



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

A report on

Wolfscastle C.P. School

**Glanleddau
Wolfscastle
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA62 5LZ**

Date of inspection: February 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Wolfscastle C.P. School

Name of provider	Wolfscastle C.P. School
Local authority	Pembrokeshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	52
Pupils of statutory school age	39
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	7
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 23.7%)</i>	0.0%
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 13.2%)</i>	*
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	02/01/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/11/2015
Start date of inspection	19/02/2024

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

Wolfscastle C.P. School is a happy and friendly community. Pupils, staff and parents take pride in its homely and inclusive ethos. Pupils feel safe and happy and develop a strong working relationship with staff. Most pupils have positive attitudes and engage well with their learning and are very keen to do their best. Everyone is respected and they are very caring towards each other.

The effect of the headteacher's firm leadership is visible across the school. In a short period, the headteacher has established sound procedures to address the school's priorities. The dedicated staff work highly effectively to create an inclusive learning environment for pupils. Leaders monitor and evaluate progress skilfully and identify improvement priorities sensibly. The governors are active as critical friends and support all of the school's activities purposefully.

A creative, broad and balanced curriculum is provided for pupils. Teachers plan a range of rich experiences and interesting activities that reflect the nature and local context of the school. They ensure that activities are suitably paced and provide stimulating learning experiences. However, staff tend to over-direct activities and this limits opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners.

Many pupils make good progress from their starting points. They develop their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately by the end of their time at the school. However, across the school, very few pupils develop appropriate digital skills.

A strong feature is the school's relationship with its local community. Pupils are given regular and valuable opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities and community events, such as services in the local chapel and events for the annual festival which help to build their self-confidence and their physical, expressive and creative ability.

Recommendations

R1 Expand opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills

R2 Develop pupils' digital skills

What happens next

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

Main findings

Learning

During their time at the school, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress from their starting points.

Most pupils across the school listen well to the contributions of adults and their peers. From an early age, the Welsh communication skills of many of the youngest pupils develop well and they strive to speak it while enjoying our learning. Many of the oldest pupils communicate with increasing confidence in Welsh and English and develop purposeful vocabulary in all contexts, for example by discussing news headlines relating to the local farmers' protests.

Many pupils' reading skills develop appropriately. The youngest pupils begin to use an appropriate range of phonic strategies to read familiar and unfamiliar words. By Year 2, many pupils use their reading skills with increasing confidence. They read with appropriate expression and use a variety of strategies effectively to read less familiar words. Many of the older pupils read with increasing accuracy in Welsh and most read intelligently in a variety of contexts in English. Many develop their reading skills appropriately and discuss the content of text sensibly and maturely. They use intonation and expression when reading aloud. The school's older pupils also develop their higher-order reading skills purposefully to gather and collate information in both languages.

A majority of pupils develop their writing skills appropriately as they move through the school. The youngest pupils begin to make marks and form letters and simple words correctly. By Year 2, many pupils begin to write freely and present their work in an organised and clear manner using appropriate form and vocabulary, for example when writing a recipe by using imperative verbs effectively. Many pupils across the school are keen to use new vocabulary and apply it effectively in their written work. Many of the oldest pupils write in different genres using purposeful adjectives in their written pieces to give appropriate consideration to the audience, for example when recalling a visit to Pembroke Castle and when responding to the local council to thank for financial contributions to the school. However, they are not given enough opportunities to write extended pieces and to refine and improve their work regularly enough.

Across the school, most pupils develop a sound understanding of mathematical concepts. From an early age, they recognise numbers to ten and group objects successfully according to their properties, for example when classifying leaves according to their colour and size. By Year 2, many develop a sound understanding of how to measure accurately and confidently when measuring the size of towers

they have built. Most of the oldest pupils use the four number operations confidently. When they are given opportunities to do so, many pupils apply their numeracy skills in work across the curriculum appropriately, for example when trying to make a profit in a local enterprise challenge.

Many pupils' digital skills develop gradually as they move through the school. Many of the youngest pupils begin to use digital tablets effectively to record their work and enter the number of faces, vertices and edges of 3D shapes into a simple database. They control a programmable toy successfully with support from an adult. In the older classes, many research safely on the internet and use programs to calculate distance on an interactive map. However, across the school, very few pupils develop a sound understanding of how to handle data, create spreadsheets and produce diverse and purposeful graphs. This hinders their ability to develop their wider digital skills further in different areas of learning.

Pupils' creative skills develop well throughout the school. Most use a variety of materials and styles effectively to produce original work of a high standard and by emulating famous artists. Most pupils develop their musical skills by singing and playing instruments in the classroom and in performances at the local chapel effectively.

Nearly all pupils' physical skills develop well. They show positive attitudes to physical activities. They enjoy the physical education sessions and apply themselves purposefully to develop their skills.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are extremely polite and treat each other and adults with a high level of respect. They enjoy coming to school and feel very happy within the homely and inclusive environment. This is reflected in the school's high attendance rate. Pupils and parents value the care provided by staff and are confident that the school addresses any concerns and problems quickly.

