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

A report on

Mayals Primary School

Fairwood Road
West Cross
Swansea
SA3 5JP

Date of inspection: October 2022

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Mayals Primary School

Name of provider	Mayals Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	226
Pupils of statutory school age	202
Number in nursery classes	23
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%)	14.7%
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%)	33%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	5.4%
Date of headteacher appointment	02/09/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	11/03/2014
Start date of inspection	10/10/2022

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

Mayals Primary school is a happy, caring and supportive school that places a high priority on the well-being of its pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to school and, during their time here, they develop positive attitudes to learning and a very good understanding of the importance of respecting others. There is a strong emphasis on the school's core values, which has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning.

The headteacher and staff know the pupils well and ensure that they take good account of their individual needs. They recognise the importance of forging close links with parents and the school has a strong community feel.

The headteacher has identified some aspects of the school's work that need improvement, including designing lessons that meet the needs of pupils well, and ensuring more challenge for pupils at all levels. Teachers from nursery to Year 2 provide a range of learning experiences that engage pupils' interest and motivate them to learn. As a result, these pupils make sound progress developing their skills across the curriculum. However, leaders have not focused their monitoring and evaluation activities well enough on pupils' learning and progress. Too much teaching and too many learning experiences provided for the older pupils do not support them to make the progress they could make in Year 3 to Year 6.

Pupils at the school behave very well. They are kind and caring and treat each other fairly. They know that all adults at the school care for them and that they can turn to them if they face any challenges.

Governors know the school well and provide good support for the headteacher. They have a wide range of knowledge and experience that helps them carry out their role effectively.

Recommendations

R1 Improve the curriculum to ensure that there is progression of pupils' skills from Year 3 to Year 6

R2 Focus monitoring, evaluation and improvement strategies more sharply on improving pupils' learning and progress

R3 Plan learning experiences that challenge pupils appropriately in Year 3 to Year 6

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

A majority of pupils enter school with skills at a level expected for their age. Most pupils throughout the school, including those with additional learning needs, make good progress in developing their skills and positive attitudes to learning.

The youngest pupils develop their communication skills well. They listen attentively and respond sensibly in lessons. For example, pupils in the nursery are keen to take orders for apple tea and talk confidently about how to create a rainbow made of autumn leaves as well as what to do when a squirrel steals their acorns.

Most older pupils work very well collaboratively. They listen carefully and respond to the contributions of others well. They express their ideas clearly and accurately, for example when talking about Welsh and Mexican festivals. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils discuss topics with increasing maturity. Most younger pupils make good progress in their ability to speak Welsh. By Year 2, many begin to use Welsh confidently and recall simple sentence patterns well. Most pupils in Year 3 and 4 continue to acquire some new vocabulary and by Years 5 and 6, most can extend sentences and hold a simple conversation in Welsh.

Many pupils' early writing skills are developing effectively. The very youngest pupils begin to make marks and write letters and simple words, and in the reception class, they record their work in a suitable variety of activities. They become increasingly independent, and, by Year 2, many pupils use full sentences, capital letters and full stops. They use increasingly creative vocabulary. For example, when writing about slime, they describe it as being "gloopy and flexible". They develop their ideas sensibly and most have a sound grasp of punctuation and spelling at a level appropriate to their age and stage of development. Many pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 make sound progress in their punctuation and grammar and learn to spell complex words accurately. They begin to write in paragraphs, extending their vocabulary to use technical words purposefully, for example when experimenting with acid and alkali during a science experiment. Many older pupils write in a limited range of genres. The overuse of worksheets and overly directed activities by the teacher, inhibits pupils' writing skills and limits the opportunities for them to express themselves independently.

The youngest pupils enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. Many pupils in reception are beginning to read simple texts, using their growing phonic skills to decode unfamiliar words. By Year 2, pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy and re-tell stories confidently. Pupils continue to make sound progress in their reading in Year 3 and 4, and by the time they reach Year 6, most pupils use inference when reading, understand the strategies different authors use and apply their reading skills to research facts about their topic.

Pupils make appropriate progress in developing their numeracy skills, although they do not always apply them across the curriculum as effectively. Pupils across the school gain a sound understanding of number with the youngest pupils using physical resources well to write their number bonds to 10. By the time they reach

Year 2, pupils create written number sentences for addition and subtraction. From Year 3 to Year 6, a majority of pupils make suitable progress in developing their number skills but do not develop their numerical reasoning skills well enough due to the lack of opportunity.

Most pupils throughout the school use their digital skills appropriately. They create presentations and complete word processing tasks usefully to share their work. Many pupils develop a suitable understanding of how to record and present data using simple packages and programmes and the oldest pupils are beginning to use information from their work on world temperatures to create spreadsheets.

Most pupils develop effective physical skills. Younger pupils balance carefully and make good attempts to climb like a monkey and slither like a snake. Older pupils build on these skills purposefully and this is enhanced by the very good variety of extra-curricular sports clubs on offer.

