



*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**

**Myrddin C.P. School  
Heol Disgwylfa  
Carmarthen  
Carmarthenshire  
SA31 1TE**

**Date of inspection: March 2012**

**by**

**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:

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

Myrddin County Primary School was built in 1960 and is located in the town of Carmarthen.

There are currently 116 pupils between 3 and 11 years of age at the school. The school has four mixed age classes in the mainstream and a special needs unit attached. The Myrddin Special Needs Unit was established in 1975, and has four special classes for pupils with severe, profound or multiple learning difficulties. Since 1999, the unit has provided education for pupils on the autistic spectrum. Twenty-three pupils attend Myrddin Unit from various parts of the local authority.

The school's serves an area that is economically disadvantaged. Forty-three per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. The school identifies 43% of its pupils as having additional learning needs and 22% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. These percentages are much higher than local and national averages.

Ninety-four per cent of pupils are White British, 3% are of mixed race and 3% are from other ethnic groups. Ninety-five per cent of pupils come from homes where English is the main language. Five per cent of pupils speak Welsh at home. In accordance with the language policy of the local authority, the school is designated as a 'Category B' school, which means that English is the main medium of teaching and learning. Welsh is taught as a second language. One pupil has English as an additional language.

The individual school budget per pupil for Myrddin C.P. School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £7,070 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Carmarthenshire is £18,947 and the minimum is £3,114. Myrddin County Primary School is sixth out of the 110 primary schools in Carmarthenshire in terms of its school budget per pupil.

## Summary

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| <b>The school's current performance</b>       | <b>Adequate</b> |
| <b>The school's prospects for improvement</b> | <b>Adequate</b> |

### Current performance

The school's overall performance is adequate because:

- all pupils in the Myddrin Unit make very good progress;
- nearly all pupils behave well and have good attitudes towards learning;
- staff have a strong working relationship with the pupils;
- provision and learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs in Myrddin Unit are very good; and
- the school provides pupils with a caring environment and works well with specialist agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met.

However:

- pupils' standards in mainstream classes are judged as adequate overall;
- learning experiences for mainstream pupils are not challenging enough;
- assessment of and for learning is underdeveloped; and
- there are shortcomings in the procedures for safeguarding.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the school has responded well to recommendations from the last inspection;
- all staff share a common vision and purpose focused on improving outcomes for all pupils;
- the school pays good attention to local and national priorities; and
- the school development plan has appropriate priorities directed towards meeting pupils' needs.

However:

- leadership responsibilities are not distributed effectively enough;
- the governing body's role as a critical friend to the school is at an early stage of development;
- the links between school self-evaluation and the school development plan are not sufficiently clear; and
- the success criteria in the school development plan are not specific or measurable or linked well enough to pupils' progress.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 improve pupils' standards, particularly in English and mathematics;
- R2 improve curriculum and skills planning to ensure that mainstream pupils are challenged appropriately and have opportunities to write for extended purposes;
- R3 develop rigorous processes for assessment of and for learning;
- R4 improve the consistency of teaching in mainstream classes;
- R5 ensure that safeguarding requirements are met;
- R6 strengthen the link between self-evaluation and school development planning;
- R7 ensure that targets in the school development are specific and measurable; and
- R8 develop the governors' ability to monitor and challenge effectively the school's performance.

### **What happens next?**

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress against the recommendations will be monitored by Estyn.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

**Adequate**

#### Standards: Adequate

Many pupils start school with basic and social skills below the expected level for their age. By the end of key stage 2, the majority of pupils in mainstream classes achieve adequate standards. Pupils with special educational needs in Myrddin Unit achieve very well according to their ability and make very good progress towards achieving their targets. Pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes make adequate progress.

In nursery and reception, pupils' speaking, listening and mark-making skills are developing well. From an early age, pupils use their phonic knowledge to sound out new words and become increasingly confident as readers and writers as they move through the Foundation Phase. However, a significant minority are not challenged well enough, particularly in reading and writing. As a result, they do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable.

Older pupils respond well in oral work and many speak confidently. Most pupils make adequate progress in reading. Many pupils in key stage 2 discuss favourite authors or books they have read previously. However, many do not have secure strategies for reading unfamiliar words. A minority of pupils read with fluency and accuracy. Pupils' written work shows adequate progression. Few pupils write well at length. Many pupils' writing lacks fluency and structure; presentation of work and handwriting are untidy.

Pupils' progress in Welsh as a second language is adequate.

The school's performance data is adversely affected by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Overall, when mainstream pupils' performance is considered separately, the school's results generally compare adequately with those of the family and other similar schools.