Pupils' behaviour is particularly good in lessons, during break times and when they are working independently. They play happily and contentedly during break times. Pupils are welcoming towards visitors, enjoy guiding them around the school and discuss aspects of school life with them confidently. They are very proud of their school and enjoy being part of its community.

Most pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy and apply themselves to their tasks with excitement and enthusiasm, particularly during practical and creative lessons such as '*Mercher Mwdlyd*' ('Welly Wednesday'). These sessions contribute effectively towards developing their co-operation, research and thinking skills. Many demonstrate perseverance in their tasks and concentrate for long periods. They work together effectively in groups, pairs or by helping each other when necessary. Across the school, a majority of pupils value and respond consistently to feedback from staff and their peers. Pupils discuss each other's work effectively and refer appropriately to the success criteria. Across the school, nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet. They discuss the importance of not sharing passwords and the dangers of disclosing personal information maturely. As a result, nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of making wise decisions. Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of making good choices in terms of healthy eating and drinking and the effect this has on their health. They are passionate about bringing fruit to school rather than sweets or chocolate. They participate enthusiastically in physical activities and clearly enjoy taking part. Most of the oldest pupils enjoy representing the school in various sports competitions. Nearly all pupils have a good awareness of the importance of keeping the mind healthy, as well as the body. They talk knowledgeably about the importance of relaxing the body and mindfulness.

Many pupils enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities at school and fulfil them conscientiously and with dedication. For example, the health and well-being group takes its role of promoting playground games during break time seriously. It considers this important in terms of personal health and the social element in a small school. The school council is enthusiastic about encouraging pupils to support national charities and participate in specific days.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff have a very warm relationship with the pupils. They treat them with kindness and respect and this creates an inclusive environment where the happiness, well-being and progress of all pupils is a priority.

Teachers and support staff provide a curriculum that engages the interest and meets the needs of nearly all pupils successfully. They plan a range of rich experiences that reflect the nature and local context of the school and ensure a broad and balanced curriculum. At the beginning of each term, they organise a special visit or experience to motivate pupils and fill them with enthusiasm and ideas for the coming term. The school uses its local community and its interesting history effectively to spark pupils' imaginations. For example, during a trip to Pembroke Castle, pupils learned a great deal about Henry Tudor, instilling a sense of belonging and pride in their county and their *cynefin* or local area. The visit sparked pupils' imagination when they saw dragon's blood in the cave beneath the castle. Staff ensure that pupils are knowledgeable about the legends of Wolfscastle and colourful local characters such as William Evans, a renowned ship's captain and chess player, and Black Bart (Barti Ddu) from Little Newcastle.

Teachers provide learning activities that have been planned carefully. They build sensibly on pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences to ensure progression as pupils move through the school. Teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and creative skills. For example, planning to develop pupils' oral skills means that pupils' standards of oracy have improved significantly. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their musical, performance and physical skills on a regular basis. This means that many pupils develop as confident performers. However, planning to develop pupils' digital skills in how to handle data, create spreadsheets and produce graphs is not as well-developed.

Over time, the school provides a number of activities to develop pupils' personal and social education skills well. They plan and design interesting learning activities that

reflect the cultural, linguistic and diverse nature of Wales and the wider world. However, their plans for teaching pupils about the history and experiences of minority communities are not as purposeful.

On the whole, teachers use a variety of teaching methods effectively. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this knowledge to guide learning successfully. They have high expectations and, in most cases, link their lessons effectively to previous learning. Overall, staff are effective language role models and this helps pupils to expand their vocabulary and develop their fluency well. On the whole, staff question pupils skilfully. They often use questioning techniques that extend and deepen pupils' understanding and build on their ability to think critically. In the best practice, teachers develop learning activities that are suitably paced. Staff provide pupils with useful oral feedback during their activities and many pupils have an increasing understanding of what they need to do to develop their work further. Teachers' written feedback support pupils to consider the success criteria of specific tasks.

Overall, there is a suitable balance between experiences led by staff and opportunities for pupils to work independently. However, staff tend to over-direct activities and this limits opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and develop as independent learners.

All staff manage pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school in a positive and robust manner. This has a positive effect on pupils' standards and well-being. Staff succeed in making their classes stimulating and engaging places where nearly all pupils can learn productively.

Staff use a range of information to track pupils' standards, progress and well-being effectively. This enables staff to produce a useful picture of each pupil's development and the next steps in their learning. Teachers share information with parents regularly about their children's progress and well-being. Parents value the comments in open evenings, which include setting pupils' individual targets. This helps them to understand how they could help their children at home.

Care, support and guidance

The school and staff know their pupils, their families and the local community very well. Leaders and staff have developed effective arrangements to ensure that pupils and their families receive the encouragement and support they need to thrive at school. They place a high priority on pupils' well-being and respond to their emotional and social needs with sensitivity.

There are highly effective arrangements to support the emotional, health and social needs of nearly all pupils, for example by giving pupils responsibility for looking after the school's animals. This contributes significantly to their happiness and social skills and the supportive environment helps pupils to familiarise themselves easily with school life.

