skills across the school

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

On entry to school, many pupils' skills are below the expected level for their age. As they move through the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), those eligible for free school meals and those in the specialist provision classes make good progress from their starting points.

Many pupils develop their early reading skills well. In reception, they develop a rapid understanding of letters and sounds, and read simple words, such as pot and mop, confidently and by Year 1, they use their knowledge of phonics successfully to build words. Pupils in Year 4 discuss what they have read and make suitable predictions about what may happen next. They use their skills such as deduction successfully to 'read between the lines'. Most Year 6 pupils are confident readers who demonstrate a clear understanding of the complex texts they read.

Many pupils' writing skills develop successfully during their time at the school, and they apply these skills purposefully in a range of contexts. Many of the youngest pupils develop their mark making skills successfully using a range of media such as sand. By the time they reach Year 2 pupils develop their writing skills well and cover a range of genres, for example when writing a persuasive text encouraging tourists to visit Burry Port to see the "sensational sandy beaches" and the "wonderful, historic lighthouse". Many pupils in Year 3 write interesting accounts of the causes and effects of river pollution, using subject specific vocabulary correctly, such as 'environment', 'habitats', and 'chemicals'. By Year 6, many pupils engage the reader very well with their writing. For example, they use motivational phrases effectively when describing why Wales is unique. However, a few pupils in the older classes do not have a clear understanding of how to improve their writing and they do not always present their work neatly.

Most pupils in nursery and reception develop their speaking and listening skills quickly, learning new vocabulary for example, when engaging effectively in role play as they plan and construct their lighthouses, using a range of materials they have chosen. By the time they reach Year 2, pupils combine their speaking and listening skills effectively to collaborate on tasks, where they relate sensitively to each other. Many pupils in the older classes share information successfully and pupils in Year 6 work well together and listen to each other purposefully, valuing what others say. In the Specialist provision, relevant visual and communication systems are in place across both classes and are used well to support learning. As a result, pupils make good progress. For example, a pupil was able to ask for help to put honey on toast with a visual prompt.

Most pupils develop a good range of mathematical skills. In reception, many count objects accurately to ten, such as when counting toy dinosaurs and by Year 2 many pupils play counting games and estimate numbers to 100. Many older pupils have a good understanding of place value and use this to order numbers, including those with decimals, accurately. They develop appropriate skills using shape, space and measure and are beginning to use these skills purposefully across the curriculum and in everyday situations. For example, Year 6 pupils use a trundle wheel to measure the dimensions of a proposed flower bed accurately. Many describe their thinking and reasoning well and explain how they have reached conclusions, for example when investigating how and why exercise affects resting pulse rate.

Younger pupils develop their Welsh language skills quickly and effectively. In reception, pupils are confident in asking and answering simple questions about the weather independently. By Year 2, many pupils have a good recall of a wide range of useful sentences and phrases. As they move into Year 3, pupils' progress in using the Welsh language slows. A majority of older pupils find it difficult to ask and respond to simple questions in Welsh without support and, overall, their use of Welsh is underdeveloped.

Younger pupils create simple databases with support from the teacher and use simple writing programmes to present their work. In a very few examples, pupils use digital technologies creatively to support their literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. For example, older pupils are beginning to populate spreadsheets and create simple presentations related to their topic. However, opportunities to use and apply pupils' digital skills in a much broader range of contexts are limited.

Nearly all younger pupils develop their creative skills well and apply them to a range of independent learning experiences. For example, Year 2 pupils use picture frames made from twigs to create a scene using natural material and use this as a stimulus for their story writing. Most pupils develop their creative skills effectively as they move through the school, for example while taking part in creative workshops relating to Burry Port lighthouse. However, older pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their critical thinking skills across the curriculum well enough. Many pupils develop their physical skills consistently and use the school yards and outdoor space effectively for physical development, for example in nursery and reception pupils use tandem tricycles to develop their gross motor skills. Many older pupils have good spatial awareness when playing games and taking part in sporting activities and in physical education lessons.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Most pupils show pride in their school and feel safe within its inclusive and caring ethos. They feel that staff in the school listen to their views beneficially when considering decisions that affect them. Many pupils' behaviour is good, and they are courteous and welcoming to adults and visitors. They show care and consideration for each other and show respect for the contributions of other pupils.

