



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

A report on

Ferryside V.C.P. School

**Ferryside
Carmarthenshire
SA17 5TB**

Date of inspection: June 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ferryside V.C.P. School

Name of provider	Ferryside V.C.P. School
Local authority	Carmarthenshire Council
Language of the provider	Welsh-medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Christian
Number of pupils on roll	27
Pupils of statutory school age	24
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	3
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 21.3%)</i>	3.3%
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 20.6%)</i>	26%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	16%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	29/01/2013

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

The school provides a supportive and welcoming environment for pupils, which encourages them to be valuable members of the school 'family'. The two classrooms, the wider learning areas and the outdoor areas are stimulating and colourful places where pupils can learn productively. As a result, pupils make appropriate progress in all aspects of their learning. They are polite, work well together in lessons and play happily with their peers on the playground. They are happy to speak to adults and value and respect the contributions of others.

The curriculum is planned carefully to raise pupils' awareness of their local area. It promotes Welsh culture, heritage and the Welsh language effectively and uses visitors and visits appropriately to enrich and expand pupils' experiences.

The school has experienced severe instability in leadership over several years. However, the current acting headteacher has transformed provision successfully, putting pupils' interests and wellbeing at the centre.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure consistency and stability in leadership
- R2 Ensure that all staff have high expectations of themselves and pupils to maintain and raise standards
- R3 Ensure that there are enough varied opportunities for older pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R4 Improve the standard of presentation of pupils' written work

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, most pupils have skills that are in line with what is expected for their age. Pupils, including those who have been identified as having additional learning needs, make appropriate progress in all aspects of their learning.

Most pupils' listening skills are developing well across the school. They listen attentively to presentations and the views of others and respond appropriately to them.

Many pupils' oral skills are developing soundly in both languages. They are keen to discuss and explain their work confidently by using increasingly complex vocabulary in both languages. Most older pupils have a wide vocabulary and use it appropriately in various contexts.

Across the school, many pupils' reading skills are developing well. The youngest come to recognise letters and simple words quickly. They find letters in the play tub to build monosyllabic words, such as 'mat', 'cap' and 'het' confidently. A majority follow the flow of a story by using a combination of Welsh words and symbols. As they grow older, most read fairly meaningfully in both languages and explain the content of text clearly. Pupils' skills in building unfamiliar and extended words are developing well.

Many pupils' writing skills develop appropriately as they move from one stage of learning to the next. The youngest pupils make simple marks to convey meaning before beginning to build short words. Slightly older pupils write full sentences to describe Geraint Thomas and different facts about him. They record simple predictions when conducting a scientific experiment or write a letter to a friend. At the top of the school, many pupils understand that different styles need to be used for different purposes and do so confidently. For example, they record the pros and cons when producing a debate based on flooding the areas around the river Towy. However, the standard of presentation of most pupils' work at the top of the school is low. They complete work on prepared worksheets too often, which hinders their ability to present work increasingly neatly.

Most pupils make good progress in their mathematics skills. They build methodically on their sound early understanding of place value and number bonds and increase their confidence in using the four rules. Most pupils have a sound grasp of measuring skills and use scales successfully to solve relevant problems. For example, the school's older pupils measure and draw an outline of an 'Anderson' shelter to coincide with the Second World War theme. Most pupils across the school apply their mathematical skills well when solving numeracy problems by using more than one step, where necessary. However, older pupils do not apply their numeracy skills purposefully across the curriculum.

Most pupils' digital skills are developing well. The youngest pupils take pictures and upload their work to appropriate digital files confidently. Older pupils use a wide

range of software purposefully and skilfully. For example, they use green screen effectively when producing video clips while role-playing historical Welsh characters.

Most pupils' creative skills are developing well. They use various media to express themselves successfully in stimulating contexts. For example, they emulate the work of an artist who designs pictures based on the coast with natural resources on the local beach.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils say that they feel happy and safe at the school. They are confident that adults listen to their views and consider them in decisions that affect them. All pupils are members of the 'Ferryside School Parliament' and play a full part in the school's life and work. This contributes successfully towards creating a familial ethos. The effective work of the Ferryside School Ambassadors develops a strong sense among pupils of the importance of caring for each other. For example, they offer support to anyone who feels sad on the playground and organise fun-filled activities for their peers.

Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of keeping fit and healthy. They enjoy physical education lessons and appreciate outdoor learning experiences that are beneficial to their emotional health and physical fitness. They know the risks that are associated with using the internet and know what steps to take to keep themselves safe and whom to approach for support while online.

A majority of pupils show ambition and enthusiasm towards their learning by sharing ideas for tasks and topics they are keen to know more about. However, the willingness and ability of a minority of pupils to take risks and challenge themselves and each other when undertaking their tasks are in the early stages of development. This has a positive effect on their enthusiasm for learning.

Most pupils concentrate for appropriate periods and work diligently to complete good work. They persevere with their tasks conscientiously, but many older pupils have a tendency to seek additional support too quickly when they face difficulties. Most pupils follow the marking code to check their work. However, a few pupils do not respond purposefully and consistently enough to feedback from adults to improve and raise the standard of their written work.

Nearly all pupils value and respect the contributions of others during learning sessions. For example, they listen attentively to the input of their peers and respond respectfully to different points of view during weekly circle time sessions. Pupils behave consistently well around the school and respond respectfully to staff and visitors. Nearly all pupils work well together in lessons and play happily among their peers on the playground.

Following the pandemic, inspectors are not reporting on pupil attendance rates during the 2021-2022 academic year. Instead, the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance will be reported on as part of Inspection Area 4.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff are beginning to plan purposefully to introduce the Curriculum for Wales and present their vision for their plans appropriately. The aims: '*Glanyfferi – Galluog, Gwybodus, Gofalgar a Gweithgar*' ('Ferryside – Able, Knowledgeable, Caring and Hard-working') inform planning and have a direct influence on developing pupils' experiences and fulfilling the principles of the curriculum. Termly plans are detailed and are often based on important elements that derive from the local community and nationally. For example, teachers provide interesting activities on the theme '*Troi a Llifo*' (Turn and Flow) and make appropriate use of the river and the local beach as a prompt for the term's theme. Activities have been provided on the history of the local village of Llangyndeyrn in the past, which is a relevant and important event for pupils and the wider community. This enriches pupils' knowledge and understanding of their history and the local area. However, teachers do not provide activities that support pupils to develop their skills constructively over time.

The school welcomes visitors and organises educational visits effectively to enrich and extend pupils' understanding of important aspects of their learning. For example, they conduct digital meetings to ask residents of the local community about their experiences during the Second World War. This supports pupils to use technology purposefully when learning about the experiences of others and enriches their experiences and their enjoyment of learning.

Provision ensures that pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills consistently in classroom sessions. However, teachers do not provide enough practical activities that support pupils to apply their number skills across the curriculum.

Both classrooms, the wider learning areas and the outdoor areas are stimulating and colourful areas in which pupils can learn productively. As there is only a small number of pupils in each class, teachers and assistants know them well and provide appropriate activities for them that address their learning needs and wellbeing. For example, the teacher and assistant of the youngest pupils encourage them to complete challenges in the outdoor area and talk about what they are doing naturally and continuously. This has a positive effect on their oral skills and their curiosity towards learning.

Teachers and assistants manage pupils' behaviour effectively and many treat them politely and with respect. Many of the staff have high expectations of themselves and the pupils, particularly in the youngest pupils' class. In many lessons, teachers share learning aims with pupils appropriately and explain clearly what they need to do. Where teaching is at its best, staff are enthusiastic, provide interesting and challenging experiences for pupils, praise them and encourage them to enjoy learning. On the whole, the presentation of pupils' work is appropriate. However, the standard and presentation of many of the older pupils' written work are untidy.

On the whole, teachers' oral feedback helps pupils to know how well they are achieving and supports them to know what they need to do to improve. A marking code is used that supports pupils suitably to respond to mistakes. This is beginning to have an effect on pupils' progress and achievement. Teachers provide appropriate

opportunities for older pupils to assess their own learning and that of their peers. This is beginning to have an effect on their understanding of how to improve their work.

Many teachers and assistants use the information from the outcomes of their assessments appropriately to plant the next appropriate steps in pupils' learning. This has a direct effect on raising standards.

Care, support and guidance

The school provides a supportive and welcoming environment for its pupils, which encourages them to be valuable members of the school 'family'. Staff promote Welsh culture, heritage and the Welsh language effectively. As a result, pupils are proud of the history and traditions of the area and their Welshness.

