



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

**A report on**

**Guilfield C.P. School**

**Guilfield  
Welshpool  
Powys  
SY21 9ND**

**Date of inspection: November 2023**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh**

## About Guilsfield C.P. School

Name of provider	Guilsfield C.P. School
Local authority	Powys County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	179
Pupils of statutory school age	129
Number in nursery classes	20
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%)	8.6%
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%)	8.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	3.9%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/10/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	19/05/2015
Start date of inspection	13/11/2023

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](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

Guilsfield Primary is a happy school where pupils and staff feel valued and cared for. Staff meet pupils' social and emotional needs well. They deal with pupils' concerns thoughtfully, appropriately and in a timely manner. During their time in school most pupils generally make appropriate progress as learners and develop as confident individuals.

Most pupils start school with good communication and personal and social skills. They settle into school life quickly and engage positively with each other and adults. They show genuine pride in their work and are very kind and caring to one another. Older pupils in particular look out for the younger pupils and offer them friendship and support. When given the opportunity, nearly all pupils take on leadership roles and responsibilities with maturity and diligence.

The very recently appointed head teacher is beginning to establish a vision for the school. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of this vision. However, leaders do not consider well enough the local context of the school and its community or pay appropriate attention of the pupils' interests in their curriculum planning. Teachers do not plan carefully enough to meet the needs of all learners and, as a result, pupils do not always make the progress they could. Teachers do not always provide the right level of challenge to ensure that pupils achieve their potential.

Leaders' monitoring of the school's provision does not focus well enough on pupils' progress and governors do not take an active role in the monitoring process. Although leaders identify suitable areas for improvement in the school's work, their actions do not always result in sufficient improvements in outcomes for pupils.

## Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen arrangements to monitor pupils' use of shared community spaces
- R2 Ensure that all leaders, including the governing body, robustly monitor and evaluate learning and teaching to secure improvement
- R3 Address the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school with a particular focus on ensuring that all pupils are challenged effectively
- R4 Develop the school curriculum to include relevant and authentic learning experiences that meet the needs of learners

## What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress.

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Most pupils start school at a stage of development in their communication, numeracy and social skills that is expected for their age and make suitable progress as they move through the school. Nearly all pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make suitable progress in line with their individual targets.

Nearly all pupils listen attentively to one another and to adults. They understand and follow instructions effectively. For example, when they take on the role of class investigator, younger pupils know to search the classroom for 'bizarre' items which will help them solve the mystery of the giant footprint. Nearly all older pupils speak with confidence, and they are articulate and enthusiastic in their interactions with familiar adults and visitors.

Across the school, pupils' development of their Welsh language skills is variable. Most younger pupils confidently respond to instructions given in Welsh. However, as the move through the school, pupils do not develop their Welsh oracy skills suitably.

Many younger pupils know the sounds of letters and use this knowledge to read simple words. Many older pupils read with confidence and enjoyment. They choose from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction material to develop their reading both for enjoyment and in their work across the curriculum. Most older pupils read fluently, using expression, intonation and pace to good effect. They demonstrate a good awareness of punctuation in their reading, for example when responding to speech marks and commas.

Across the school pupils' writing skills develop appropriately. Younger pupils find and copy words from word banks to help them construct simple sentences, and they develop a sound understanding of basic punctuation. Most older pupils acquire a sound understanding of a suitable range of writing genres. For example, as part of their learning about Victorian times, they write formal letters to Queen Victoria to express their views on child labour. However, many pupils do not make the progress they could in their writing skills as they move through the school.

Many pupils develop a good range of mathematical skills. Younger pupils give sensible estimates and predictions, for example when they estimate how many jelly beans are needed to measure the giant's hand. Many Year 1 pupils use mathematical terminology such as estimation while measuring ingredients to bake buns. Most pupils in Year 4 add and subtract numbers to 1,000 and calculate the area and perimeter of simple shapes. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils carry out calculations relating to multiplication and division effectively. They identify characteristics of numbers such as square and prime numbers. However, few pupils apply their numeracy skills into other areas of the curriculum and real-life contexts.

Many pupils apply their numeracy skills and understanding across a suitable range of experiences well. For example, many older pupils confidently convert measurements to draw a Tudor ship to scale.

Pupils' development of digital skills is variable overall. Many pupils develop an appropriate range of digital skills and apply these effectively across the curriculum. In Year 4, many pupils use databases, and access online resources to develop their artwork using perspective. However, ICT skills are limited, and opportunities for pupils to develop skills in coding and the interrogation of data bases are an area for development.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their physical skills. Younger pupils move around the indoor and outdoor area confidently. They demonstrate good co-ordination when handling small tools and objects. Most pupils across the school participate in physical activity, including preparing for sporting events with partner schools, confidently and enthusiastically. Nearly all pupils develop important life skills through participating in swimming lessons in every school year.