Most younger pupils make worthwhile progress in developing their creative and artistic skills. They use a good range of media, for example to create collages of faces and rainbows using natural objects from the woodland area. In Year 5, pupils successfully created a drama sketch focusing on the Battle of Bosworth.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils at Mayals Primary School behave very well. They are kind and respectful to each other and to adults. They take pride in their school and actively promote its values in class and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Nearly all pupils feel included in the life of the school, and they are confident that all staff listen to their views. They know that staff care for them and, as a result, they feel valued and understood.

Nearly all pupils respond positively to verbal feedback from adults during lessons and settle quickly to their work. They engage well and remain on task for extended periods of time, even when they are working independently. As they progress through the school, most pupils listen attentively to others and respect that others may have different opinions. They value diversity and this is promoted well in carefully thought out and sensitive assemblies. Nearly all pupils show a positive attitude to their learning and enjoy contributing their ideas to their topics through “Plan it boards”. As they move through the school, most pupils show increasing confidence and resilience in their work. However, older pupils are aware that they do not always have enough opportunities to develop their independent thinking skills as well as they could because are guided by the teacher in most lessons.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of healthy eating, supported by Healthy Hywel, a character who encourages pupils to make healthy choices throughout the school. Pupils understand the importance of taking regular exercise to achieve a healthy life and older pupils enjoy taking part in a variety of after school sporting activities. Older pupils know how to stay safe online and understand the idea of appropriate digital footprints and how this can affect them. Nearly all pupils play co-operatively, take turns and support each other. Older pupils have a purposeful understanding of the United Nations Rights of the Child. They are keen to engage in new activities and learning experiences and understand why it is important to

persevere in tasks they may find challenging. For example, Year 4 pupils explain how they can ask a friend or do their own research before asking an adult for help.

Pupils in leadership roles value the opportunities to take on extra responsibilities and feel that they are listened to. For example, members of the Healthy Hearts Group were instrumental in developing “Caban Cymuned,” a cabin where pupils can buy fresh fruit and healthy snacks. Pupils are developing well as ethically informed citizens. For example, through fundraising activities and working with a local business, pupils have raised funds to develop a communal area outside.

Pupils are attending school more regularly this year compared to last year, when the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact nationally on school attendance. Considerably fewer pupils are persistently absent this year compared to last year.

Teaching and learning experiences

Across the school, staff establish and maintain very positive relationships with pupils. They are skilled in ensuring that all pupils feel valued as part of the school community and in return, pupils are respectful and co-operative. Overall, the school’s curriculum is broad and reflects the principles and culture of the Curriculum for Wales. All topics begin with an opportunity for pupils to influence what they want to learn through use of “Plan-It” boards. However, teaching and learning experiences for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 do not always ensure that pupils make good enough progress. Too often teachers plan activities that occupy pupils rather than focus on what they need to learn and the skills they need to develop.

The curriculum and teaching from nursery to Year 2 meet the needs of the pupils well and support them to make strong progress. Staff use their secure knowledge and understanding of the needs of the pupils to plan provision and engaging learning experiences. Younger pupils have a wealth of opportunities to learn through active play and direct their own learning in a spacious indoor and outdoor environment. Staff plan activities that build on pupils’ prior learning and support them to develop their skills well. They support pupils to engage purposefully in their learning in authentic contexts, such as making an apple crumble and Year 2 pupils responding to a letter from Grandma asking them to create a potion.

The curriculum for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 provides a suitable menu of topics although the range of authentic teaching and learning experiences offered is limited. Teachers use interesting starting points to engage pupils, for example when studying a topic about the Romans. They seek out valuable opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning and enrich creative experiences. For example, a local artist helped Year 3 design and make a graffiti wall as part of their topic and a local harpist visits the school to enhance music provision. However, although most teachers create a warm and caring environment, the planning and delivery of lessons does not always support this, as lack of challenge means that pupils sometimes lose interest and become disengaged in their learning.

Teachers across the school often provide focused verbal feedback to support pupils’ learning and check understanding of new concepts. They encourage the pupils and praise them for their achievements. Most pupils respond positively to this feedback from adults during lessons and develop confidence to tackle new challenges and persevere with their learning. Teachers assess pupils’ progress regularly. However, overall, this information is not used to identify next steps in learning effectively.

Therefore, assessment for learning strategies are in the early stages of development. and teachers in the older classes do not provide relevant and purposeful opportunities for pupils to assess their own and their peers' learning or reflect upon and improve their work. This means that the effectiveness of assessment on improving the work of individuals is limited.

Care, support and guidance

The school has a highly caring and inclusive ethos where all pupils and adults feel valued. Members of staff know the pupils well and promote values such as respect, understanding and tolerance towards others successfully. They place a high priority on the well-being of all pupils. Parents speak highly of the emotional and personal support that the school provides for them as well as their children.