Many pupils are developing well as capable and aspirational learners. They have a positive attitude towards learning, show interest in their work and talk confidently and enthusiastically about school life. When the work is matched to their needs, many pupils listen attentively to teachers' instructions and concentrate well on their work

during lessons. They collaborate successfully in groups and in pairs, and many make positive contributions to class discussions. However, when work is not suitably matched to their needs there are instances of low-level disruptive behaviour, which impact on pupils' learning.

Nearly all pupils can draw on strategies to support their emotional well-being effectively. For example, many older pupils can discuss a variety of coping mechanisms when faced with tasks that might be more challenging. As a result, many pupils in the oldest class develop confidence and resilience when persevering with their work. In the early years and specialist provision, nearly all pupils make very good use of their visual timetables to explain their daily routines. They check-in every morning sharing their feelings with staff members who promptly intervene if pupils are feeling fretful for any reason, thereby relieving them of their anxiety.

Nearly all learners are developing as ethical and informed citizens through their awareness of fairness, the way they show care towards others, and their knowledge of children's rights. For example, older pupils can maturely discuss the inequalities in 1960's American society. This increases pupils' awareness of the importance of their contributions to create a caring society. They very much welcome pupils who attend the specialist provision classes when integrating into their own mainstream activities.

Many pupils participate in decision making about their learning experiences. They express imaginative opinions when offering ideas that are integrated effectively into the school's curriculum. In the younger years pupils respond enthusiastically, such as when considering the everyday needs of Buddy, the new class hamster using specialist language successfully and developing their oracy skills.

Pupils take an active part in the life of the school by taking on beneficial leadership roles through a range of inclusive pupil groups. They fulfil their responsibilities skilfully and conscientiously. Representatives undertake their work proudly and make a valuable contribution to the school's life and work. For example, the Sports Ambassadors arranged a timetable of activities on the playground to enhance pupils' experiences during playtime.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and can discuss the benefits of staying hydrated. They understand the benefit of physical exercise on their health and well-being, such as taking part in a block of swimming lessons during the summer term. Most older pupils have a sound grasp of the changes that happen to them during puberty and can discuss these changes confidently. The younger pupils access the school's outdoor areas enthusiastically and embrace their outdoor learning experiences with pleasure. Many older pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities that promote their physical development and mental well-being effectively, such as attending the after-school sports club. Many pupils respond positively to feedback from adults and peers. However due to a lack of opportunity and inconsistency in the quality of feedback, older pupils do not know how to improve their work well enough.

Nearly all pupils have a comprehensive understanding of the need to be careful when using the internet and remind each other sensibly that they do not share passwords.

Many pupils develop well as enterprising, creative contributors by responding positively to the variety of local entrepreneurs who visit the school to share their experiences. Local banking experts help to raise their awareness of making good money choices in the future and helps them to explore problem-solving tasks in a practical way, thereby developing useful skills for life.

Teaching and learning experiences

Across the school, staff actively establish and maintain positive relationships with pupils. The school has developed a clear vision for the curriculum, involving all stakeholders. This curriculum, which is based on the local area, offers a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of the community. Teachers use places of interest effectively to inspire learning, for example, a visit to the local farm helps pupils develop their understanding of animal care. However, in some classes, opportunities to explore the diverse nature of Wales as a country are not yet fully developed and pupils' knowledge, skills and experience from the local environment are not always extended to the national and world stage. The school's provision for personal and social education successfully promotes pupils' understanding of their own well-being and fosters respect and understanding of those around them effectively. Most pupils are encouraged to collaborate, support each other with their learning and use independent learning strategies to overcome challenges.

