



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

A report on

Ysgol Croes Atti

**Chester Road
Flint
CH6 5DU**

**Deeside
Plymouth Street
Shotton
CH5 1JD**

Date of inspection: October 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Croes Atti

Name of provider	Ysgol Croes Atti
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	269
Pupils of statutory school age	197
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	39
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 23.0%)</i>	32.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 16.1%)</i>	19.8%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	12.0
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	
Date of headteacher appointment	January 2015
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/09/2015
Start date of inspection	16/10/2023
This school has two sites. One site is located in the town of Flint and the other in the town of Shotton, Deeside.	

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from 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

Most pupils make sound progress in a range of skills during their time at Ysgol Croes Atti. A prominent strength of this school is the way in which enthusiastic leaders and staff work together successfully between the school's two sites, in Flint and Shotton in Deeside, to develop confident Welsh-medium pupils. The work of the staff to ensure pupils' Welsh language development is commendable.

Leaders know the school well. This includes identifying the needs of pupils, the community and strengths and areas for improvement well. With this information to hand, they set a clear direction for the school and operate strategically by setting sensible priorities and strengthening provision. As a result, there is robust provision in place to support pupils' well-being and improve standards. Provision to ensure care, support and guidance for pupils is very robust and succeeds in maintaining and strengthening the well-being of all of the school's pupils.

The good teaching and planning by teachers to provide an engaging curriculum and learning experiences ensures that pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Through this, pupils feel that they belong to the school and are keen to complete their work and persevere with it diligently.

The school's work and focus to develop pupils as independent learners usually have clear successes. They are given opportunities to influence the life and work of the school greatly, contribute to what they would like to learn and are usually given opportunities to guide their learning in lessons sensibly. However, a few aspects of teaching and planning prevent pupils from developing independent learning skills of the highest standard. The result of this can be seen in fewer opportunities for them to write at length and freely, for example.

Recommendations

- R1 Sharpen teaching and planning to build on best practice in terms of developing pupils' independent learning skills
- R2 Increase opportunities for pupils to master their extended writing skills

What happens next

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

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, many pupils have literacy, numeracy and social skills that correspond to their stage of development or are slightly lower than expected. During their time at the school, many make sound progress in a wide range of skills. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who speak Welsh or English as an additional language make good progress against their personal targets.

On the whole, pupils' literacy skills develop soundly. Although not many pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes, during their time at the school, their acquisition of the Welsh language is a very positive feature.

A prominent strength is the way in which most pupils communicate clearly and productively with each other and adults, particularly in Welsh. They speak maturely when completing tasks and listen carefully to the contributions of others, for example when planning a speech about their dreams based on the speech by Martin Luther King. By the end of their time at the school, most pupils have very sound oral skills in both languages.

Across the curriculum, most pupils use their reading skills effectively to discover more about their themes. In the foundation learning classes, many pupils identify familiar words when reading. They use a suitable range of strategies to read and understand unfamiliar texts. By the top of the school, most pupils read clearly and with expression, and a few change their tone of voice very skilfully to imitate a character from their story. The oldest pupils use their reading skills well in both languages. They demonstrate a sound understanding of different texts. They are able to express an opinion and gather information about a particular subject from more than one source meaningfully.

Most of the youngest pupils develop early writing skills successfully by experimenting and making marks with various resources. They begin to write familiar words, such as 'car' and 'bws' when writing what transport is in their town. As they mature, they build on their writing skills effectively in a suitable range of genres, for example when recalling previous knowledge to re-write a story about St Winifred and using rich Welsh vocabulary. Many pupils across the school are keen to use new vocabulary and apply it effectively in their written work. Most of the oldest pupils write in different genres and use purposeful adjectives in their written pieces to give appropriate consideration to the audience. However, on a few occasions, the over-use of worksheets, closed tasks and over-direction from staff hinders pupils' progress to achieve highly enough. This limits the opportunities for pupils to master their extended and free writing skills at higher levels.

