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

A report on

Old Road C.P. School

Old Road
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA15 3HW

Date of inspection: October 2022

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Old Road C.P. School

Name of provider	Old Road C.P. School
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	166
Pupils of statutory school age	127
Number in nursery classes	14
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 21.3%)	42%
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 22.2%)	24.4%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	6.3%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	25.2%
Date of headteacher appointment	January 2009
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/02/2014
Start date of inspection	03/10/2022

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

Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants at Old Road CP School are committed to creating a warm and happy learning environment where pupils enjoy a variety of learning experiences provided for them, both indoors and outdoors. Most pupils are friendly and keen to talk about their work, their friendships and how the school helps them to learn and thrive. Pupils feel safe and listened to, and most show a positive attitude towards their learning.

During their time in school, many pupils make sound progress in most areas of learning. They develop their thinking skills well through talking and listening to others. In general, learning activities do not always support a minority of the older pupils to develop their reading and writing skills to the best of their ability. Most pupils make suitable progress in developing their mathematical knowledge, however, opportunities for them to apply their numeracy skills systematically in different areas of learning is limited. The school provides a broad and interesting range of learning activities to help pupils develop their understanding of the culture, history and geography of Wales. However, pupils do not develop their Welsh language skills well enough across the school. Pupils across the school develop their digital and creative skills well and older pupils transfer their learning successfully to enterprise projects in the local area.

Pupils make contributions to teachers' planning, often making useful suggestions. They enjoy taking purposeful roles in the school's leadership groups and their ideas influence positive changes, for example to its outdoor provision and to its inclusive ethos. The school's vision to support pupils to become respectful and responsible citizens can be seen clearly in the way they make a difference to the school and wider community.

Teachers are beginning to develop purposeful opportunities which reflect the new Curriculum for Wales and its four purposes. They consider pupils experiences and interests and begin to engage them in rich and purposeful learning. Adults and pupils have a strong working relationship, and staff help pupils to understand and regulate their emotions sensitively in preparing them for learning. On the whole, teachers do not always plan learning activities that supports and challenges all learners to make strong progress.

Leaders generally identify priorities for school improvement accurately. Most recently this has included standards in literacy and Welsh. They focus appropriately on pupils' well-being and act on plans to monitor the teaching and learning. However, leaders do not identify specific aspects of teaching that needs refining to best meet the needs of all pupils. Most governors work well with leaders to plan and monitor school improvement. However, not all governors support the strategic direction of the school effectively to bring about the changes needed. Leaders and governors carefully consider ways to combat disadvantage and to provide effective support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).

Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' reading and writing skills, especially for the older pupils

R2 Ensure that the curriculum supports pupils to develop their knowledge and skills progressively, especially in numeracy

R3 Ensure that teachers better plan to meet pupils' individual needs, especially the more able

R4 Strengthen school improvement processes to focus on specific areas of teaching and learning

R5 Ensure that all members of the governing body work collaboratively and constructively to support leaders with areas for improvement

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

During their time at Old Road CP School, many pupils, including those who are socially disadvantaged, make suitable progress from their individual starting points in most areas of learning. Most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make suitable progress towards their individual targets. However, pupils, particularly the more able and those in need of additional guidance, do not always work at an appropriately supportive or challenging level. As a result, they do not make the progress they are capable of in different aspects of the curriculum.

Many pupils speak confidently to each other and to adults. The youngest pupils make rapid progress. For example, they make good attempts at naming the vegetables they are using to make soup, such as cabbage and pumpkin and describe which are heavy or light. Most pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 listen to each other considerately and hold discussions in groups productively. They speak clearly and use persuasive language convincingly when producing a video advertisement. A few pupils are less confident when presenting to their peers.

Many younger pupils develop a useful understanding of letters and sounds, build words successfully and begin to read simple texts accurately. As they move through the school, many make suitable progress in improving their reading skills and read appropriate texts with fluency, independence and concentration. They identify the main points from stories they have enjoyed. However, a minority of older pupils do not always read fluently enough or understand sufficiently the books they have chosen to read.