In the younger classes, staff provide a wide range of stimulating indoor activities and utilise the enhanced provision outdoors to encourage pupils' enthusiasm and collaborative skills effectively. For example, pupils in Year 2 actively participate in creating boats using natural materials to test buoyancy. As a result, most pupils confidently engage in their learning. Most teachers support the development of pupils' numeracy and literacy skills well, across the curriculum. A notable example of this is the teaching of financial literacy across the school. The Welsh language is modelled effectively by teachers in the younger years. However, this is not suitably built upon in many older classes. Many teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply their digital skills across the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not improve their ICT skills well enough as they move through the school.

Staff in the specialist provision provide stimulating and engaging learning experiences for all pupils. Sensory sessions provide rich opportunities for pupils to be curious, develop their fine motor skills and interact with staff to develop their personal and social skills.

In the younger classes, teachers plan explicitly to enhance oracy skills, encouraging nearly all pupils to use ambitious vocabulary. For example, pupils use descriptive language and similes to describe the beach before creating artwork to represent their ideas. Teachers and support staff generally ask suitably thought-provoking questions, fostering critical thinking and encouraging pupils to ask their own questions. Many staff intervene at appropriate points, enabling pupils to reflect on their work and make the necessary adjustments. In the older classes, teachers provide general feedback on the accuracy of pupils' work, and occasionally on the quality of the content. However, written feedback does not always provide clear guidance on how to improve their work further. At times, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough and they do not challenge pupils appropriately to make the progress they could during independent learning tasks.

The quality of teaching in the younger classes is good, however in the older classes, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Where teaching is at its best, teachers plan engaging learning opportunities based on pupils' prior knowledge and experience. For example, Year 6 pupils produced empathetic pieces of writing about Victorian children. However, in many of the older classes, learning is not set at an appropriate level of challenge for the pupils, which results in some pupils not making adequate progress during the lesson and leads to low level disruptive behaviour. Across the school, in instances where learning is less effective, the pace of teaching is too slow, and a minority of teachers do not always maximise the use of time available. For example, they often spend too long introducing activities or keeping pupils waiting passively to learn. When teaching is good, planned activities impacts positively on pupil progress. However, in the older classes, teachers do not engage sufficiently well with pupils learning activities to correct misconceptions and support ways forward. As a result, many pupils are uncertain about the success of their completed tasks or how to improve further.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring community where staff encourage pupils to contribute positively to its supportive ethos. The beneficial relationships between staff and pupils help develop a sense of belonging. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils feel safe and well cared for. Teachers and support staff understand pupils' needs well and they respond with sensitivity to the pupils' emotional and social needs. For example, across the school, the check-in system at the start of the school day helps to settle pupils for learning if they feel anxious or vulnerable.

All pupils have a 'one page profile' which helps strengthen the school's understanding of pupils' needs. This supportive and warm atmosphere helps nearly all pupils settle easily to school life on entry and contributes significantly to their overall well-being.

The school provides comprehensive support for pupils identified as having additional learning needs (ALN). The ALN co-ordinator, along with all teaching staff ensure that there is swift identification, tracking and support for individuals and groups of pupils. This support is accomplished through a range of programmes tailored effectively to pupils' needs. The school works imaginatively with outside agencies to enhance the ALN provision and provide timely support. For example, staff work well with the local authority speech and language therapist to assess the needs of pupils with speech and language difficulties and implement programmes of support. Staff have worked effectively to develop positive partnerships and supportive relationships with parents of pupils with ALN. Parents value the support their children receive. These arrangements ensure that targeted pupils make good progress in relation to their abilities.

The care and support provided by staff in the specialist provision is excellent. The school provides personalised learning programmes and authentic learning experiences for pupils attending the provision, which match their needs comprehensively. These have a very positive impact on their individual progress and achievements. Staff in the specialist provision work effectively with the staff in mainstream classes to facilitate pupils' integration into the daily life of the school.

Most older pupils, including those from different groups across the school such as those with ALN and pupils who are eligible for free school meals, take on leadership roles as members on a variety of worthwhile groups. This broadens their understanding of the importance of active citizenship and the school successfully cultivates opportunities to participate in decision-making at a school level. For example, members of the School Council successfully petitioned school leaders to refine lunchtime arrangements to improve pupils' experience during the lunch break.