Staff support pupils with their well-being from a young age, helping younger pupils to understand their emotions and how to self-regulate their behaviours. Teachers and associate staff promote the importance of good behaviour, courtesy and respect successfully. They share any concerns with parents promptly to ensure that any issues are resolved speedily. There are beneficial opportunities during assemblies and classroom activities to develop pupils' moral and spiritual understanding. For example, they learn to understand that people have similarities and differences that are important to them and this encourages them to celebrate diversity.

There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to influence the life of the school and develop their leadership skills by taking on additional responsibilities as members of one of the pupil voice groups, such as Eco Squad or Healthy Helpers who organise a fruit stall at break time to raise awareness about healthy hearts. The Criw Cymraeg work to improve the Welsh language throughout the school in lessons and encourage others to speak Welsh during playtimes. The school holds events to celebrate St. David's Day, where children can perform in the Eisteddfod.

Within the curriculum there is a variety of activities to help pupils develop their understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales, and their 'Cynefin', their place within it. For example, pupils compare Welsh festivals with those in Mexico. Staff make meaningful use of spaces beyond the grounds, such as the coast and local park to help pupils learn about their local environment and explore it safely.

Staff have developed a range of effective systems to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support and encouragement they need. For example, the school employs a welfare manager to deliver valuable support to pupils and families. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) supports pupils' needs appropriately. Staff identify pupils' additional needs early and provide focused and beneficial support to help pupils emotionally and in their learning. Regular pupil progress meetings consider a broad range of helpful information and focus suitably on pupils' individual learning needs. Overall, the school is making appropriate progress towards the national approach to ALN reform. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) works efficiently to organise a programme of support that meet pupils' needs. As a result, most pupils with ALN make appropriate progress against their targets.

Members of staff promote the importance of eating healthily and encourage physical fitness through a range of physical education activities, including extra-curricular clubs such as netball, rugby and boys and girls football clubs. The extensive playing

fields allow staff to organise and provide a range of outdoor activities, which contribute very well to pupils' wellbeing and enjoyment of exercise. Lessons also play a key part in promoting pupils' understanding of how to make healthy choices relating to their lifestyle and the importance of keeping fit.

Having received input from staff and other agencies such as the local police, pupils know how to stay safe online. Staff ensure that pupils are confident to talk about issues such as bullying. They refer to lessons and workshops where they have learnt how to identify if bullying is taking place and what to do if they ever experience it.

The school promotes pupil attendance well. It has sound strategies in place to promote good pupil attendance, including daily monitoring, regular communication with parents and follow-up work where necessary. Staff have pupils' well-being and safety at heart. The safeguarding culture is robust, and all staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and know who to speak to if they have a safeguarding concern about a pupil. There is effective provision to support pupils to keep themselves safe when working online. The school's arrangements to keep pupils safe meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and staff create a warm, welcoming and caring community which has pupil well-being at its heart. Parents recognise this and appreciate it greatly; they particularly value the nurturing ethos the school promotes. The school has developed positive relationships with the whole community and supports families considerately. It is effective in gathering the opinions of a wide range of stakeholders, for example, leaders survey pupils and parents effectively through the use of questionnaires. They use this information sensitively to inform future initiatives, for example when considering after-school activities.

The headteacher and governors are committed to the professional development of all staff. They create opportunities for teachers to grow into leadership roles and for associate staff to progress their careers, for example, by supporting associate staff to qualify as teachers or higher-level teaching assistants. There are effective processes to support newly qualified teachers and nearly all staff feel supported, valued and listened to. Professional development and performance management links suitably to school improvement priorities. The school collaborates well with other schools in its cluster, for example to develop a consistent approach to areas of learning and experience in the Curriculum for Wales. Leaders plan effective opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in a range of formal and informal situations. They have developed the role of the 'Criw Cymraeg' successfully and pupils play a key role in improving spoken Welsh.

Overall, the school has appropriate arrangements for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. This includes considering a range of first-hand evidence, such as looking at pupils' work, listening to their views and carrying out lesson observations. However, although the school's development priorities are broadly relevant, leaders have not identified important areas for improvement in teaching and learning, such as in planning for the progression of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Monitoring and evaluation do not always focus sharply enough on evaluating the impact that the school's actions have on improving teaching and learning.

Members of the governing body are highly supportive of the school and discharge their duties conscientiously. Through regular visits and reports from the headteacher, they are well informed about the school's work. Governors ensure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place to promote the importance of healthy eating and drinking. Leaders link national priorities with the needs of their school community suitably, for instance by supporting pupils to engage in activities, such as residential visits, that enrich the curriculum.

The headteacher and governors manage the budget suitably. They allocate and monitor the pupil development grant and other additional funding carefully and ensure these benefit vulnerable pupils. For example, this funding is used beneficially to subsidise school trips, enrichment activities and additional members of staff. This allows more pupils to access small group or individual support and so make greater progress. It has also enabled practitioner training to support pupils' emotional well-being. Leaders ensure that the school has plenty of good quality resources that meet pupils' needs sensibly. For example, a new perimeter fence improves pupil safety and digital resources enhance provision for pupils throughout 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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2022: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 12/12/2022