In key stage 1, in 2011, no pupil achieved the higher level (level 3) in English, mathematics or science. In key stage 2, there was a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils who achieved the higher level (level 5) in mathematics. However, pupils' performance at the higher level in key stage 2 is still below the average for the family and similar schools. In three out of the last four years in key stage 1, girls have performed better than boys in English and science and boys have performed better than girls in mathematics. In key stage 2, girls have generally performed significantly better than boys in English, Welsh as a second language, mathematics and science.

In key stage 2 in 2011, girls performed better than boys in all subjects with the gap between boys and girls being the largest in the family of schools in oracy, reading, writing and science.

Pupils entitled to free school meals have made generally appropriate progress over the last four years.

## **Wellbeing: Good**

All pupils feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they have concerns. Most pupils understand the importance of having a healthy lifestyle and taking regular exercise. They participate enthusiastically in an appropriate range of physical activities. A significant number of pupils take advantage of the breakfast club.

Although many pupils work well together to solve problems, their ability to improve their own learning is at an early stage of development. Many pupils are not yet regularly involved in contributing to planning what they learn.

Nearly all pupils feel that the school listens to their views. The pupils on the school council are enthusiastic about their work and have influenced school provision, for example, by planning the improvement of the outside play area. Links with the community such as local businesses, the clergy and local churches enrich pupils' learning experiences well.

Nearly all pupils behave very well. Mainstream pupils interact very well with pupils from the Myrddin Unit.

Pupils' attendance has risen slightly in the past year and there are appropriate initiatives in place to raise it further. However, attendance remains in the lower 50% when compared to that in other similar schools. Nearly all pupils are punctual.

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|---|
| <b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b> |
|---|

|                 |
|-----------------|
| <b>Adequate</b> |
|-----------------|

## **Learning experiences: Adequate**

Teachers' planning in the Myrddin Unit is very good. They adapt learning experiences very well to meet the wide range of pupils' needs. Staff meet regularly to plan innovative and personalised programmes, which have a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. A broad range of enrichment activities are provided that develop pupils' skills and wellbeing very effectively.

However, planning in the mainstream classes does not ensure that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills develop systematically as they move through the school. Although lesson plans make general references to the development of skills, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.

Learning experiences do not always meet the needs of all pupils. In the majority of cases, planning does not provide enough challenge for pupils and there are too few opportunities for independent learning. Pupils complete too many worksheets and, as a result, they have limited opportunities to write at length for a range of purposes.

There are limited opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to learn about sustainable development and their part in a global community. The provision for developing pupils' Welsh language skills is appropriate across the school with good use of incidental Welsh in most classes. Opportunities to develop the Cwricwlwm Cymreig are limited.

## **Teaching: Adequate**

All teachers have good subject knowledge and all staff have strong working relationships with pupils. Nearly all teachers manage behaviour well.

Teaching in the Myrddin Unit is consistently good with some outstanding features. Teachers and support staff have invaluable medical, nursing and paramedic knowledge and they are very experienced in meeting the needs of the pupils. This is a significant strength in the Myrddin Unit. Detailed monitoring and assessment of pupils' individual progress lead to highly effective weekly planning linked to pupils' individual education plans and needs. Staff set pupils challenging short term targets and all staff have high expectations of each pupil. There is a clear focus in teaching sessions, with very good use of praise and encouragement to motivate each pupil.

In mainstream classes, the standard of teaching is variable. Where teaching is good, the work is suited to the age and ability of the pupils and teachers have high expectations of the pupils. Also, lessons are well paced, and planned activities motivate pupils. Where teaching is less successful, lessons do not build well on pupils' prior learning, questioning does not encourage pupils to think for themselves and activities are not adapted well enough to meet the needs of pupils.

There are shortcomings in assessment procedures in mainstream classes. Data is collected but is not used effectively to target groups of learners or individuals. Processes to ensure consistency of assessment lack rigour. Most pupils receive good oral feedback in lessons. However, teachers' written comments are not clear enough to enable pupils to improve their work. The quality of teachers' marking and target setting is inconsistent between classes. Assessment for learning strategies are underdeveloped.

Reports to parents are informative and comply with statutory requirements

## **Care, support and guidance: Unsatisfactory**

All members of staff make sure that pupils feel safe in school. They successfully encourage pupils to show tolerance and respect for each other and promote healthy living well. Provision for pupils' social and cultural development is effective. The school assemblies provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to reflect on their spiritual and moral development.

The school works well with specialist agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Training is offered to ensure that staff are given the right support in order to meet those needs.

The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding. Procedures for dealing with safeguarding issues are not fully developed.

