



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Milford Haven School
Steynton Road
Milford Haven
Pembrokeshire
SA73 1AE**

Date of inspection: May 2011

by

Mr Peter Harris

Under Contract for

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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

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Context

Milford Haven School is an English-medium 11-18 mixed comprehensive school of 1,080 students and pupils, including 154 in the sixth form compared with 1,281 pupils and students when the school was last inspected.

Just over 18% of pupils are eligible for free school meals (FSM) compared with the Welsh average of about 15% for secondary schools. Very few pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. A small percentage of learners currently learns English as an additional language.

The school's intake represents the full range of ability. Just under 2% of pupils have statements of special educational needs (SEN). This figure is below the average for Wales as a whole.

The headteacher took up his post in 2008. The present senior leadership team (SLT) is comprised of two deputy headteachers, one assistant headteacher, a business manager and two seconded members of staff. Of the present SLT, only one deputy headteacher was in post at the time the school was last inspected.

The school's key purpose is to provide the best possible education for children of all abilities within a happy, child-centred, pleasant working environment.

The school works in close partnership with two other secondary schools and the local further education college to enhance provision at key stage 4 and in the sixth form.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Milford Haven School is £4,155 which compares with a maximum of £4,867 and a minimum of £3,998 for secondary schools in Pembrokeshire. The school has the fourth highest budget per pupil out of the eight secondary schools in Pembrokeshire.

Summary

The school's current performance	Adequate
The school's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

Overall standards in the school are satisfactory.

Standards in key stage 3 and in the sixth form are good, as are overall standards of learners' wellbeing throughout the school.

However, in key stage 4, many pupils fail to make sufficient progress in examination results.

Aspects of provision that inspectors judged to be good were the:

- overall curriculum provision;
- care, guidance and support of learners;
- partnerships;
- learning environment, and
- management of staff and resources.

Prospects for improvement

Inspectors judged prospects for improvement to be adequate because:

- the headteacher and SLT have a good understanding of areas of weakness and the need to address them;
- the school's self-evaluation procedures are appropriate;
- the school is managed efficiently;
- there is good practice in a majority of classrooms that can be used as a basis for improving practice across the school;
- planning for improvement does not focus sharply enough on improving teaching and learning; and
- the low attendance of a minority of pupils continues to have a negative effect on their performance.

Recommendations

R1: Raise standards, particularly in key stage 4.

R2: Improving the quality of teaching in order to engage and challenge all pupils.

R3: Further develop planning for improvement and monitoring in order to focus more on improving pupils' performance and outcomes.

R4: Continue to develop strategies to improve attendance.

What happens next?

Milford Haven School will produce an action plan to show how it will address these recommendations. Estyn will monitor the progress they make in implementing them.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Overall standards across the school are satisfactory.

In key stage 3, results are above national and family (1) averages in English, mathematics and the core subject indicator (CSI) (2). Results in science are in line with the family average and slightly above the national average. When compared with similar schools in terms of FSM benchmarks, results are above average; those in English, mathematics and the CSI are in the top 25%.

Pupils' progress from key stage 2 to key stage 3 has been above average.

However, in key stage 4, learners' performance on nearly all indicators has declined over the last three years and is below the averages for Wales and the family of schools.

In 2010, the percentage of pupils attaining the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics was 11% below the family average and 12% below the national average. Just below 2% of pupils left school without a qualification.

Over the past three years, performance on most indicators has been below average when compared with similar schools in terms of the FSM benchmarks; in 2010, performance was in the bottom 25% against all major indicators.

Pupils' have made limited progress during key stage 4.

While in the sixth form, learners' attainment at the level 3 threshold falls below the national average, on the wider points score it is above national averages. On the whole, this represents a good level of achievement for these students.

In all key stages, girls attain higher standards than boys. The gap in relative performance is larger than average. Specific groups of pupils, including those entitled to FSM, looked-after children and those with additional learning needs make good progress in line with their abilities.

Most pupils remain in full-time education at the end of key stage 4, either in the school or elsewhere. Over two thirds go on to higher education after the sixth form. Ninety-five percent of pupils leaving school in summer 2010 entered further education, training or employment. This is in line with the national average.

Overall, learners make acceptable progress during lessons. Most learners have good communication skills. Most listen well to teachers and each other, and this supports their progress in learning. The majority of pupils reads and writes well, and can express its views clearly.

(1) Families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in deprived areas, from ethnic minority backgrounds, and having special education needs.

