



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

A report on

Myrddin C.P. School

**Heol Disgwydfa
Carmarthen
Carmarthenshire
SA31 1TE**

Date of inspection: January 2024

by

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

About Myrddin C.P. School

Name of provider	Myrddin C.P. School
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	118
Pupils of statutory school age	96
Number in nursery classes	8
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%)	39.2%
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%)	51.0%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	11.5%
Date of headteacher appointment	
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/10/2015
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

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

Overview

Myrddin Community Primary School is an inclusive and caring environment where pupils feel safe and valued. Staff in the three mainstream and four specialist Additional Learning Needs (ALN) unit classes work effectively to build strong relationships and provide good support for pupils' emotional well-being. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who are proud to share their successes and achievements with visitors.

A majority of pupils in the mainstream classes make suitable progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. In a few aspects of the curriculum pupils make good progress, for example when developing their oracy skills. Teaching in the specialist ALN unit is highly effective and as a result, many pupils in these classes make strong progress from their starting points. However, leaders have not monitored the school's work carefully enough and have not ensured that teachers in the mainstream classes have high enough expectations for pupils' learning and progress. In a majority of lessons, learning experiences do not support mainstream pupils to make the progress they are capable of.

The school is beginning to develop its curriculum appropriately and is providing a few engaging learning experiences for pupils. However, progress towards embedding the principles of Curriculum for Wales is slow and the school has not yet developed its curriculum well enough to ensure that pupils build on their skills progressively.

The recently appointed acting headteacher is working to improve staff well-being and pupils' progress. However, this arrangement is temporary and there remains a lack of capacity in leadership at all levels. Leaders do not have a clear enough strategy for improving the quality of teaching and learning that is understood by all staff.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve leadership at all levels to ensure that self-evaluation and monitoring processes are used accurately to identify and address the key improvements needed in teaching and learning
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that all pupils make the progress they are capable of
- R3 Develop the curriculum to provide a systematic, whole school approach to developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills
- R4 Improve attendance

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. 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 usually every four to six months.

Main evaluation

Learning

When pupils join the mainstream nursery class, most have skills, knowledge and understanding that are lower than would normally be expected. Most pupils settle well into school life, develop good relationships with staff and their peers and engage positively with learning experiences. However, during their time at the school many pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, do not make enough progress in their learning. There is a lack of challenge in many lessons and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

A majority of younger pupils develop their speaking skills appropriately. They begin to develop their vocabulary and express themselves suitably when working with their peers in class role play areas. Many older pupils listen well to each other and staff. A few pupils discuss their work with confidence, for example when talking about how they could improve their work. Most pupils in the specialist ALN unit make good progress in developing their communication skills.

Around half of the youngest pupils in the mainstream classes begin to develop their knowledge of letter sounds suitably. A few younger pupils begin to develop independence and fluency in their reading. Many older pupils read for enjoyment and develop positive attitudes to reading. A majority of the oldest pupils read fluently and begin to develop appropriate expression. However, across the school a majority of pupils do not have sufficient skills to develop their reading skills well enough.

A majority of younger pupils are beginning to develop their fine motor skills appropriately to support the development of early writing skills. They use marks to represent letters in their emergent writing. By Year 4 they begin to write successfully in sentences using varied vocabulary and language. A majority of older pupils are beginning to write for a range of purposes. For example, they show appropriate understanding of the features of persuasive text when writing a letter of complaint to the local council. In the specialist ALN unit a few older pupils are developing their writing skills well and are proud to share their 'news' books. A few pupils use digital devices effectively to create and retell stories. However, in the mainstream classes a majority of pupils do not develop their writing skills effectively enough.

In the specialist ALN unit a few pupils make good progress in developing their understanding of number and apply their knowledge in their work across the curriculum. Around half of mainstream pupils make suitable progress in developing their mathematical skills. The youngest pupils begin to show recognition of numbers

and count to ten. In Years 3 and 4, they develop a good understanding of place value, and a few pupils compare 4-digit numbers accurately. By Year 6, they begin to deepen their understanding, exploring different methods of addition and subtraction. However, many pupils do not consistently recall multiplication facts. As a result, they find it difficult to solve problems successfully.

Across the school a majority of younger pupils respond appropriately to instructions and greetings in Welsh, and they begin to reply using simple Welsh phrases and vocabulary. However, most pupils do not develop their Welsh language skills well enough. They rely heavily on prompts from staff and lack the skills and confidence to sustain simple conversations in Welsh.

Overall, in the mainstream classes pupils' digital skills are at an early stage of development. A few younger pupils are beginning to use digital applications appropriately, for example to create pictures on a screen. In Years 5 and 6, many pupils create presentations about their sporting heroes. In the specialist ALN unit many pupils apply their digital skills well. Many pupils confidently use digital technology to communicate and enhance their learning experiences, for example using tablets to retell familiar stories: adding pictures, text and voice recordings.