There is robust provision to support pupils with additional learning needs. The ALN co-ordinator has rigorous processes for identifying pupils' educational and well-being needs. The school has a comprehensive range of provision which is used effectively

when planning support. As a result, most pupils make good progress against their personal targets.

The school communicates well with parents and carers about ALN arrangements and pupils are an integral part of the process. The school gives full consideration to the views and feelings of the child, parents and carers as part of the valuable arrangements. Staff work closely with families and external agencies to create effective support plans for pupils with additional learning needs. This support, along with regular communication with parents, has a positive effect on their progress and well-being.

The school has successful procedures to track and monitor pupils' progress. Staff recognise and identify pupils who need additional support and ensure that they make effective progress. They provide specific support programmes for pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Through this, they evaluate the effect of interventions carefully, by refining and re-setting useful steps for improvement, which enable pupils to continue to make good progress over time.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which staff promote and develop pupils' understanding of their identity, heritage and culture. Pupils take advantage of highly beneficial opportunities to celebrate their Welshness and to feel that they belong to the local community.

Collective worship arrangements provide purposeful opportunities to support pupils to learn about issues relating to various beliefs, in addition to reflecting on fundamental questions and their own values. Regular assemblies are held at the school and in the local chapel and opportunities are provided for pupils to take an active part in them.

Staff promote the importance of healthy eating and encourage physical fitness through a range of physical education activities, which include regular fitness sessions and opportunities to compete in sporting competitions. Provision also promotes pupils' understanding of how to make healthy choices in terms of their lifestyle and the importance of keeping fit successfully by running a mile a day.

Staff provide exciting opportunities for pupils to voice their opinions to contribute to their learning and to school life. This enriches their experiences and prepares them well to take responsibility for their decisions and consider other points of view. Most pupils express an opinion about their learning through planning for class themes and through the work of the pupil councils in promoting awareness of the Welsh language and raising money for the local community.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding pupils. Staff promote a culture of safeguarding highly effectively and these arrangements are not a cause for concern. The procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns about pupils is robust and staff work with external agencies, when appropriate. The school has robust processes for monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Leadership and management

The school has a clear vision based on creating a happy and caring learning environment to provide a firm foundation for pupils to develop their core skills. This is

based on supporting pupils to be respectful and ambitious learners who are ready to succeed. As a result, there is a strong sense of trust and pride between pupils and staff which permeates naturally across the school's close-knit community.

The headteacher leads the school highly effectively and encourages pupils to develop their skills and talents in an inclusive learning environment. The headteacher has high expectations for herself, pupils and staff. An ethos of working as a productive team among teachers and assistants is a notable element of the school. As a result, all staff work together diligently to provide stimulating and engaging learning experiences that meet pupils' needs.

Arrangements to support, develop and distribute leadership across the school are developing appropriately. Within a short period of time, the headteacher has developed an effective team of staff by distributing roles and responsibilities suitably. They are completely clear about their roles and responsibilities and apply themselves fully to the school's values, by promoting a culture of effective co-operation between all members of staff. As a result, staff are keen to develop provision to improve pupils' experiences, progress and skills, for example by developing pupils' reading skills across the school.

Members of the governing body support leaders and staff highly effectively. They undertake a variety of relevant monitoring and evaluation activities thoroughly. For example, active members of the curriculum sub-panel are responsible for producing and monitoring the school development plan to evaluate progress in standards of teaching and learning. They share the effect of actions with the full body regularly. As a result, governors have a sound awareness of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They use their experiences from their regular visits to challenge and support leaders with their work. The headteacher manages the school's funding carefully with the experienced support of the governing body. There is a clear plan in place to ensure that expenditure supports the school's strategic objectives.

Leaders ensure that the school has comprehensive arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and they have a sound understanding of national priorities. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that poverty does not affect pupils' educational attainment. For example, the school offers free musical instrument lessons to all pupils individually and in groups. As a result, most pupils' creative skills develop successfully.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils, the school and its community extremely well. The school's relationship with parents is a strength and the continuous co-operation and communication promotes the school in its community highly effectively. The school has strong and successful links with the local community to provide valuable experiences for pupils. For example, pupils hold a service at the local chapel once a term to support the local community. The headteacher also seeks parents' views regularly about important aspects of their children's learning experiences and responds to their recommendations successfully, for example by developing an open session each week to give parents an opportunity to discuss pupils' progress.

The headteacher has established and promoted a culture of regular self-improvement which has begun to have a positive effect on provision and pupils' skills. Leaders have a sound awareness of the school's strengths and priorities for

improvement. These processes are developing increasingly well, with teachers and curriculum leaders taking an increasingly proactive role.

Monitoring reports are analysed in detail to ensure that standards improve continuously. Improvement steps are identified clearly and refined through an effective engagement process with a good range of stakeholders, including pupils. Through these processes, leaders have already identified some priorities for the next year.

Leaders have created a positive culture and ethos to promote and support the professional learning of all staff. They provide rich opportunities for them to undertake a good range of professional learning, which responds robustly to their individual needs and the school's priorities. Good examples of the training provided are how staff have developed reading provision across the school and have visited neighbouring schools to develop outdoor learning.

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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