

**A report on**

**Merllyn C.P. School**

**Foel Gron  
Bagillt  
Flintshire  
CH6 6BB**

**Date of inspection: March 2025**

**by**

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

## About Merllyn C.P. School

Name of provider	Merllyn C.P. School
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	133
Pupils of statutory school age	97
Number in nursery classes	16
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%)	30.2%
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%)	11.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	11.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	02/09/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	12/12/2017

Start date of inspection	17/03/2025
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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](http://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

Merllyn C.P school is a happy, caring school, where the headteacher leads a team of staff effectively to secure exceptional support for pupils' well-being and learning. This, together with a rich and engaging curriculum, ensures that most pupils, including those from low-income households and with additional learning needs (ALN), make strong progress.

Pupils with identified ALN as well as those in need of additional support, benefit from the expertise of motivated and knowledgeable staff who provide high quality interventions. As a result, these pupils access their learning effectively and make significant progress.

Teachers work diligently to plan rich and meaningful activities to engage and challenge pupils' thinking. However, planned activities in the continuous provision for younger children do not always support or challenge them to develop their skills or independence.

Most pupils develop a range of skills effectively and make strong progress. They use their mathematical knowledge and skills successfully in real-life situations. Most younger pupils develop a secure understanding of phonics. This helps them to make good progress as readers and supports them to begin to write independently. Most older pupils read fluently and confidently and write articulately for a variety of purposes and audiences. However, most pupils' Welsh language skills are at an early stage of development.

Teachers use questioning effectively to assess pupils' understanding and provide valuable feedback to help them to improve their work. They support pupils effectively to learn how to evaluate their own work and plan their next steps.

The Pupil Parliament actively contributes to school improvement by influencing whole-school decisions. Involvement in the groups that make up the parliament contributes positively to pupils' development of essential leadership skills.

The school excels in sharing information promptly, ensuring that parents are well-informed about school life and their children's progress. This is particularly evident during regular pupil-led meetings, which actively engage parents in understanding their child's progress. This contributes to a strong partnership between the school and families.

## Recommendations

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

- R1. Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills
- R2. Improve continuous provision for younger pupils

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

The recently appointed headteacher works effectively with staff, governors and pupils to implement a shared vision to care, believe and achieve together.

The school promotes an inclusive and welcoming ethos that permeates all aspects of school life. Staff are supportive role models, and pupils are respectful to those around them. The link between the playgroup and nursery is well-established, ensuring a seamless transition and a positive experience for pupils. The school successfully embraces the diversity of its pupils. This has helped pupils develop a clear understanding of equality in their school community and beyond. Nearly all pupils exhibit a positive attitude towards their work, for example by demonstrating perseverance and resilience in their learning.

The headteacher collaborates well with staff to create a clear strategic direction for the school. There is a growing sense of teamwork and a shared sense of purpose and ownership for all stakeholders. Leaders provide valuable professional learning opportunities for staff, which involves worthwhile collaboration and supports the school to bring about significant improvements.

The school delivers an innovative curriculum with challenging and meaningful learning experiences that are responsive to pupils' interests and needs. This leads to high levels of pupil engagement. Additionally, the use of assessment for learning supports substantial progress in pupils' understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. Overall, this influences pupils' well-being and outcomes positively.

### **Spotlight 1: Effective assessment for learning**

Teachers use purposeful questioning to effectively assess and support pupils' learning in real-time. Older pupils benefit from strategies, such as using a visualiser and co-constructed success criteria. The use of these strategies enhances feedback by allowing pupils to compare each other's work against agreed criteria and by helping them to understand how to improve through clear expectations and examples of success. This significantly enhances their progress and fosters their development as independent and reflective learners.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils and generally plan rich and challenging activities for them. This helps ensure that most pupils are engaged and actively involved in their learning. However, continuous provision for younger pupils does not offer enough opportunities to support the development of pupils' independent learning and problem-solving skills or their literacy and numeracy skills.

Teachers provide engaging opportunities for pupils to talk to each other for a range of purposes that support or extend their learning. They place a strong focus on early reading skills. This ensures that most younger pupils develop a sound understanding of a range of letters and corresponding sounds. Over time, this knowledge helps them to read new and more challenging words successfully. Older pupils read with fluency and expression, using a range of strategies appropriately to help them to understand different texts and build confidence.

Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop and use their writing skills for a broad range of purposes. Most younger pupils produce quality written work. They use their knowledge of phonics successfully to begin to produce independent writing. Older pupils use features of various genres confidently and organise their writing to suit its purpose well. Overall, most pupils make considerable progress in writing from their individual starting points. Teachers offer limited opportunities for pupils to develop and make progress with their Welsh language skills, resulting in most pupils needing too much support to ask and respond to questions accurately.

Most pupils use mathematical knowledge well. Across the school, they apply their numeracy skills successfully to real life situations. Teachers offer valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their digital skills across the curriculum. This leads to most pupils using a range of digital tools confidently to support their learning, problem-solving, and creativity.

A notable feature of the school's provision is the support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those in need of additional support. Effective processes are in place to identify and meet pupils' needs at an early stage. Leaders strategically use resources, including grant funding, to develop staff skills, offer high-quality provision and mitigate barriers to learning. Overall, the school's work ensures that most pupils with ALN make good progress from their starting points.

### **Spotlight 2: Effective provision for pupils with social, emotional, and behavioural needs**

The school's exemplary provision for pupils with social, emotional, and behavioural needs involves effective collaboration with parents and external agencies, providing tailored individual support. The provision is available to any pupil during the day, helping them self-regulate until they are ready to learn again. This approach helps pupils communicate their needs, manage their emotions, and support them to engage positively in their learning. Nearly all pupils make strong progress within this safe and nurturing environment.

Pupil voice is a strength of the school, with older pupils enthusiastically taking on leadership roles. The Pupil Parliament teams work collaboratively to transfer the ideas of their fellow pupils into actions that improve school life. These roles result in highly motivated pupils who positively impact the school.

Leaders build strong relationships with families through effective communication and support in a welcoming, inclusive environment. They also foster valuable community partnerships to enhance pupils' social and emotional skills.

Governors are well-informed and are beginning to take an active role in the life of the school. They recognise the school's strengths and areas for improvement, which enhances their effectiveness as critical friends.

### **Additional information**

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

The school's arrangements for site management 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](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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