(2) The core subject indicator refers to the percentage of pupils who gain the expected level in Welsh or English, mathematics and science combined.

The majority of pupils remembers previous work and uses this well to learn new skills. In many subjects, pupils develop their thinking skills well and apply these effectively to solve problems. In many lessons pupils use their numeracy skills and information and communications technology (ICT) skills well.

Pupils make good progress in Welsh second language. In 2010, most pupils gained a GCSE in Welsh second language from a full or short course. While throughout the school pupils are aware of their Welsh identity, they do not use Welsh independently or make sufficient use of their Welsh-language skills outside Welsh lessons.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils have a secure understanding of how to be healthy. They have positive attitudes to healthy eating. They exercise regularly and most engage readily in a wide range of activities that promote their physical fitness. Pupils feel safe.

On the whole, pupils are motivated to do well and willingly engage in activities within and outside the classroom.

Attendance rates over the last three years fall below national averages. Overall standards of behaviour are good.

Through the school council and other groups, pupils contribute effectively to many aspects of school life, particularly in relation to decisions about wellbeing and the school environment. Pupils have been influential in helping to develop a number of policies and contribute to the process of appointing members of staff. They are represented on the school's governing body as associate members. By various means such as regular questionnaires, pupils give their views on a wide range of issues concerning how and what they learn.

Pupils relate to each other well and generally have good social skills. Learners' efforts to raise money for various charities are outstanding. They readily take on responsibilities and older pupils are well prepared for life and work outside school.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The curriculum is broad, balanced and flexible. It fully meets all statutory requirements. The school plans well for the transition of pupils from its partner primary schools allowing the curriculum to build on existing knowledge, understanding and skills.

The school uses Learning Pathways (LP) 14-19 successfully to broaden the range of academic and vocational subjects it offers. This is achieved through effective collaboration with other local providers, for example the 'Engage Project' has a positive impact on increasing the motivation of particular groups of pupils.

All learners benefit from a well structured careers and personal development programme. Long-established and effective links with the local community provide invaluable access to work-related experiences.

Strategies for the delivery of key skills are good. Pupils in key stage 3 are very well supported in their acquisition of key skills. Learners in key stage 4 and the sixth form gain key skills qualification through the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ).

Learners benefit from a full range of extra curricular activities. They provide effective opportunities for learners to acquire and develop skills in a wide range of sporting, musical and cultural activities.

The Welsh dimension and Welsh language provision is developing well and meets all statutory requirements.

The school provides good coverage of sustainable development and global citizenship in many activities.

Teaching: Adequate

In the lessons graded good or better the quality of the preparation and planning is good. Teachers display a sound grasp of subject knowledge. They employ a good range of teaching strategies to engage learners in their studies. Lesson objectives are clearly explained to the pupils. The lessons display good pace and challenge. Working relationships in most lessons are very positive making a significant contribution to learners' progress, knowledge and understanding.

However, there are shortcomings in the ways in which teachers challenge pupils to do their best. A minority of lessons lack clear objectives, appropriate pace and organisation. Work is insufficiently matched to the needs of learners and learning is not consistently reinforced.

Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and many give clear guidance on how to improve. In a few cases however, teachers' comments do not allow pupils to identify what they need to do to improve.

Teachers assess learners' work accurately and regularly. There is a good system for recording this information. However, its use by leaders and managers to set targets and monitor progress is inconsistent.

The school reports to parents about their children's progress in an appropriate way. Reports contain targets for improvement, however in a minority of cases, these targets are not specific.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has a well planned strategy to promote the healthy development and wellbeing of learners. This is included successfully within the school's personal development programme.

The school makes effective use of external support agencies and has implemented procedures to raise attendance levels. To raise standards in key stage 4, the school has ensured that all pupils have access to good quality learning coach provision.

Learning experiences effectively promote learners spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

There are appropriate procedures to identify pupils with SEN on entry to the school. Learning support assistants (LSA) provide good support.

Individual education plans (IEP) include clear strategies to be used in mainstream classes to secure improvements. Progress of learners with SEN is not monitored on a sufficiently formal basis within mainstream lessons.

Learners who are withdrawn for specific SEN support, including those in the sixth form and those who show behavioural difficulties, receive very good targeted provision. This has resulted in consistently good improvement in attitudes, behaviour and achievement. Their progress is effectively monitored within those lessons

The school identifies those learners who are more able and talented, but the provision to meet their needs has yet to be implemented.

Learning environment: Good

Equality and diversity are actively promoted throughout the school. The ethos of the school ensures that all pupils and students have the opportunity to access the full range of the school's provision.