Across the school, most pupils develop their numeracy skills soundly. The youngest pupils begin to recognise numbers and use their numeracy skills in different contexts, for example by sorting 2D shapes correctly. By Year 2, they develop a good range of mathematics skills and make sound progress, for example by using different equipment to estimate the amount of water needed to make a cup of tea for Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother. As pupils move through the school, they build on

their skills beneficially; for example, many in Years 3 and 4 allocate numbers by four-digit place value confidently. By Years 5 and 6, many use their numeracy skills to calculate the place value of decimals suitably and match 3D shapes to their relevant nets successfully. Most pupils across the school apply their number skills regularly in relevant and engaging learning activities across the curriculum.

Most pupils develop their digital skills purposefully. From an early age, they begin to use these skills constructively in a rich range of learning experiences across the curriculum, for example by using apps to make characters speak and by giving instructions to a programmable toy. Most older pupils use technology well to record and support their work, for example to communicate, present information and save their work. However, only a few pupils develop their advanced digital skills to solve problems, handle data through spreadsheets and model.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are happy and proud of their school. They feel safe within its familial, inclusive and caring ethos. Nearly all pupils know whom to approach if they have any concerns and are confident that staff will listen and deal with any issues appropriately, for example should any allegations of bullying arise. They behave very well in their classrooms, while moving calmly around the school and during break time. Nearly all pupils are friendly and polite and treat their peers, visitors and staff with a high level of respect. They greet them welcomingly and hold the door for them voluntarily, for example.

Most pupils have a good awareness of the importance of keeping the mind and body healthy. They youngest pupils go to the '*Hafan Heddwch*' in the outside learning area to calm down, if necessary. As they move through the school, many pupils discuss their feelings on a daily basis, which contributes effectively to supporting their confidence and emotional well-being. They use the '*Sut wyt ti heddiw*' ('How are you today') charts and the '*Blwch bwrw bol*' worry box purposefully, knowing that staff will deal with any concerns in a timely and sensitive manner.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and how to keep fit. For example, Year 3 pupils conduct an experiment on the amount of sugar in different drinks. They take part diligently in extra-curricular activities during and after school, such as swimming and sports clubs.

Many pupils have a sound understanding of their rights and responsibilities as global citizens. The '*Y Byd a'i Bethau*' council presents the importance of recycling to the school's pupils and then shares advice with parents by e-mail. They have also contributed food and various products to the local food bank. These initiatives help them to develop as ethical and responsible citizens.

Most pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning. From an early age, they settle quickly to choose learning activities in different areas. Most engage purposefully with their tasks, concentrate well, avoid distractions and complete their tasks without fuss. They persevere with their tasks and work well together, respecting the ideas of other pupils. Most pupils listen carefully and respond thoughtfully to their ideas.

Most pupils respond strongly to opportunities to plan jointly and influence what they would like to learn. For example, they share their interests and aspirations in a variety of ways when contributing orally to mind maps or by using technology at the beginning of a termly theme. As a result, most pupils have an interest and very positive attitudes when engaging with their learning. However, in some activities in a minority of classes, pupils are over-reliant on instructions from teachers and do not make enough decisions about how to organise and present their work. At times, this limits the opportunities for pupils to think for themselves.

During lessons, many pupils respond appropriately to effective questioning and oral feedback from teachers. In these circumstances, they know how to improve their work. Many pupils appreciate and recognise teachers' consistent feedback strategies. They reflect appropriately on their learning and check if their work meets the expectations set at the beginning of the task. Pupils are also proud to receive praise and written feedback from teachers, although pupils are not always given appropriate opportunities to respond to the feedback to move their learning forward.

Pupils are given valuable opportunities to join groups that are responsible for different aspects of school life. The group members speak skilfully about what they achieve and take their roles seriously. For example, the 'Digital Wizards' promote online safety by placing posters around the school and linking it to the right of children to be safe. They have also established a lunchtime club for pupils to practise their digital skills. As a result, most pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online, including not sharing their passwords or talking to strangers online.

Pupils' attendance rates are improving gradually since the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the absence rate of pupils who are eligible for free school meals remains slightly lower in comparison with other pupils.

Teaching and learning experiences

Teachers provide learning experiences that inspire pupils. They have a good understanding of the curriculum and plan effectively across the classes. As a result, staff share their expertise across the curriculum successfully. Activities are planned purposefully and build gradually on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences to ensure progression in their learning.

