



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

**A report on**

**Morrison Comprehensive School**

**Heol Maes Eglwys  
Morrison  
SA6 6NH**

**Date of inspection: September 2024**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About Morryston Comprehensive School

Name of provider	Morryston Comprehensive School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Secondary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	1086
Pupils of statutory school age	942
Number in sixth form	143
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 Secondary is 21.1%)	27.9%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Secondary is 11.2%)	15.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.8%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	03/02/2020
Start date of inspection	30/09/2024

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: [mylocalschool.gov.wales](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

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

## Summary

Morriston Comprehensive school fosters a strong sense of community. Staff are committed to supporting pupils and their families to improve their well-being and progress in learning. This is underpinned by the headteacher's clear vision for creating an inclusive ethos that values the contribution that the whole community make towards school life. This has helped to place the school at the centre of its community and to provide high levels of care, support and guidance for their pupils and their families. As a result of this caring ethos, many pupils feel safe and free from bullying.

In most lessons, there are positive relationships between staff and pupils. This helps pupils engage well at the start of lessons. The majority of teachers plan activities with an appropriate level of challenge, provide clear explanations and have suitable expectations of pupils' progress and participation. In these lessons, pupils make sound progress in their learning. In a few lessons, pupils make strong progress because of effective teaching that stimulates their engagement and challenges their understanding and thinking. In a minority of cases, there are shortcomings in teaching that mean pupils make limited progress and often become passive in their learning. In these lessons, teachers often plan undemanding tasks, provide too much support for pupils and have too low expectations of what they can achieve.

The school provides a suitably broad and balanced curriculum and offers an appropriate range of courses for pupils in Key Stage 4 and sixth form. This curriculum is enriched through a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and visits. Whilst staff have been committed to developing their Curriculum for Wales, the school's provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is not planned or coordinated strategically. As a result, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply or develop their skills alongside their subject understanding.

Pupils in the sixth form enjoy being part of the school community. In general, they engage positively in lessons and work productively with one another.

Leadership has secured valuable improvements in certain aspects of the school's work, for example pupils' attendance. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved year on year and compares favourably to levels in similar schools. In addition, pupils feel that behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved. Despite this, leadership at all levels has not had enough impact on a number of important areas, in particular on the quality of teaching and learning and the progressive development of pupils' skills. This is due to the variation in leaders' ability to evaluate and plan for improvement and because senior leaders have not ensured that middle leaders consistently carry out their roles effectively. Although the senior leadership team has very recently been reorganised, leaders at all levels, including governors, are not clear enough about their roles and responsibilities. In addition, senior leadership roles are not distributed well enough which hampers the school's ability to secure improvements.

The specialist teaching facility provides a caring environment where pupils engage in a valuable curriculum and helpful learning experiences that support them to make strong progress from their starting points.

## Recommendations

We have made four recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Ensure that self-evaluation focuses precisely on the impact of provision on pupils' learning and progress
- R2 Refine roles and responsibilities of senior leaders so that they and governors hold staff to account fully
- R3 Improve the effectiveness of teaching so that pupils are consistently challenged to make strong progress
- R4 Develop the strategic leadership of skills so that pupils receive a range of challenging and relevant opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy across the curriculum

## What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress about 12 months after the publication of this report.

## Main findings

### Teaching and learning

In most cases, teachers in Morriston Comprehensive School foster positive working relationships with their pupils and develop well-established classroom routines. This supports pupils to engage positively in their learning. Most settle quickly at the beginning of their lessons and demonstrate strong levels of respect for staff, visitors and their peers.

In the few cases where teaching is effective, teachers:

- have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
- plan carefully, focusing on what and how they want pupils to learn
- provide helpful modelling to support pupils' knowledge and understanding
- skilfully control the pace of their lessons in response to pupil progress

- ask helpful questions that challenge pupils to deepen their learning and develop their thinking

In these lessons, pupils confidently recall prior learning and successfully apply their knowledge, skills and understanding in a suitable range of new contexts. They make good progress, develop their thinking skills, and work well independently.