As they move through the school, many pupils improve their writing skills appropriately. Pupils in Year 2 begin to write legibly and develop their use of descriptive language when describing the toys in their classroom. A majority of pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 write in more depth for a range of purposes, for example when explaining a bad day in their diary entries or creating hypotheses about their heart's performance. A majority of older pupils include vocabulary appropriate to areas of learning and experience, use paragraphs suitably and vary sentence structures. However, by Year 6, a minority of pupils writing skills remain inconsistent. In a few cases, their written work contains too many spelling and punctuation errors and is difficult to understand. When given the opportunity, many pupils use their literacy skills well to support their work in other subjects. For example, in Year 6, pupils develop arguments for and against opening a copper works in the local area.

Most younger pupils make suitable progress in developing their number skills, for example counting out pinecones to put into their soup in the mud kitchen. By Year 2, many are beginning to transfer their skills competently, for example measuring objects in the class and finding the sum of groups of blocks in their play. Many older pupils make good progress in developing their mathematical skills. By Year 6, pupils use appropriate mental and written strategies to complete calculations, such as finding factors of a whole number. They have a good understanding of decimals and use this well, for instance when recording distance and time. However, across the school, pupils do not always apply their number skills securely enough in their work

across the curriculum or when solving problems, for example when calculating the interest on earnings in a bank account.

Many pupils make an appropriate start in developing their basic skills in Welsh. Younger pupils use simple words and phrases happily, for example to greet others and to say ‘diolch’. In Year 1 and Year 2, they join in with singing Welsh songs and comment on the weather accurately. As they progress through the school, a majority of pupils follow the Welsh patterns modelled by adults in Welsh sessions well. They use a range of supportive materials and by Year 6, a majority use a few sentences and phrases independently, such as when expressing opinions or replying to questions about how they are feeling. However, many pupils do not use Welsh as confidently outside of these sessions.

Pupils use digital skills to support their learning in most subjects regularly. Younger pupils use mobile devices confidently to support their literacy skills, for instance to play a letter and sound matching game. By Year 2, a majority use technology well to record data and create bar charts successfully. Older pupils use a broad variety of programs confidently, for example when creating interesting presentations or producing spreadsheets to record numerical information. They develop a basic understanding of databases, but do not have a secure enough understanding of how to use them purposefully to search for information.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to be creative, for example when creating colourful collages of their favourite toys focusing intently on their work, using natural and manmade materials, such as pasta and felt. Older pupils develop their creativity and imagination well through drama, expressing the moods and emotions of characters as a stimulus for writing their own Welsh folk tales. Pupils in Year 6 develop their ideas extensively, working with artists to produce animations and composing the music for a film about their local area.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Most pupils are thoughtful and treat one another, staff and visitors with respect. They learn to form and maintain friendships, reflecting on how to treat others and, as a result, they feel safe and happy in school. Nearly all pupils demonstrate good behaviour in classes and around the school. There are very few instances of bullying but, when they do occur, pupils know who to turn to and feel certain that staff will resolve issues swiftly. Pupils use helpful class charters to ensure that everyone can learn without disruption.

Across the school, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They engage enthusiastically with learning experiences when working with adults, completing tasks independently or at play. Pupils often work well in pairs and small groups and persevere when learning new skills. Overall, many pupils remain engaged in their learning throughout their lessons. In a few classes, a minority of pupils do not maintain their interest when learning independently. Many pupils respond well to written and verbal feedback from teachers, for example to improve their methods of mathematical calculation. As they move through the school, they begin to use success criteria to identify and understand what they need to do to improve. By the end of their time in school, many pupils use a peer learning coach effectively to improve and reflect on their learning. In general, pupils’ ability to articulate their next steps in learning is less secure.

Most pupils enjoy opportunities to be active, for example playing games or using a wide range of equipment in the outdoors at break and lunchtimes. The youngest pupils develop their co-ordination well as they enthusiastically manoeuvre trikes around a path. Older pupils play ball games and use a range of sporting equipment to develop their physical skills further.

Nearly all pupils interact purposefully with staff in a range of situations, and most respond to instructions appropriately. Most pupils are able to talk about the purpose of rules in keeping everyone in the school safe and happy. Many pupils make healthy food choices and understand the importance of eating a healthy breakfast at the beginning of the day to prepare themselves for learning. Most pupils develop a sound understanding of how to protect themselves online, for example when using search engines to gather information for school projects and when playing online games at home.

Pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 take on leadership roles and responsibilities in the school's pupil voice groups and confidently describe the ways in which they make a difference in school. Pupils in the eco council developed the 'walking bus' to support other pupils with their attendance and the healthy school group use 'Wheels Day' to encourage pupils to travel to school on foot or by bike. Older pupils worked closely with an inspiring local blacksmith to design a new quiet zone in the school grounds. Pupils are especially enthusiastic about their work as global goalkeepers promoting fair-trade activities and sustainability issues such as the global effects of the use of palm oil.