Provision for pupils who have been identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) is effective. As a result of the close and open relationship between staff and pupils, in addition to the school's detailed progress-tracking processes, they identify pupils' needs at an early stage. Staff work effectively with specialists and adapt provision appropriately when responding to the individual needs of pupils with ALN. For example, they have trained and supported an assistant to support the emotional wellbeing of a cohort of pupils effectively.

Staff introduce and reinforce pupils' positive spiritual, moral and social values consistently in lessons and joint sessions. As a result, the school has an inclusive and homely ethos that seeks relevant opportunities to work regularly with the community of which it is an important part. For example, staff and pupils have worked successfully with the local community council to plant trees in the area. Staff help pupils to develop an understanding of their local community and its place within Wales and the wider world successfully. For example, staff have provided effective opportunities for pupils to compare the lives of children in Wales and Malawi by raising money for a relevant charity.

The 'Ferryside School Parliament' is a busy and valuable group that provides an opportunity for all pupils to have a positive influence on what effects them at the school. Although they have begun the work, pupils are not yet given enough opportunities to have a direct influence on what they learn in lessons.

The school provides important opportunities for pupils to develop their self-confidence by taking part in performances in the school and the local community. For example, staff provided an opportunity for pupils to present the last Christmas concert to parents and the community outdoors. In addition, pupils' artwork in collaboration with a local artist was celebrated at a grand opening ceremony held at Yr Egin in Carmarthen recently.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily and works effectively with partners in the public sector, such as the police or the school nurse. This helps pupils to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding that they need to make healthy choices in terms of their lifestyle. A combination of school lessons and sessions by experts ensure that pupils have a sound understanding of issues including eating and drinking healthily, substance misuse and the importance of online safety. The school has effective arrangements to

support pupils' emotional wellbeing. These include purposeful opportunities to encourage older pupils to share their feelings and any concerns they have with the staff.

Teachers have begun to work with staff at two other local schools to provide joint extra-curricular experiences and educational visits for pupils. For example, a trip was organised for pupils from the three schools to the Urdd Centre in Cardiff recently. Through this co-operation, pupils develop their learning and social skills effectively.

The acting headteacher, governors and staff promote and support a strong sense of safety and wellbeing within the school community. They monitor attendance and regular absences effectively and take proactive action, where necessary. As a result, the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The school has experienced severe instability in leadership over several years. However, since being appointed a little under a year ago, the current acting headteacher has established a clear vision for the school based on 'nurturing honest, caring pupils who thrive in all that they do'. He conveys this vision clearly among staff, parents, governors and pupils.

The school has appropriate processes to gather evidence, which enables leaders to identify what works well and the areas that are in need of development. By implementing these consistently, the acting headteacher has identified a number of important areas for improvement in provision and teaching quickly. As a result, he has introduced improvements that have already begun to have a positive effect. As a result, most pupils make appropriate progress in specific areas such as literacy and numeracy.

The acting headteacher includes staff, parents and pupils in the self-evaluation process. He has sent them questionnaires to seek their views and has invited them to discuss any issues that are important to them. This, in addition to activities such as scrutiny of books, visiting classrooms and talking to staff and pupils, has helped to set purposeful priorities for the development plan. This plan is methodical and identifies suitable actions, the individuals who are responsible for them, a timescale for action and monitoring progress, and the cost involved. The school plans its improvement activities in response to national and local priorities effectively. For example, staff promote a robust culture of safeguarding, are preparing to introduce the Curriculum for Wales, are responding to the requirements of the new ALN Act and improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills appropriately.

Governors operate appropriately as critical friends. They understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities and discharge their statutory duties conscientiously. They are aware of the school's priorities for improvement and have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. The governing body has suitable arrangements to support pupils to make the right decisions in terms of a healthy lifestyle.

The acting headteacher and staff have a productive relationship with parents. The parents' association is hard-working and has recently funded the work of improving the outdoor learning area. The school communicates regularly with parents in various ways to inform them about important issues, such as changes to the curriculum and to provide support for parents whose children have ALN. The school has a robust partnership with the nursery school on the school grounds, which supports children to transfer to the school smoothly and happily.

The acting headteacher provides professional learning activities for all staff, which link appropriately with the findings of the self-evaluation processes, priorities for improvement and individuals' professional needs. This increases staff's understanding of effective teaching methods and supports them to use them to improve their practice. The acting headteacher identifies best practice within the three schools in his care and shares it with all members of staff in order to take advantage of it. This is beginning to have a positive effect on staff's skills in improving provision, which in turn supports pupils' progress.

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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