The majority of teachers plan appropriately and offer pupils a suitable level of challenge. They ensure that activities build on and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding appropriately. These teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. They have suitable expectations of pupils' engagement and progress. This enables the majority of pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), to make sound progress in their learning.

Despite these strengths, shortcomings in teaching mean that a minority of pupils make limited progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. In a minority of cases, teachers:

- plan for what they want pupils to do, rather than what they want them to learn
- provide pupils with activities that are insufficiently demanding or too heavily scaffolded and do not allow pupils to make good progress
- do not ensure that pupils are fully engaged throughout the lesson
- do not plan well enough to help pupils develop their skills alongside their subject understanding

In these lessons, pupils of all abilities do not make sufficient progress. They have difficulty applying their knowledge, understanding and skills. In addition, a minority of pupils are often too passive in their learning, lose focus, and rely too heavily on teachers to support them. As a result, they do not consistently develop their independence or their resilience to persist when work becomes challenging.

Many teachers use questioning appropriately to test pupils' recall and understanding. Only a few use questioning skilfully to probe or deepen pupils' understanding. This limits the development of pupils' thinking skills and their ability to reflect on their own learning.

Many teachers monitor pupil progress appropriately and provide suitable verbal feedback during lessons. In general, pupils respond purposefully to this in order to improve the quality of their work.

Although a minority of subjects across the curriculum provide suitable opportunities for pupils to practise their basic literacy, numeracy and digital skills, overall, provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills is not strategically planned and co-ordinated. As a result, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply and develop their skills, in particular their literacy and numeracy skills, in a range of relevant and challenging contexts.

The majority of pupils listen carefully to their teachers and respond promptly to questions and instructions. They share their views appropriately and use a suitable range of vocabulary to justify their opinions. However, a minority of pupils offer only brief and underdeveloped responses, using only a limited range of vocabulary. They

are often not challenged or supported well enough by their teachers to improve their responses.

Many pupils can extract relevant information from texts suitably. A few pupils use advanced reading skills well, for example when they use inference and deduction to examine the behaviour of characters in novels and plays. However, overall, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their advanced reading skills across the curriculum. They do not use range of reading strategies successfully to support their learning.

Around half of pupils produce short, well-structured and accurate pieces of writing for a suitable range of purposes and audiences. However, they are not offered sufficient opportunities to write at length across the curriculum and therefore do not develop their ability to write extended pieces well enough. Although a few pupils write in a mature and sophisticated style, around half often do not demonstrate sufficient control in their writing and make careless errors.

The majority of pupils have sound basic number skills and use the four rules competently, for example to calculate percentage increases. Many construct and analyse simple graphs accurately. Generally, pupils do not develop their understanding of mathematics and numeracy concepts well enough. As a result, the minority have difficulty when performing basic calculations and the majority do not develop or apply their numeracy skills sufficiently in relevant contexts.

A few subjects provide helpful opportunities for pupils to develop their digital skills. For example, they develop a flowchart for classification in science and manipulate images in photography. In their ICT lessons, pupils develop a suitable understanding of software, for example when using spreadsheets and databases.

Many pupils have a positive attitude towards learning Welsh and make suitable progress in their Welsh lessons. They construct basic sentences in Welsh and retrieve information from simple texts. When speaking Welsh, many pupils provide only simple responses and their use of Welsh language outside of Welsh lessons is limited.

Overall, pupils in the sixth form have positive attitudes towards their learning, engage well in lessons and respond positively to teacher feedback. They present their work clearly and are keen to work collaboratively, providing helpful support to their peers.

The school provides a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. Staff have worked enthusiastically to establish the school's own vision for Curriculum for Wales to promote subject knowledge and provide learning experiences that are tailored to ensure that pupils are 'Ready, Respectful and Responsible'. The school provides beneficial extra-curricular activities and visits that enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils participate in a field trip to Penllergaer or a visit to local arts centre to see a Welsh language play. In addition, the school production provides a large number of pupils with a valuable opportunity to develop their creativity and confidence and contributes well to the inclusive ethos of the school.