In the specialist ALN Unit, many pupils develop their physical skills appropriately. For example, through regular swimming and surfing lessons, pupils develop core strength and co-ordination. In the mainstream classes, a majority of the youngest pupils develop their physical and creative skills when riding bicycles, demonstrating increasing control and balance. Most older pupils show increased poise and control when they work with their peers to create a group dance. Many pupils develop their artistic skills well when painting and modelling. They use line, shape and colour when studying and replicating the work of Mondrian.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

The school has caring ethos, which is shared and articulated by staff, governors, parents and pupils. Nearly all pupils behave well during lessons and breaktimes. Most pupils know who to speak to if they have worries. Nearly all pupils feel safe, secure and valued.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate kindness, empathy, and respect for their peers. Many older pupils provide care and support care to younger pupils throughout the school day. For example, the newly formed sports ambassadors, promote the benefits of physical activity effectively. They encourage pupils to participate in sporting activities during playtimes by providing equipment and modelling playground games. Nearly all pupils understand and follow the school rules and behaviour is exemplary across the school.

Most pupils have a sense of belonging to their local community. They demonstrate their respect for the place where they live, for example by considering how to live in an environmentally friendly way. The school Eco Committee organises litter picks and monitors and organises recycling activities to promote sustainability. Older pupils work with the local hospital and create posters to motivate and bring joy to patients.

During lessons, nearly all pupils respond well to instructions and carry out their work conscientiously. They are proud of their school and have positive attitudes towards learning.

Many pupils, including those with ALN, take on leadership and decision-making roles. Pupils in the recently introduced pupil leadership groups are beginning to influence school improvement positively and take their responsibilities seriously. For example, members of the school council ensure that pupils across the school learn about children's rights.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and taking regular physical exercise. They develop their physical skills appropriately and make suitable healthy choices when choosing meals during breakfast club and throughout the school day.

Many pupils engage well with their learning. They use a range of resources effectively to support them in their learning and are beginning to persevere and find solutions when challenged. For example, when trying out new methods of calculation, older pupils persevere until they reach the correct answer. When given the opportunity, pupils respond well to verbal and written feedback. A few older pupils use this feedback appropriately to make positive improvements to their written work. However, the school's work to improve the quality of feedback to pupils is at an early stage. Many pupils in the specialist ALN unit respond well to new experiences and, with support, build on these experiences to make progress in their learning.

Leaders monitor pupils' attendance suitably and identify those pupils whose attendance falls below an acceptable level. Staff communicate with families appropriately to attempt to address the issues preventing pupils from engaging with school. However, despite the range of processes and procedures in place, attendance remains too low.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff develop positive working relationships with pupils. This is a strength of the school. Staff demonstrate kindness and compassion towards the pupils. They manage pupil behaviour well and are sensitive to pupils' emotional needs. This creates a positive learning environment where pupils feel valued.

Where teaching is effective in mainstream classes, teachers plan activities that are stimulating and engaging. They ask appropriate questions to check pupil understanding and the pace of lessons enables many pupils to make suitable progress. However, in around half of lessons, teachers do not ensure that activities meet the needs of all pupils well enough. They do not use assessment effectively to identify pupils' next steps in learning and do not have high enough expectations. As a result, teachers and leaders do not have a clear picture of the progress made by all pupils.

Teachers in the school's specialist ALN unit plan a highly effective range of activities that meet pupils' needs well. They use a range of specialist resources and approaches appropriately and adjust and adapt activities successfully to ensure that pupils make progress. For example, when pupils attend horse riding, surfing and swimming sessions in the community they are inspired to write their own reviews

using digital blogs. Staff in these classes plan purposeful learning opportunities that relate directly to pupils' interests and needs, focus on skills, and encourage independence. They regularly review the next steps in learning for each pupil.

In the mainstream classes, teachers do not plan effectively for pupils to develop literacy, numeracy or digital skills progressively. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop these skills or to practice and improve. As a result, progress is slow, and pupils do not apply their skills across the curriculum well enough.

Teachers are beginning to plan learning experiences that develop pupils' understanding of life in modern-day Wales through Welsh festivals and events. They enhance learning experiences through visits in the local area. For example, pupils visit the local estate agents to gain a deeper understanding of the world of work. However, the school's work to develop its curriculum in line with national reform is at an early stage.

Most staff model the Welsh language throughout the day effectively and encourage pupils to use Welsh outside the classroom. In a few lessons, teachers' consistent use of Welsh supports pupils to develop their understanding of basic words and phrases. However, teachers do not plan effectively enough for pupils to build on their Welsh language skills. This limits the progress that pupils make.

Teachers ensure that the youngest pupils have regular access to learning outdoors. Pupils develop their sense of curiosity and exploration when hunting for treasure in the sand and when using a range of resources to construct a model of their home.