Teaching and learning experiences

Although the school is in the early stages of designing its curriculum, teachers are beginning to adapt their planning suitably to consider the four purposes and areas of learning and experience (AoLE) in line with the transition to Curriculum for Wales. The school, using the locality as a stimulus, is developing a range of suitable and interesting learning opportunities. The current topic, for example, aims to provide experiences linked to the pupils own interests, their immediate experience and that of their families as they explore the history, culture and changing face of Llanelli. Pupils enjoy discovering the work of local artists, exploring traditional Welsh literature and experiencing the busy trading environment at the town's market.

The curriculum has a broad range of learning experiences that engage most pupils well. Teachers make effective use of the outdoors, especially the recent addition of the Nature Den, to provide interesting opportunities for pupils to develop skills effectively. For example, pupils in Year 2 practise their measuring skills in the outdoors and develop problem-solving when experimenting with natural resources to fashion a miniature den to keep their toys safe from the elements. In a few areas of learning, teachers have begun to carefully consider the experiences pupils will need to engage in successful learning. In the best examples, teachers build sequences of lessons which build on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, for example to transfer their knowledge of co-ordinates to their artwork and to extend these experiences to the world of work by producing items to sell locally. However, in general, the curriculum does not build systematically and coherently enough on pupils' knowledge and skills and teachers do not consider a wide enough range of teaching approaches. As a result, pupils do not develop skills, such as reading, writing and numeracy, well enough as they move through the school.

The school's work on diversity is well-established and teachers plan opportunities for pupils to share their own cultures and languages and to learn about others. They develop their understanding of relationships from a young age and by the time they leave the school, pupils have a good understanding of the LGBTQ+ community. The school helps pupils develop their understanding of Wales well, for example, through visits to places such as Kidwelly Castle where pupils explore and appreciate the past. However, while there is a structured plan to support pupils in developing their Welsh language skills, not all teachers build well enough upon the broad range of vocabulary and language patterns developed by the school's Welsh leader. As a result, pupils do not develop their Welsh language skills well enough across the school.

Nearly all teachers plan and deliver a broad range of stimulating and purposeful learning activities, such as debates and drama sessions. In nearly all cases, teachers develop learning experiences that focus on a clear learning objective helpfully. As a result, most pupils engage in their learning well. All adults treat pupils with kindness and respect, and this gives pupils the confidence to ask and to respond to questions positively.

Most teachers use questioning well to help challenge pupils' thinking and to identify pupils' misconceptions. In many cases, teachers use teaching assistants beneficially, and they make a valuable contribution towards pupils' learning. On occasion, teachers do not challenge or support pupils well enough or have high enough expectations of what they should achieve, particularly when learning independently. As a result, pupils do not always make strong enough progress in their skills.

The school is developing its understanding of the way they can support pupils to know what and how to develop their work. In many classes, adults give pupils helpful verbal feedback on their learning that supports them in completing tasks and in understanding what they need to do to improve. A minority of teachers are beginning to use success criteria to help pupils understand how to complete tasks well. However, this work is at an early stage of development and teachers do not discuss progress with pupils regularly enough for them to fully understand the purpose of their learning, or their next steps.

Care, support and guidance

Old Road CP School is a warm and friendly community where all staff place a high priority on the well-being of pupils. The positive relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves is a strong feature of the school. Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well and respond sensitively and effectively to their emotional and social needs through a range of appropriate strategies. This contributes to high levels of happiness and well-being.

The school has worked efficiently to implement ALN reform, including establishing effective systems to identify the additional needs of specific learners. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) ensures that pupils with ALN have detailed plans for the support they need to make the progress they are capable of and these pupils make good progress towards meeting their individual targets. All pupils have useful one-page profiles, shared with parents and carers, stating what makes them happy and how they can be supported in their learning. Many teachers and teaching assistants implement strategies effectively to create inclusive classrooms. The school

works well with external agencies and a few staff receive training to provide effective and sustained support for pupils with social and emotional needs. However, teachers do not always identify the needs of all learners in their planning sufficiently well enough to meet the needs of every pupil.