The school celebrates its Welsh heritage positively by providing an interesting range of visits and visitors to support the curriculum and engage pupils in their learning. This includes a visit to Castell Henllys Hill Fort where pupils learn how to bake bread and build part of an Iron Age round house as part of their theme 'Through the Ages'. Pupils discuss and agree the names for their classes following visits to places of historical interest in the locality as part of their Cynefin project.

Through visits to a local café and by arranging for local business people to visit the school, pupils develop a beneficial understanding of the world of work. This helps them prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life. As part of their one-page profiles, pupils have the opportunity to think of what they want to be when they grow up, thereby raising their expectations and their aspirations even at a young age.

Through the school's work with an overseas 'Face behind the Mask' project, pupils are encouraged to use their imagination and engage creatively with partner schools from Rome and Murcia. This contributes effectively towards their creative skills and their ability to work as a team.

The school has a range of strategies to monitor attendance and works with families to identify underlying issues with lateness and absenteeism. The school has a robust approach to the safeguarding of pupils and address any concerns as a matter of priority. They work with multiple agencies to support the wellbeing of pupils and their families. Staff understand the school's protocols for safeguarding. Leaders ensure that the school site and its grounds, which it shares with a Flying Start nursery, are a safe place for pupils.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides thoughtful leadership with a clear focus on developing the well-being of pupils across the school. The school motto, "Guiding Brighter Futures", shapes the vision for school improvement, which the headteacher shares effectively with all stakeholders. The deputy headteacher and members of the senior leadership team support the headteacher purposefully. They work well as a team and fulfil their roles and responsibilities appropriately. For example, they lead departmental teams to develop a shared understanding of ALN reform. Together with the headteacher, they provide clear strategic direction for the school and set appropriate professional standards. The whole staff work well as a team to ensure that the well-being of pupils and staff is everyone's foremost priority, resulting in a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school.

Governors are experienced, skilled, and very supportive of the work of the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They use their individual expertise

effectively to promote what is best for pupils. They are well informed and have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They gather first-hand evidence through activities, such as listening to learners and learning walks, to help them carry out their roles as critical friends. They value the work of the whole staff and are particularly proud of the role they play in supporting the needs of the local community. Governors make appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking and support leaders to manage finances effectively in line with the school's priorities. For example, they use grants to pay for fruit for all pupils at snack time. Leaders ensure that the pupil development grant is used to benefit eligible pupils, for example through employing a number of staff to support learning. Communication with and support for families is strong. Parents are appreciative of the information and support they receive, for example, nursery staff make home visits to every family, so they get to know the pupil and parents well prior to them starting school. The staff are visible and approachable and parents value this. Overall, there is a strong culture of openness and support between school staff and parents.

There are suitable arrangements to evaluate the work of the school and to identify areas for improvement. Leaders at all levels have taken a lead role in assessing their areas of responsibility and have contributed effectively to a whole school evaluation of progress towards the implementation of a Curriculum for Wales. A majority of these self-evaluation activities are robust and identify well a range of strengths and areas for improvement. For example, they identify clearly when teachers do not give sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum. However, leaders do not always focus well enough on specific areas for improvement, such as to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching in the older classes. Leaders provide useful opportunities for staff to reflect upon and improve their own practice. For example, staff have recently engaged in a programme of professional learning, where they use a coaching approach to lesson observations. Overall, however, leaders have not always focused sharply enough on those aspects of teaching that have the most impact on pupils' progress. As a result, the quality of teaching across the school is too variable and improvements are not always made quickly enough. Overall, the school's improvement priorities link well to the key messages from the self-evaluation process. For example, leaders recognised the need to improve younger pupils' oracy and reading skills and provided valuable professional learning for staff to attend beneficial courses.

Leaders provide staff with relevant professional learning that is matched well with the school priorities and with national initiatives, such as the Curriculum for Wales. As a result, most staff have suitable opportunities to develop their professional understanding in line with improvement initiatives and curriculum developments. However, opportunities to share the specialist knowledge and skills of staff within the specialist resource across the wider school are under-developed.

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)

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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