

A report on

Arddleen C.P. School

**Arddleen
Llanymynech
Powys
SY22 6RT**

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Arddleen C.P. School

Name of provider	Arddleen C.P. School
Local authority	Powys 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	115
Pupils of statutory school age	100
Number in nursery classes	N/A
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%)	4.5%
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%)	*
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	02/09/2024

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	23/04/2018
Start date of inspection	30/06/2025

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 acting headteacher has worked closely with staff, governors, and pupils to redefine a shared vision for the school. Arddleen is a warm and welcoming school with a strong community feel, where staff and pupils treat each other with care and respect. This creates a calm, nurturing environment that supports learning and development effectively. The school promotes positive behaviour successfully, and nearly all pupils behave well.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement through purposeful monitoring and self-evaluation. Governors are well-informed and provide rigorous challenge and support to school leaders.

The curriculum is broad, balanced, and purposefully aligned with Curriculum for Wales. Most pupils develop a range of skills effectively and make strong progress. They apply their skills across areas of learning and in real-life situations successfully and benefit from engaging activities, including educational visits across Wales. Teachers use the local area and Wales as one of the main drivers when planning topics. Staff have high expectations for pupils' Welsh language development. They enhance this work effectively through participation in events such as the Llangollen International Eisteddfod.

Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well and adapt provision to meet individual needs, including those with additional learning needs (ALN). Support is sensitive and inclusive, resulting in good well-being for pupils with ALN.

Most lessons are well-paced and provide appropriate challenge. Teachers take into account what pupils want to learn about. However, allowing pupils greater input into how they want to learn is at an early stage of development. Across the school, there is not a consistent approach to feedback or for how teachers support pupils to refine their work.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Strengthen the quality of feedback provided to pupils and ensure they are given purposeful opportunities to use this information to improve their work
- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to make choices about how they learn and to work independently

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Arddleen is a warm and welcoming school with a strong community feel. Staff and pupils treat each other with a high degree of care and respect. This contributes to a calm and nurturing environment in which to learn and develop. The school has effective systems for promoting good behaviour, and nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.

The recently appointed acting headteacher has worked effectively with staff, governors, and pupils to redefine a shared vision that permeates the school's work. She leads by example and is developing a positive culture of school improvement, for example by allowing newly qualified teachers to observe her teach and then modelling reflective practice when they discuss the lesson afterwards.

Effective monitoring and self-evaluation processes ensure leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders implement improvement strategies successfully. For example, the focus on improving provision for Welsh language education has resulted in pupils having strong Welsh oracy skills across the school.

The school has developed a broad, balanced, and exciting curriculum to align with the principles and purposes of Curriculum for Wales. Teachers plan for progression effectively, and pupils have beneficial opportunities to apply their skills in all areas of learning. The school provides a range of stimulating and engaging activities, including meaningful visits across Wales, that develop pupils' curiosity and support them in becoming creative and ethical learners. There is a strong emphasis on the local area, Wales, and Welshness.

A few pupils benefit from opportunities to enhance their leadership skills and take on responsibilities through the school's pupil leadership groups. For example, the 'Dŵds y Gymraeg' lead engaging Welsh themed assemblies.

Spotlight: Wales and the Welsh language have a high priority in curriculum and teaching

Pupils and staff at Arddleen are proud to be part of a school in Wales. At every opportunity, Welsh heritage, culture, and language are celebrated and embraced. Cynefin is a central part of topic planning, and pupils are encouraged to learn about and care for their local area, for example by writing to the local community about damage to Rodney's Pillar. Pupils' knowledge of Wales is developed through a wide range of trips that enrich topics successfully. Staff have high expectations of pupils, encouraging them to speak Welsh confidently and precisely. Pupils have represented the school at the national Urdd Eisteddfod and the International Eisteddfod in Llangollen. Overall, pupils' progress in learning Welsh is strong.

Across the school, teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils and their developmental needs well. They use this knowledge to make thoughtful adjustments to provision. Most pupils make good progress from their individual starting points, including those with additional learning needs (ALN). Staff provide sensitive support for pupils with ALN. Teachers and teaching assistants skilfully and subtly use strategies that ensure pupils get the support they need, whilst also ensuring that they have full and equal access to all aspects of the school's provision. Staff receive valuable professional learning to enable them to support pupils with ALN. They use the skills and knowledge they acquire to deliver a range of support strategies successfully.

Teachers ensure most lessons move at a good pace and offer appropriate challenge. Teachers listen to and consider pupils' ideas and interests when planning topics. However, teachers tend to provide too much direction on how pupils learn and miss valuable opportunities to nurture problem-solving and independent learning skills. For example, most pupils have strong digital skills and can use a range of software proficiently. However, over-direction by teachers limits pupils' opportunities to choose the most suitable digital tools for a task.

Most pupils make good progress with their mathematical skills. Teachers plan activities that meet pupils' needs successfully. Many of the youngest pupils understand numbers to 20, recognise simple number patterns, count in twos, and perform basic additions using concrete resources. By Year 6, most pupils have a secure understanding of number and use this knowledge to complete a range of mental and written calculations effectively. They apply their skills across the curriculum successfully, for example using data to estimate how long materials take to decompose.

Most pupils develop good speaking skills and by the time they reach Year 6, they talk confidently and articulate themselves well. The oldest pupils are fluent, enthusiastic readers who express opinions about different genres and read with expression. Nearly all pupils develop their writing skills well. Younger pupils use their knowledge of sounds to write words and sentences, while older pupils organise their writing into lively, effective paragraphs, selecting vocabulary to suit the genre. Staff have high expectations, and most pupils take great pride in their work and present it neatly.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, and creative development successfully. Teachers ensure pupils have a strong sense of equality, for example through learning about events related to the Windrush generation. Most older pupils develop a mature appreciation of the challenges that others face and display empathy and compassion.

Teachers across the school use a range of strategies to ensure pupils understand what is required from an activity and provide feedback on how to improve their work. However, this does not develop systematically as pupils move through the school. Work to develop a consistent approach to feedback and to support pupils with how to use this information to refine their work is at an early stage of development.

Regular and planned opportunities for governors to work with staff, engage in learning walks, and talk to pupils ensure that governors are well-informed about school life. They understand the school's strengths and areas for development and provide rigorous challenge and support to the acting headteacher.

Additional information

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

The school's arrangements for site management give cause for concern and have been brought to the attention of the local authority.

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/carers 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.

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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