Pupils benefit from a valuable Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme that is responsive to pupils' needs and the school's context. This helps to

foster positive and respectful attitudes to diversity, for example when pupils consider how best to challenge stereotypes. Planning for other aspects of curriculum, such as developing an understanding of the history, cultural and linguistic heritage of Wales is at an early stage of development.

For older pupils, the school provides a wide range of suitable courses that enables them to follow their chosen pathway. These include criminology and politics in the sixth form as well as GCSE courses in Spanish and construction. The school collaborates effectively with other schools in order to enhance the breadth and balance of the sixth form curriculum.

Pupils in the Specialist Teaching Facility (STF) benefit from a tailored curriculum that supports them to make good progress. This includes the opportunity to engage in the mainstream curriculum where appropriate, for example when they study construction in Key Stage 4. Pupils in the STF have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to share their learning with others.

### **Well-being, care, support and guidance**

Morriston Comprehensive School is a warm, caring and nurturing school where staff are passionate about supporting their pupils. They have created an inclusive community that provides effective support and guidance. The school has focused carefully on cementing its position at the heart of the community, employing staff strategically to support pupils' needs.

The school provides a high level of care and support through an extensive range of provision. Leaders use well-being data effectively to identify specific themes and provide targeted support for themes such as friendship issues, 'sexting' and social skills. Pupils' well-being is monitored closely and the introduction of digital platforms means that pupils know how to report concerns and feel supported when there are issues.

Staff work effectively with a broad range of external agencies to provide beneficial additional support for those pupils who need it. The school also works effectively with partners such as the police, social services and the local health board to address specific issues. Staff work strategically to foster strong relationships with parents and carers. For example, they hold coffee mornings and parenting classes. This work has a positive impact in reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

#### **Spotlight – Improving pupils' attendance**

Leaders at the school monitor pupils' attendance closely. They analyse data regularly to identify trends in the attendance of groups of pupils. There is a considered approach to intervening when pupils' attendance falls below specified levels. This involves staff at all levels and outside agencies. The school uses a variety of strategies to improve attendance and a strong feature is the regular evaluation of the impact of these strategies on individual pupils. Leaders regularly communicate the importance of good attendance to pupils and parents. Pupils appreciate the school's rewards systems. They are able to gain rewards for positive engagement and good behaviour as well as high levels of attendance.

The school's work in this area has led to attendance improving year on year, and the school's attendance compares favourably with that of similar schools, although it remains substantially below pre-pandemic levels. The attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average and that of schools which have a similar context.

Many pupils behave appropriately in lessons and around the school, although pupils feel that, at times, behaviour in lessons does disrupt their learning. The school tracks pupils' behaviour well. It has suitable procedures in place to support engagement and behaviour. For example, staff in the school's behaviour management centre provide valuable interventions to support pupils' self-regulation. The school uses restorative approaches well to allow pupils to learn from their mistakes and rebuild relationships with staff and peers. A small number of pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 attend the 'MILE' centre, which provides a bespoke alternative curriculum for pupils with behavioural challenges.

Pupils, including those in the STF, are encouraged to take on leadership roles and the school has appropriate arrangements for pupils to develop their leadership skills. The school parliament is open to all pupils and is suitably involved in influencing school life. As a result, many pupils feel that the school listens to their opinions and adapts provision accordingly. The pupil parliament has had a positive influence on improving aspects of school life such as the price of food in the canteen, and changes to school uniform.

The school provides pupils with beneficial opportunities to develop their understanding of life after school and the world of work, helping to raise their aspirations. When choosing their options at the end of Year 9, the school offers useful guidance to pupils. Key Stage 4 pupils are provided with impartial guidance on further education, careers and other post-16 options. Sixth form pupils value the regular sessions to guide them in making choices about their next steps.

There are sound arrangements for supporting pupils as they move from primary school, including open evenings and transition days. Pupils who have ALN, including those transferring to the STF, benefit from enhanced transition arrangements to ensure that they settle well at the start of Year 7 and that the school is fully aware of their needs.

The STF provides strong support for its pupils. Staff know them well and adapt their teaching to bring out the best in their pupils. Staff place a suitably high priority upon nurturing pupils and supporting their well-being. As a result, nearly all pupils in the STF are happy and confident to learn.