Many older pupils develop suitable thinking and problem-solving skills through their science lessons. Pupils in Year 4 plan an investigation and consider what is required to make a fair test. In Year 6, many pupils demonstrate clear thinking when planning their work and make sensible suggestions to improve their experiments. However, across the school, pupils do not develop their thinking and problem-solving skills well enough.

Pupils develop their creative skills appropriately. By the time they reach Year 6, older pupils develop a range of drawing techniques such as stippling and cross hatching, while studying the artist Henry Moore.

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

Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy at school. They are proud of their school and enjoy positive relationships with staff. Most pupils feel well supported and know who to talk to if they have a problem and are confident that staff will deal quickly and effectively with their concerns.

Nearly all pupils behave well and treat one another with care and respect. They have a thorough understanding of the importance of rules and sanctions and how these support positive relationships in school. Most move through the school quietly and calmly and manage transitions within the school day very well. Nearly all pupils show respect towards adults and speak confidently and politely to visitors. They interact well with one another in their learning and play. For example, when discussing how to make bread, younger pupils disagree respectfully with how bread should be made, justifying their views clearly.

Most pupils make good choices in relation to eating and drinking. They eat a fruit or vegetable snack daily and every pupil has access to drinking water throughout the day. Most pupils eat a healthy cooked meal at lunchtime. Many pupils understand the importance of being physically active and take part in activities such as daily walking and swimming, and many represent the school teams, such as football and netball. Many pupils take part in extra-curricular sporting clubs and activities.

Most pupils, including those with ALN, take their leadership responsibilities seriously and discharge their roles confidently. Many are involved in roles such as the Eco and Health and Well-being Committee, Digital Wizards, and the Safety Squad. These

groups and committees support the school's ethos, lead initiatives across the school and make valuable links with the community. For example, the Eco Committee recently gained a donation of bird seed from a local business which they used to fill their own bird feeders to feed the birds over winter.

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning and engage well in their lessons. Most pupils are confident learners, who complete their learning with pride and care. When given responsibility for their learning, they demonstrate high levels of independence and do their best. Nearly all settle to their tasks quickly and many learners demonstrate sustained concentration to complete tasks. For example, younger pupils work well together and show perseverance when gathering sticks to build a shelter in the outdoor area.

Most pupils read their teachers' written feedback and many respond appropriately when prompted, for instance by improving a sentence. Older pupils accurately assess completed tasks against agreed success criteria and identify strengths and what they or their peers need to do improve. However, few pupils use this information to improve the quality of their work and, overall, pupils do not clearly understand what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

Pupils' attendance levels are very good, including those eligible for free school meals. Nearly all arrive happily and punctually every morning.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Relationships between staff and pupil are warm and supportive. This is a strength of the school.

Many teachers explain tasks clearly to pupils and help them understand what to do. They share learning expectations at the beginning and, where teaching is most effective, teachers pause regularly throughout the lesson to check in on pupils' understanding and establish what they need to do next. For example, in Year 6, when using multiplication strategies to break a code, pupils reflect maturely on their progress and suggest improvements on how to approach the task differently.

Nearly all teachers have sound subject knowledge. They use a suitable range of questioning styles to encourage pupils to develop their skills effectively. Many plan suitable tasks that engage pupils. However, in a minority of lessons, activities lack challenge and teachers rely too much on worksheets. As a result, pupils' opportunities to develop critical and creative thinking skills are restricted and pupils do not make the progress they could.

The school uses a suitable range of assessment strategies to accurately identify those pupils who require extra support in their learning. Teachers and support staff monitor their learning closely and, as a result, most make sound progress towards their individual targets.

The school has a suitable marking and feedback policy in place. However, this is not used consistently across the school to help all pupils to improve their work. As a result, pupils do not always make sufficient progress. Reports to parents are clear

and informative. They give useful information about their child's progress and personal and social skills, along with targets for the next steps in their learning.

Planning for the Curriculum for Wales is at its early stages. The school has based its curriculum around the six areas of learning using overarching themes. The school is working collaboratively with partner schools to develop a relevant and meaningful curriculum. However, the school has not considered well enough how it will develop its own curriculum in line with the Curriculum for Wales. In a minority of classes, pupils are given the opportunity to have an input into their learning. Whole-school themes that the school chooses to use do not match well enough to the needs and interests of the pupils, the school or its locality and they do not provide good enough opportunities for pupils to use their skills for real life purposes. As a result, pupils do not make the relevant links to between what they are learning, their own lives and their community.