The school has taken reasonable steps to ensure that learners with disabilities do not suffer less favourable treatment.

The school offers a safe and welcoming environment for all learners.

Accommodation is well maintained and in good condition. Classrooms and public areas provide a stimulating environment with a high standard of decoration and wall displays.

Learning resources are of good quality well matched to meet pupils' needs particularly in ICT and physical education.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Adequate
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Leadership: Adequate

The headteacher has made good progress in communicating and securing staff commitment to his strategic vision of supporting learners' wellbeing.

The headteacher has made satisfactory progress in addressing underperformance. The school has successfully raised standards in key stage 3 and has reviewed and developed the curriculum provision for key skills. The restructured curriculum in key stage 4 now meets the needs of pupils more effectively.

There are shortcomings in the ways in which the SLT works together to address the need for school improvement. Though good practice is shared, the impact on standards has not been monitored effectively. There is inconsistency in the ways in which heads of department are held to account for the performance of their areas of responsibility.

Performance management arrangements help identify suitable professional development opportunities for all staff.

The school takes good account of national priorities, especially in relation to extending the curriculum for 14 to 19 learners in collaboration with other local providers.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties appropriately, but they are not sufficiently involved in the evaluation of the school's performance.

Improving quality: Adequate

The cycle of monitoring, evaluation and review is embedded in school procedures. Leaders and managers review the performance of their areas using first hand evidence but the rigour of this process is variable, especially in the extent to which lesson observation is used to judge standards.

Senior and middle leaders use data from National Curriculum assessments and examination results to analyse the performance of the school. However they have not used it rigorously enough to set priorities and appropriately challenging targets for improvement. Consequently issues that may lead to improvement have not been clearly identified.

Planning for improvement draws on the results of self-evaluation to set targets for improvement. However, development plans have imprecise success criteria and do not specify clearly enough the steps to be taken to secure improvement.

Sharing of professional knowledge both within the school and with other schools is still developing and is beginning to have a positive impact on standards, especially in key stage 3.

The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection report.

Partnership working: Good

The school has developed strong links with its partners. Positive links exist between neighbouring schools and Pembrokeshire College. These successfully improve provision, quality and choice for learners.

The school has established beneficial links with the local community. These links have a positive effect on learners' wellbeing. They enrich the formal curriculum and provide learners with opportunities to become increasingly confident and develop their social skills.

Collaborative planning and sharing of resources are good. There is trust and good communications between the school and its partners. Partner primary schools are involved in the life of the school and transition arrangements are good.

Resource management: Adequate

The school manages its finances very well.

There are robust procedures to monitor and prioritise expenditure. Prudent management of the budget lessens the impact of fluctuations in pupil numbers.

Staffing levels are sufficient to teach all aspects of the school's curriculum. Teaching and support staff are deployed effectively. The school meets statutory requirements regarding teachers' workload.

Senior managers ensure that teachers have sufficient learning resources and equipment. Departments are generously funded through a formula and there are opportunities to bid for money for specific projects.

The site is managed particularly effectively and is well-maintained.

However, in view of the standards achieved by learners, inspectors judged the value for money provided by the school to be adequate.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Sixty-six parent questionnaires were completed, representing an adequate proportion of the total number of parents. Overall, they expressed positive views about the school. The majority say that the school expects their children to work hard and to do their best. The majority of parents are satisfied with the school and say their children like being there. Most feel that their children are safe at school and that their children are making good progress, the teaching is good and that their children are well prepared for moving onto college or work. Most say that the school is well run and find it approachable if they have any questions or concerns. Many feel they are kept well informed about their children's progress.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Questionnaires were completed by around 25% of the pupils, who were selected at random. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school. Most feel they are doing well in school, that there are enough resources to enable them to learn well and they have many opportunities to get regular exercise. They say that teaching is good, and that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and to take on responsibility. Most feel the school helps them to be ready for the next stage of education, training or work. Many feel that the school deals well with bullying and that they have someone to talk to if they are worried. Many also say that they are treated with respect, and that they are helped to understand and respect people from different backgrounds. A majority of pupils feels that the school listens to their views and think behaviour is good. The vast majority report that there are sufficient resources provided for them to learn and that learners are shown high levels of respect.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Peter Harris	Reporting Inspector
Glyn Griffiths	Team Inspector
David Hughes	Team Inspector
Huw Llewellyn	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Lois Spargo	Peer Inspector
Paul Edwards	School Nominee

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Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11