The school offers an engaging range of activities to promote physical health and emotional well-being. All pupils take part in daily physical activity, often in the outdoors, and as they move through the school, they develop their understanding of the importance of physical well-being on their bodies and minds. Younger pupils reflect on how their actions affect others, for example, considering how they help others and how they have been helped. Across the school, pupils learn to express and regulate their emotions. Older pupils appreciate the many opportunities they have to share their worries with trusted adults.

Teachers provide opportunities for many pupils to be included in what they learn. For example, at the beginning of a topic, pupils share what they already know about their locality and suggest what they would like to learn. They are beginning to influence how they learn by suggesting activities, trips and visits. Pupils develop their leadership skills effectively by taking on additional responsibilities and make active decisions about important aspects of school life. The eco council promotes sustainability and respect for the environment in its work on developing the outdoor gardens. The school council leads the school's work on human rights, making a successful bid for a peace award.

The school provides a range of trips and visits to support the curriculum and to engage pupils in their learning. These include visits to different areas of their locality and trips further afield to the theatre to see plays based on Y Mabinogi. Older pupils enjoy adventurous activities during residential trips, which help them to develop their independence, resilience and problem solving skills. Following the pandemic, the school has not yet reinstated its after-school clubs.

Whole school acts of collective worship make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Staff provide pupils with the opportunity to reflect on key values and how they might apply to their daily lives. The school celebrates its Welsh heritage and its diversity positively and develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of the culture of Wales as well as that of the wider world. It sustains its international links with schools in Lesotho and France and celebrates key world religious festivals. When thinking about future careers, pupils have opportunities work with local artists, traders and businesses. Older pupils use these experiences to transfer a range of learned skills and their creativity to a range of purposeful enterprise activities.

The school monitors pupils' attendance closely and uses a range of initiatives to reduce persistent absenteeism such as the walking bus and attendance club. Pupils have opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe, for example through the school's approach to addressing pupils' concerns and lessons about internet safety. The school's arrangements and culture of safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management

Leaders create a caring and inclusive environment. There is a strong sense of team work amongst staff and a shared commitment to ensuring that pupils are happy and healthy. As a result many pupils often display high levels of engagement. The established senior leadership team, together with middle leaders, work well to support each other. Following school closures during the pandemic, they have identified a number of important areas in need of improvement including the standards of literacy in English and Welsh, and strengthening the school's approaches to monitoring teaching and learning. Where improvement planning is productive, the school makes good progress, for example in supporting the health and well-being of its pupils and improving provision for mathematics.

Leaders are beginning to structure and distribute roles and responsibilities across the school to improve teaching and to share the successful practice that exists in the school. This is at an early stage of development. Leaders ensure that professional development is linked to school improvement priorities and make suitable arrangements for performance management. Although there is a useful plan in place for monitoring the quality of learning and teaching the school, it has not yet reinstated the full range of its monitoring processes following the pandemic. As a result, leaders do not always focus suitably on addressing the aspects of teaching and learning most in need of improvement and which will ensure that the school meets the needs of all learners effectively. Leaders plan appropriately to address local and national priorities. This includes supporting pupils to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaders have implemented changes to its provision for pupils with additional needs in light of ALN reform. Most staff have clearly defined roles and the school uses a range of purposeful interventions, which allow those with ALN to make good progress. However, on occasion, teachers do not deploy additional staff effectively enough to support the progress of all pupils during lessons. Leaders support staff appropriately to implement the school's curriculum and teachers are beginning to evaluate the school's progress in developing AoLEs. This is at an early stage of development.

Across the school, leaders and staff at all levels have a strong understanding of pupils well-being needs. The school's response to the impact of the pandemic leads to high standards of behaviour and effective provision to address the impact of social disadvantage. The school builds purposeful relationships with the community and supports vulnerable families in need. Many parents and carers are appreciative of the work of the school. However, parents do not always receive all the information they need in a timely manner.

In general, the governing body acts suitably as a critical friend. Many governors understand the school's priorities and contribute useful suggestions which improve the pupils' experience. Together with leaders they monitor spending plans and the impact of these plans efficiently. As a result, the school allocates its grant funding effectively. For example, the school uses the pupil development grant to provide individual support for pupils' emotional well-being and to improve attendance. Governors ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. However, not all governors support the strategic direction of the school. This lack of cohesion impacts negatively on the work of leaders and teachers.

Leaders and governors establish a sound safeguarding culture at Old Road CP school. They ensure that the learning experiences that they provide help to develop pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

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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