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

A report on

Rhosymedre Community Primary School

Parc Road
Rhosymedre
Wrexham
LL14 3EG

Date of inspection: October 2024

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Rhosymedre Community Primary School

Name of provider	Rhosymedre Community Primary School
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	English medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	230
Pupils of statutory school age	174
Number in nursery classes	27
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 22.9%)	58.3%
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 11.1%)	13.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2011
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/09/2017
Start date of inspection	14/10/2024

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

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

Summary

The headteacher has established a clear vision based on pupil well-being and family engagement. Adults quickly get to know the pupils very well. As a result, nearly all pupils at Rhosymedre school feel valued and respected, and grow in confidence as they progress through the school. The learning environment is calm, and staff use resources very well to support pupils' emotional needs. For example, break out areas throughout the school provide a safe and comfortable space for pupils when they feel stressed or upset.

Leaders work well with families and external agencies to secure specific support when this is required. Families feel very well supported by the school and partnerships between the school and the community are strong.

Adults work together effectively to ensure that pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), including those in the learning resource provisions, make strong progress from their starting point.

Teachers plan interesting and engaging lessons and foster strong relationships with the pupils. However, in a minority of lessons, teacher overdirect the learning and pupils are not always given sufficient opportunity to respond to feedback and improve their own work.

Leaders evaluate the work of the school appropriately and they identify purposeful priorities to secure school improvement. However, this work does not always focus sharply enough on pupil progress and aspects of teaching, such as ensuring the right level of challenge for all pupils.

Teachers and adults alike are excellent language role models. They support nearly all pupils to make sound progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. Older pupils speak with confidence and enthusiasm and show pride in their work and in their school. Most pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. However, opportunities for them to write at length are limited.

Many pupils make appropriate progress in developing their mathematical and digital skills from a low base line. However, teachers do not always provide a high enough level of challenge for pupils in these aspects of their work.

Recommendations

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

R1   Improve provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills and ensure that teaching consistently provides the right level of challenge for pupils

R2   Ensure that adults do not over-direct learning experiences during lessons

R3   Ensure that self-evaluation activity and development planning is focused on improving progress for all pupils

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Rhosymedre school is a safe, warm, inclusive environment underpinned by a strong culture of safeguarding and support for pupils' emotional well-being. The headteacher has established a strong vision for the school and all members of its community collaborate well to achieve it. Nearly all pupils feel valued and grow in confidence as they progress through the school. The learning environment is a calming and relaxing space that enables pupils to learn successfully. Nearly all pupils engage purposefully in their activities. They behave extremely well and are courteous and polite to one another and adults alike. All staff treat pupils with care, respect and kindness.

Spotlight: Building strong relationships to support pupils' well-being

Leaders have established a culture where pupil well-being sits at the core of all aspects of school life. Adults treat pupils with respect and sensitivity and provide high levels of support to individuals dealing with emotional trauma. Because of this, nearly all pupils feel a strong sense of belonging to the school and relationships between pupils and adults are highly effective.

Nearly all pupils display empathy and show a mature attitude to the needs of their peers. This is exemplified by the school's Happiness Heroes, a group of older pupils who support younger pupils to use strategies to regulate their emotions.

Spotlight: Effective early intervention to support pupils' progress

From the moment a new pupil joins the school, adults work together and with a broad range of external agencies to build a comprehensive profile for every individual. Leaders work in close partnership with pre-school providers. A dedicated and well-resourced classroom within the school enables staff to build strong relationships with families and secure a sense of trust and collaboration form an early age. This ensures that pupils settle very well into school and benefit from purposeful intervention and support.

Leaders have in place robust strategies for early identification in relation to additional learning needs (ALN). They work closely with parents to build strong relationships with external agencies to secure necessary support. Most pupils with ALN, including those pupils in the resource provisions, make strong progress. Leaders monitor

attendance carefully and support families where attendance gives cause for concern. As a result, attendance is improving.

Throughout the school, staff develop interesting ways of approaching the curriculum through authentic learning experiences. Opportunities for pupils to make choices about what they would like to learn are carefully planned at the beginning of the themes.

Teachers plan interesting lessons and respond appropriately to the range of ability within the classes. In the best practice, teachers ensure a good pace to their lessons. However, in a minority of lessons there is a tendency for the staff to over-direct the learning and the pace is too slow. Most teachers give appropriate feedback, which helps pupils to understand what they do well in lessons. They provide a useful pause for pupils to review their progress. However, across the school, pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to improve and refine the content and quality of their work following feedback.

Overall, learning experiences enable many pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills appropriately and many pupils make suitable progress in their learning from their individual starting points. This includes pupils facing socio-economic challenge.

Staff are excellent language role models, in English, Welsh and in British Sign Language. Nearly all pupils interact confidently with adults and other children and talk enthusiastically about their school and their learning. Many younger pupils talk confidently about their work with an increasing range of vocabulary. As they move through the school, they continue to develop their speaking and listening skills soundly. Pupils respond well to their peers, ask appropriate questions, and express their opinions confidently, showing respect for others. Throughout the school there is a strong Welsh ethos and pupils are proud of their Welsh heritage and identity. Provision to develop pupils' Wesh language skills is strong and, nearly all pupils speak Welsh with enthusiasm, confidence and at an age-appropriate level.

The school provides a systematic approach to developing pupils' early reading skills and most pupils make sound progress. Younger pupils build on their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds well and pay close attention to punctuation, adding expression to engage the listener. Older pupils apply their reading skills effectively across the curriculum to gather and interpret information from a suitable range of texts.

Many pupils develop their writing skills appropriately throughout the school. Most of the youngest pupils successfully develop their early writing skills by experimenting and creating marks using a variety of writing tools. As pupils' skills develop, they use a good range of punctuation, spell more complex words correctly and choose vocabulary to add interest to their writing. However, across the school, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write extended pieces of writing or refine and improve their work.

Throughout their time at the school, many pupils make appropriate progress in developing their mathematical skills and understanding. Many younger pupils' mathematical skills develop well and, by the end of Year 2, they tell the time using a

digital clock and group items using a Venn diagram. Many older pupils' skills progress well. They develop a sound understanding of mathematical concepts such as number, place value and how to present and interpret data. However, teachers do not always challenge pupils to extend their learning as well as they could.

Many pupils use digital technology adequately to support their learning across the curriculum. Many younger pupils use instructions skilfully to navigate a floor robot through a maze. Most older pupils use their digital skills suitably to support their research and present their findings through multimedia presentations. However, teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to develop apply a wide enough range of digital skills.

Throughout the school various pupil leadership groups have a positive impact on school life and enable pupils to influence on school improvement appropriately. For example, pupils audit the effectiveness of the school's recycling systems and use this information to make changes in response to new laws.

Leaders use a sound range of first-hand evidence appropriately to evaluate the impact of many aspects of the school's work. They use information appropriately to identify improvement priorities. For example, they focus on improving the outdoor learning environment to enable pupils to develop their independence skills effectively. However, the school's self-evaluation and improvement work is not always precise enough and does not focus sufficiently on the progress made by all pupils. Governors know the school well and provide useful support to the headteacher when managing the school's finances. In particular, the pupil development grant is used very effectively to support pupils from challenging socio-economic circumstances.

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/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

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 (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.