The ALN Team is determined to ensure the best possible care and support for pupils with ALN. There are helpful processes for tracking and monitoring the progress of these pupils, with clear entry and exit criteria for interventions that focus suitably on pupil progress. The school regularly reviews and refines its provision to ensure that they support pupils with ALN effectively.

The school has made suitable progress towards the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act. Individual development plans



identify key information about barriers to learning and they are beginning to provide suitable guidance of how teachers can support pupils within lessons. The ALN team know its pupils' individual needs well. This is reinforced by the use of person-centred practices, which ensures that pupils and parents are involved in developing their individual development plans. The school makes good use of a digital platform to ensure that staff have access to one-page profiles, although the monitoring of how well class teachers use this information is underdeveloped.

The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding suitably. There is a comprehensive personal and social education programme to develop pupils' awareness of their own well-being, mental health and emotional needs. This is reinforced by the 'Values' curriculum, which is delivered during registration periods and assemblies.

The school has a sound culture of safeguarding. The safeguarding team have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They respond to concerns appropriately and make referrals to outside agencies when necessary. Pupils know who to report their concerns to and have confidence the school will respond appropriately. Pastoral staff deal swiftly and robustly with incidents of negative behaviour. As a result, many pupils feel safe, fairly treated and free from bullying and harassment.

### **Leading and improving**

The headteacher has a clear vision for developing a safe and inclusive school. This is supported by a positive culture of collaboration amongst staff.

Overall, leadership has been successful in securing beneficial improvements in several aspects of its provision for care, support and guidance. This has had a positive impact on, for example, pupils' attitudes to learning and rates of attendance. However, leadership at all levels has not had a sufficiently consistent impact on other important areas, particularly on the quality of teaching and therefore the progress that pupils make in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

The majority of leaders at all levels have a suitable understanding of the broad strengths and areas for development in their areas of responsibility. They analyse data appropriately and make sensible adaptations to their provision. A minority use a range of self-evaluation evidence thoughtfully to plan for and secure improvement in specific aspects. Overall, however, leaders do not always evaluate their provision with sufficient rigour. In particular, they do not focus well enough on the impact of teaching on pupil progress. This gives them an overgenerous view of their provision and restricts their ability to secure improvement.

Middle leaders are enthusiastic and committed to improving pupil outcomes. They ensure that staff in their teams have useful opportunities to share good practice. They value the support they receive from their line managers. However, there is not enough consistency in how robustly senior leaders hold them to account. Whole-school professional learning has a strong focus on supporting staff to develop their Curriculum for Wales. However, it has not focused well enough on developing the leadership skills of middle and senior leaders. As a result of these factors, there is considerable variation in how effectively middle leaders carry out their roles.

The school has taken a range of beneficial steps to address a few national priorities, such as reducing the impact of poverty on pupil outcomes. For instance, they provide these pupils with extra support for examination preparation and homework. These strategies have had a positive impact on, for example, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals. However, leaders have not had sufficient impact on the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills, or the attainment of pupils from low-income households.

Governors are committed supporters of the school. They are working to strengthen links with subject areas in order to better understand and support senior and middle leaders. However, they are not sufficiently well-informed about some important aspects of the school's work, for example the progress pupils make in their learning and skills, which limits their capacity to hold leaders to account. In addition, their role in ensuring that the school promotes healthy eating and drinking is not well enough developed.

Over the last few years, leaders have been successful in putting the school on a secure financial footing. In general, leaders and governors monitor spending appropriately to ensure that it is focused on the school's improvement priorities. Grant funding such as the pupil development grant is targeted suitably on meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils. However, its impact is not evaluated thoroughly enough. In order to achieve financial stability, the school has recently substantially reorganised the structure of its senior team. Although it has endeavoured to match these new roles to the school's improvement priorities, responsibilities are not sufficiently balanced, equitable or clear.

The STF benefits from effective leadership. Staff focus closely on the progress pupils make and adapt their provision thoughtfully to meet the needs of their pupils well.

### **Additional information**

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for site security do not give any cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

## 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 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 and middle leaders (where appropriate) 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, where appropriate
- visit a broad sample of lessons, 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

## Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

## 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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