Overall, in the mainstream classes, pupils' independent learning skills are underdeveloped. Many staff over direct the learning and do not plan opportunities for pupils to immerse themselves in learning, to problem solve, take risks, or make mistakes, often enough. In too many instances, staff do not challenge or extend pupils' learning appropriately.

Care, support and guidance

Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and respond sensitively and effectively to pupils' emotional and social needs. This contributes significantly to their happiness and well-being.

A majority of teachers, including those in the specialist ALN unit, plan activities carefully to support pupils' personal development. ALN staff support pupils' physical health and well-being well by making effective use of the school's hydrotherapy pool, as well as regular visits to a local swimming pool, massage sessions and providing sensory experiences. In the mainstream classes, staff provide suitable opportunities for pupils to be curious and develop collaborative skills.

Staff plan effectively for pupils' transition. They prepare younger and older pupils well for their move to new settings. The school works successfully with the onsite Flying Start setting to provide seamless transition for the youngest children and with the high school and special schools to prepare pupils for their next stage of their learning.

Mainstream staff generally provide appropriate support for pupils with additional learning needs. Teachers in the specialist ALN unit assess, plan and evaluate learning support effectively and welcome contributions from pupils, parents, staff and outside agencies. This collaborative approach enables pupils in the specialist ALN unit to make good progress in their learning. However, leaders do not monitor the impact of support for pupils with ALN in the school's mainstream classes rigorously enough. They do not share the strong practice that exists in the school to support and improve outcomes for pupils with additional learning needs.

Recently, the school has re-established its pupil leadership groups. The Criw Cymraeg have an important role in promoting Welsh language across the school and lead regular assemblies. The school council is representative of all pupils across the school, including the specialist ALN unit. In the specialist ALN unit, pupils have opportunities to contribute to the wider life of the school through their involvement in The Entertainment Crew where they help staff to consider ways to improve well-being.

The school's collective worship arrangements make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, and moral development. Through school assemblies, for example, pupils across the school explore human rights. The school is beginning to form beneficial links between the mainstream and specialist ALN unit classes. Pupils share learning experiences and special events across the whole school. These opportunities to work together develop pupils' understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion effectively.

Pupils' well-being and safety is an integral part of school life. The school's arrangements to keep pupils safe meet the requirements and give no cause for concern. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of staying safe online. For example, pupils understand the importance of not sharing personal information. Additionally, the school addresses any incidents of bullying well and works alongside the local authority to record and monitor these. The school has suitable processes in place to address concerns about the attendance of individual pupils, but overall rates of attendance are too low.

Leadership and management

Leaders, governors and staff work hard to provide a caring and inclusive environment where pupils feel valued and supported. Leaders have a good understanding of their community and work to ensure that their pupils are safe and happy during their time in school. Currently however, there is significant instability in leadership, which is negatively affecting the cohesion and well-being of staff across the school and the progress that pupils are making.

The acting headteacher is beginning to improve staff well-being and pupils' attitudes to learning. However, there remain important gaps in leadership at all levels. In addition, the school is currently running a deficit budget with no clear plan as how to address this issue during the coming financial year.

Since her appointment, the acting headteacher has identified significant areas for improvement across the school and is involving all staff in decision-making. She has reviewed and adjusted strategic priorities to address areas in need of urgent action.

However, the lack of an established leadership structure within the school is impeding leaders' ability to drive through the actions necessary to secure improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

Governors are keen to support the school. They have a good understanding of the school's finances and bring professional expertise to carry out their role as a critical friend and to ensure that financial resources are used effectively. However, the governing body's role in self-evaluation is underdeveloped and relies too heavily on the information provided by school leaders. As a result, governors do not have a complete picture of pupils' progress.

Leaders are beginning to address national priorities. They use grant funding suitably to support pupils, such as those eligible for free school meals and those from low-income households with their social and emotional needs. However, the school's work to design a curriculum to align with Curriculum for Wales is still in the early stages of development. Staff do not consider carefully enough how pupils' learning experiences can raise their aspirations or support them to learn about diversity and cultures across the world.

Leaders plan and carry out suitable self-evaluation and monitoring activities throughout the year. However, these processes lack rigour and do not identify the most important areas for improvement, such as the progress of all groups of pupils, the effectiveness of curriculum planning and the quality of teaching. Leaders do not plan clear and coherent steps for improvement. They do not involve staff in self-evaluation and, as a result, staff do not always know what they need to do to improve their own practice or how to contribute effectively to the wider progress of the school.

The school has appropriate arrangements to support the professional learning of staff. These arrangements have a significant impact on securing improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in the specialist ALN unit. There are suitable opportunities for staff in all classes to observe effective practice within the school and in other schools. However, leaders do not link professional development closely enough to improving the quality of teaching and learning or to securing effective outcomes for all pupils.

The acting headteacher is beginning to promote a culture of partnership working between school and parents. A majority of staff develop useful links with parents to help them support their child's learning. However, leaders do not provide parents with sufficient information on their child's progress and there are too few opportunities for them to be involved in the full life of the school.

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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