Leaders and staff have worked diligently to nurture and develop pupils to become independent learners. They plan engaging opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills and trust them to learn within the attractive areas across the school. A good example is the opportunities for pupils to become independent and creative learners by completing purposeful challenges. Overall, this has had a very positive effect on developing pupils' independence from their starting points. However, at times, there is a tendency for staff to over-direct learning and the over-use of worksheets and closed tasks impedes the school's intentions to develop highly independent learners. For example, on occasion, this leads to a lack of opportunities for pupils to think independently and record their work in a variety of ways of their own choosing or to write extensively enough.

The school's curriculum and provision to support pupils' linguistic development is very effective and has a positive influence on many pupils' speaking and listening

skills, including those who are new to the Welsh language education sector. This provision ensures that the curriculum meets the needs of nearly all pupils and reflects the context of the school community effectively. An obvious strength of teaching is the way in which staff promote and model the use of the Welsh language. By doing so, they maintain pupils' positive attitudes towards the use of the Welsh language. As a result, most develop and build very effective Welsh speaking skills.

Teachers make their classes stimulating and engaging places in which all groups of pupils are able to learn productively. There are interesting and useful corners across the school that engage pupils' interest and include a good range of resources to support learning. Teachers and support staff create a productive and homely learning environment, which develops positive attitudes among pupils towards their learning. They manage their classes in an orderly manner, set a good pace for lessons and ensure that the range of activities that are available to pupils engage their interest.

Teachers and assistants know the pupils well and there is an excellent working relationship between them. They are caring towards them and provide timely and purposeful support to improve their skills and ensure their well-being. Across the school, assistants support learning appropriately. They treat all pupils equally and promote diversity well, for example by supporting newcomers to settle quickly in their new school. This contributes wonderfully towards the sense of family that flows throughout the school community and provides a support learning environment for all pupils.

Within lessons, teachers use skilful questioning to promote pupils' understanding and intervene at appropriate times to provide effective support to each group of pupils. They provide pupils with valuable and constructive oral feedback. This gives them clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work during lessons. Teachers also provide written feedback that celebrates pupils' successes and often corrects their grammar and punctuation. However, the quality of written feedback to provide pupils with useful direction to improve their work is inconsistent and there are not regular enough opportunities for them to respond in a sufficiently productive way.

Care, support and guidance

Positive working relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves are a strong feature at Ysgol Croes Atti. Staff know the pupils, their backgrounds and the local community very well. They place a high priority on pupils' well-being and respond sensitively to their emotional and social needs. Across the school, there are wonderful corners within the classrooms, for example the '*Ardal Anadlu*' breathing area, which encourages pupils to relax and use a range of objects to calm down. Beneficial intervention sessions support pupils' emotional well-being in a valuable way. This contributes significantly to their happiness and social skills, and the supportive environment helps pupils to familiarise themselves easily with school life.

The school has successful procedures to track and monitor pupils' progress. Staff identify and earmark pupils who need additional support and ensure that they make effective progress. They provide specific support programmes for literacy and numeracy skills and for pupils' emotional well-being. By doing so, they evaluate the

effect of interventions carefully and refine and rearrange useful steps for improvement, which enables pupils to continue to make good progress over time.

Staff work closely with families and external agencies to create effective support plans for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). This support, alongside regular communication with parents, has a positive effect on their progress and well-being. The school also works effectively with external agencies and internal staff. They provide specialist support for parents and carers through weekly support sessions, for example to advise them on the basics of effective sleep, in addition to holding therapeutic art and craft workshops. This strengthens the relationship between the school and the home and has a positive effect on co-operation and links for the benefit of the family and the child.

The school provides a variety of opportunities for pupils to keep fit through purposeful activities, which include visiting a local park, the school grounds and holding valuable sessions that promote mental and physical reflection. Year 2 pupils, for example, go to the forest on a sensory journey to immerse themselves in nature as part of their theme work. The school has purposeful arrangements for eating and drinking healthily and pupils understand what they need to do to keep fit. The school has provided a water fountain for pupils to encourage them to keep themselves hydrated during the day.