The provision for pupils in the Myrddin Unit is exceptional. All pupils access all areas of the curriculum at a level appropriate to their ability. The staff regularly work closely with many external agencies to provide every pupil with the right support. There are regular parental consultation meetings; each parent receives a detailed log book



noting their child's progress weekly, and parents communicate freely with the staff. Detailed risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis to accommodate off premises visits and in-school provision. The impact of such support for the pupils ensures that the best possible progress is made.

However, provision for pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes judged as adequate overall. Pupils' needs are not always met well enough or soon enough. Targets are set through individual educational plans but lack of regular evaluation of the targets means that pupils' progress is not sufficiently monitored.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

There is a caring and friendly atmosphere in the school, with both pupils and adults conveying attitudes of respect and courtesy. There is a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. The school is an inclusive environment where pupils receive equal access to all areas of provision. There is a very good level of interaction between pupils in the mainstream classes and pupils in the Myrddin Unit.

The Myrddin Unit has excellent facilities and resources and displays are stimulating and colourful. However in the mainstream, accommodation and resources are judged as adequate and not enough use is made of display areas to celebrate pupils' achievements.

The school building is maintained to an acceptable standard. Effective use is made of outside areas for the Foundation Phase.

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| <b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b> | <b>Adequate</b> |
|--|-----------------|

### **Leadership: Adequate**

All staff share a common vision and purpose focused on improving outcomes for all pupils. Strategic planning identifies key priorities for the school that are directed towards meeting pupils' needs. The school is developing better structures to achieve the its strategic priorities. These include the introduction of improved systems to track pupils' progress and clearer development planning. However, these processes are in an early stage of development and have yet to impact on provision and standards.

Leaders and staff have appropriate roles and responsibilities. Lines of accountability are clear. However, leadership responsibilities are not distributed effectively enough to impact fully on improvements in learning and teaching.

School meetings are suitably focused on the core business of the school and provide an opportunity for staff to share ideas, for instance about recent training and development events. However, the minutes of these meetings do not generate clear action points with specific responsibilities.

Senior leaders address underperformance appropriately. The school has supported staff to develop their practice. There is a system of performance management that aligns individual staff targets with whole school priorities.

Governors are supportive of the school and have an adequate understanding of the day-to-day work of the school. However, they have limited understanding of the standards achieved by pupils, or of the key priorities for the school. Their role as a critical friend is under-developed.

The school pays good attention to local and national priorities. In particular, the school is implementing strategies to improve pupils' literacy skills and is developing approaches to tackling issues of disadvantage.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The school has a clear process for self-evaluation. Leaders analyse performance data well and gather information to provide a detailed and thorough account of the school. The school's self-evaluation report gives an accurate picture of the school in many areas. However, in a few sections, the report does not outline sufficiently areas for improvement.

The school has a range of procedures for gathering evidence about the quality of teaching and learning, including monitoring of lessons, peer observations, and book scrutiny. However, these processes do not always focus sufficiently on pupils' progress, and outcomes are not analysed well enough to inform improvement strategies.

The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement. However, the success criteria for the actions are not specific or measurable enough. The links between school self-evaluation and the school development plan are not sufficiently clear.

Nearly all teachers participate in groups that share professional knowledge and practice both within the school and with other schools. These groups provide teachers with very good opportunities to develop and share their professional knowledge. This has had a positive impact on standards in information and communication technology. However, these groups have not yet had an impact on whole school practice in teaching and learning.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school works effectively with a wide range of partners, including training providers, local authority services, parents and the community, to improve pupils' standards and wellbeing. This includes working with several local authority psychologists and pupils' progress officers as well as other special schools and special facilities, all of which have a positive impact on provision for pupils.

Partnership working with other schools is helping to develop teachers' practice in areas such as key skills and assessment, and in ensuring that pupils' work is moderated effectively. The school has appropriate arrangements to help pupils to transfer to the secondary school. Pupils have numerous opportunities to visit the secondary schools to ease the transition process. Pupils from the Myrddin Unit benefit very well from these procedures.

**Resource management: Adequate**

Overall, the school manages its resources efficiently. It is appropriately staffed to deliver the curriculum effectively. Staff are generally deployed well to make the best use of their time and expertise.

The school makes effective use of its funding to maintain successfully a balanced budget. It is developing sound systems to make sure that spending is directed effectively towards strategic priorities. There is a clear system for the allocation and review of funding.

Taking into account standards and pupils' progress overall, value for money is judged as adequate.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

The school has a specialist teaching facility for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils make very good progress in relation to their abilities and starting points.

When analysing pupil attainment in relation to the family of school averages, it is important to consider that the school's performance data contains the results of all the school's pupils. When attainment data of mainstream pupils is considered separately from the specialist facility, the school compares better with family averages.

In key stage 1, the percentage of pupils gaining level 2 in the core subject indicator has been substantially lower than the family of schools average for the last four years.