Across the school, teachers plan appropriately for pupils to develop their literacy skills. For example, staff develop a positive culture of reading throughout the school. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to develop their reading skills through a range of reading material both at school and at home. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their reading skills. Recently, leaders have improved the provision for developing pupils' mathematical skills and, as a result, progress and standards are improving. Many teachers are beginning to provide pupils with suitable opportunities to apply a range of numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example, when calculating how many years ago key events took place during the Victorian era, pupils apply their subtraction skills effectively. Planning for the progression of digital skills is less developed and opportunities for pupils to develop questioning and thinking skills across curriculum areas of learning are limited. Also, teachers are inconsistent in delivering Welsh lessons. In the best examples, pupils have regular and frequent opportunities to speak Welsh and respond to the teacher. However, in a minority of classes, planned Welsh activities are not delivered and teachers use a very limited amount of Welsh in their lessons.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school is a very caring and warm community that supports pupils' emotional, health and social needs well. Staff model respectful interactions consistently and encourage pupils to support one another throughout the daily life of the school. High priority days, such as 'odd socks day', help to highlight to pupils what they need to do if they need support. Nearly all pupils are confident of where to go if they need support. Where individual pupils require support to meet their emotional needs, the school provides well-planned sessions such as play therapy with a specifically trained member of staff.

Support for pupils with ALN is sound. School leaders work systematically to ensure that pupils who require additional support are identified swiftly. Teachers set appropriate targets for pupils and use these to inform provision. Many support staff support individuals and groups well. They provide useful access to programs, such as individual therapy sessions using construction toys and additional support groups to develop pupils' knowledge of phonics. Regular review meetings evaluate pupils' progress against their individual targets and the appropriateness of provision

appropriately. As a result, pupils with ALN make suitable progress during their time in school.

There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills during the school day, such as walking, dance, games sessions and extra-curricular sporting events. These contribute positively to pupils' overall physical development.

The school offers a suitable range of extra-curricular activities to support the curriculum and develop pupils' self-confidence, creativity, and performance skills. Nearly all pupils take part in local Urdd dance competitions and whole-school performances.

The school develops pupils' creativity suitably through its curriculum and by inviting visitors to school. For example, a beat-boxer and live loop artist visits the school to share his skills and encourage pupils to try out the voice techniques that he uses.

The school celebrates its Welsh heritage and culture well. It promotes the benefits of speaking Welsh across the community by creating a leaflet, which was published as part of the local bulletin. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the diversity of Wales and other cultures. The school's curriculum provides limited opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of values and their rights as children. Daily acts of collective worship contribute purposefully to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The school monitors attendance beneficially, using consistent approaches. Any issues are addressed with sensitivity and care. In general, there is a suitably strong culture of safeguarding within the school. During the inspection, the team brought issues relating to the use of shared community spaces to the school's attention.

## **Leadership and management**

In a very short period of time, the headteacher is beginning to gain an understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Working with the acting deputy she has identified appropriate improvement priorities for the school, which leaders and staff are beginning to address. For example, leaders have identified the need to improve opportunities for pupils to develop their digital skills.

Nearly all teaching staff have allocated leadership roles that focus on developing the Curriculum for Wales. Through positive engagement with professional learning, they are beginning to drive forward school improvement. However, the development of teaching and learning strategies to reflect the philosophy of the Curriculum for Wales is underdeveloped and impacts negatively on classroom provision. Leaders do not ensure that teachers provide relevant learning experiences that enable pupils to connect their learning with the real world and many lessons do not provide enough challenge to allow pupils to achieve their potential. There is a strong culture of collaboration and teamwork throughout the school. Staff are very supportive of one another and, as a result, staff well-being is a strength.

Leaders have developed an appropriate timetable to enable them to monitor and evaluate the school's work. The range of activity includes lesson observations, learning walks and the scrutiny of pupils' work. From this, leaders are beginning to



accurately identify many of the areas where the school needs to make improvements. However, too few monitoring activities focus closely enough on improving pupils' outcomes and the progress they make with their learning. In addition, they do not monitor progress towards improvements rigorously enough to bring about school wide improvements. As a result, pupils are not challenged well enough and do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

The governing body is highly supportive of the work of the school. Though governors have a broad awareness of school improvement priorities, they do not participate robustly enough in the school's self-evaluation processes and rely heavily on the information presented by school leaders to assure quality. As a result, governors do not have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This limits their ability to fulfil their role as a critical friend. Governors ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders manage the school's finances diligently. They use additional funding such as the pupil development grant well, for example to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to engage in outdoor learning experiences and to fund music tuition for targeted pupils.

The school communicates useful information on social media with parents effectively. However, the views of parents and other stakeholders do not impact sufficiently on school development. Leaders address national priorities appropriately, although the school's progress towards the Curriculum for Wales is underdeveloped.

## 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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