Pupils are given opportunities to develop their expressive skills and embrace Welsh culture and history effectively, for example by composing and performing a song with a famous Welsh musician. This develops pupils' creative skills and self-confidence and makes a beneficial contribution towards nurturing pupils' respect and pride in their locality. The school celebrates its Welsh heritage positively through field visits to support pupils' work. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, go on a trip around the town to identify natural and man-made features and develop their literacy skills purposefully by writing a formal letter to the town council to propose improvements.

The school provides opportunities that contribute towards developing pupils' spiritual and ethical beliefs and helps them to investigate issues relating to tolerance and respect for others. Following an imaginary hot chair session with Martin Luther King, Year 3 and 4 pupils develop moving speeches about dreams of a fair and equal world for all.

All pupils have equal access to all aspects of the school's provision and have the same opportunities to participate fully in school life. Pupils have an increasing range of opportunities to develop leadership skills and prepare for adult life, for example through their membership of the school council and curricular councils. Members of these groups contribute effectively to whole-school improvements, such as the Welsh Council's actions to promote the use of the Welsh language across the school. Overall, this contributes successfully to sharpening most pupils' Welsh language skills, and encourages them to become proud and confident Welsh speakers.

The school has appropriate systems for monitoring pupils' attendance. They work effectively with welfare agencies to promote good attendance. The school is aware of the need to continue to focus on reducing the gap between the attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and their peers. It has effective arrangements to contact the home when a pupil is absent. There is a strong culture of safeguarding

across the school. Its arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's effective leadership sets a clear strategic direction for the school's development. He leads a successful team of leaders and staff who have succeeded in working with stakeholders to create a shared vision. This is based on developing pupils' Welsh language skills and creating a Welsh culture as a central element of the school's life and work. As a result, there is a strong sense of Welshness.

Leaders act robustly to ensure that the vision supports pupils to be independent and respectful learners who are keen to succeed. There is a sense of trust, pride and respect between pupils and staff, which permeates naturally across the school's familial community. Leaders know the needs of pupils, the school and its community well. With an enthusiastic team of staff, they succeed in working together skilfully between both of the school's sites in Flint and in Shotton, Deeside.

Leaders have set clear strategic objectives and they understand their responsibilities well. The headteacher has high expectations of himself and others and makes effective use of the expertise of all staff to support pupils' well-being and achievement. He works effectively with the deputy headteacher and other leaders and, as a result, they contribute effectively towards implementing the school's priorities, in addition to reinforcing a productive team ethos between teachers and assistants.

An open and supportive culture promotes and encourages the professional learning of all staff. Leaders hold beneficial opportunities for them to take part in a good range of training which responds sensibly to their individual requirements and the school's priorities. As a result, professional development procedures have a positive effect on the standards and well-being of pupils and staff.

Leaders have purposeful arrangements for managing financial resources and are aware of the importance of trying to reduce the effect of poverty on pupils' achievement. They use the pupil development grant suitably to improve the standards and attendance of specific groups of pupils, for example by planning and implementing '*teulu time*' family sessions. As a result, opportunities for parents to engage with the school are good. Leaders manage the budget carefully and allocate expenditure to align with their priorities sensibly, including local and national priorities. However, the school currently has a significant surplus and has agreed a plan with the local authority to mitigate it.

Governors receive appropriate information and reports that support their work suitably. They promote healthy eating and drinking and discharge their statutory duties appropriately. They are aware of the school's evaluation processes and also evaluate their own effectiveness as a body. Although the chair of the governing body is new to the role, governors have put a plan in place to take advantage of the expertise of individuals in undertaking scrutiny and observation processes. As a result, they conduct appropriate scrutiny and observation activities and challenge and support the school to address its priorities meaningfully.

Self-evaluation procedures identify strengths and areas for improvement appropriately. The school improvement plan identifies appropriate actions and suitable targets to develop specific areas across the school. Leaders put sensible timescales in place to ensure that priorities are given due attention and are achievable. Overall, the school meets its priorities in a timely manner. A good example of how the school works strategically is when setting a priority that focuses on increasing provision to support pupils with their speech and language. By doing so, a significant investment is earmarked to provide a Welsh-medium resource at the school, which contributes well towards improving the communication skills of specific learners.

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/members of the management committee 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, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), 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 (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- 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 (<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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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