The performance in English at level 2 has been lower than the family of schools average for the last four years although the gap in performance has reduced in the past two years. Oracy performance is lower than the family average, with reading and writing substantially lower.

In mathematics, performance has been substantially lower than the family of schools average for the last four years.

In science, performance has been lower than the family average for the last four years, but the gap has reduced; performance was higher than the family average for the first time in 2011.

When key stage 1 attainment data of mainstream pupils is considered separately from the specialist facility, the school has performed better than the family average in science for the last four years and in English for the last two years. However, performance in the core subject indicator and mathematics have remained below the family average for the last four years.

In comparison with schools with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals, the results for key stage 1 in 2011 placed the school in the higher 50% of schools for science, the lower 50% for English, and in the lowest 25% of schools for mathematics. When results are considered separately from the specialist facility, the data places the school in the highest 25% of schools for science and English and the lower 50% for mathematics. The percentage of pupils performing at the higher level 3 in English, mathematics and science was lower than the family average in 2011, with no pupils gaining level 3 in any of the subjects.

Girls have performed better than boys in English and science for three out of the last four years, including 2011, although margins for science have been small. Boys have performed better than girls in mathematics for three out of the last four years, including 2011.

In key stage 2, the percentage of pupils gaining level 4 in the core subject indicator has been lower than the family of schools average for the last four years.

The performance in English at level 4 has been lower than the family of schools average for the last four years. Performance in oracy, reading and writing was lower than family average for 2011, with reading performance being the lowest in the family.

Performance in Welsh as a second language assessed for the last two years was lower than the family average.

In mathematics, performance has been lower than the family of schools average for the last four years. There was a marked improvement in 2011, with performance being very close to the family average.

In science, performance has been lower than the family average for the last four years.

When key stage 2 attainment data of mainstream pupils is considered separately from that of the specialist facility, the school has performed better than family averages in science and mathematics for the last two years. However, performance in the core subject indicator and English have remained below the family average for three out of the last four years.

In comparison with schools with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals, the results for key stage 2 have placed the school in the higher 50% of schools for mathematics and the lowest 25% for English and science.

When results are considered separately from the specialist facility, the data places the school in the highest 25% of schools for mathematics, the higher 50% for science and the lower 50% for English. The percentage of pupils performing at the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science has been lower than the family average in the last four years. However, the 2011 percentages were the highest in four years for all subjects, with English performance being within one percentage point of the family average.

In key stage 2 in 2011, boys underperformed across all subjects, with the gap between boys and girls being the largest in the family of schools for English, oracy, reading and writing, and for science.

Girls have significantly outperformed boys in English, mathematics and science for three out of the last four years.

Over the past two years in key stage 1, pupils entitled to free school meals have performed significantly less well than other pupils. However, there is no discernible difference in performance in key stage 2.

Pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream make adequate progress.

## Appendix 2

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

Thirty-two parents or carers completed the questionnaire. The responses are generally in line with the benchmark comparisons for learner questionnaires.

All parents feel that their child settled well when he/she started in school and is making progress. All parents believe that the teaching is good, that staff expect pupils to work hard to do their best and that homework builds well on what their child learns in school. All parents say that they are kept well informed about their child's progress and that the school is well run.

Nearly all parents express overall satisfaction with the school and feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem. Nearly all parents are of the opinion that their child likes the school, and that staff treat pupils with respect. Nearly all parents believe that their child is safe in school and well prepared for moving on to the next school. Nearly all agree that the school helps their child become more mature and take on responsibility and that their child receives additional support in relation to any additional needs. Nearly all feel that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints and that their child is encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise.

Most parents feel that there is a good range of activities including trips and visits and that pupils behave well in school.

### **Responses to learner questionnaires**

Forty-two pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. The responses are generally in line with the benchmark comparisons for learner questionnaires.

All pupils feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they have concerns. All pupils feel that the teachers and adults in the school help them make progress; they know what to do and whom to ask if they find work hard. They think that homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school.

All pupils feel that the school helps them to keep healthy and nearly all pupils feel that they get many chances to do regular exercise. Nearly all pupils believe that they are doing well in school and that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

Many pupils say that the school deals well with any bullying and that pupils behave well at playtime and lunchtime. A majority of pupils believe that other pupils behave well and that they can get their work done in class.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

|                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Stella Gruffydd             | Reporting Inspector |
| Sarah Lewis                 | Team Inspector      |
| Enir Rees Morgan            | Team Inspector      |
| Julie Ann Price             | Lay Inspector       |
| Ceri Williams               | Peer Inspector      |
| Julian Parker (Headteacher) | School Nominee      |

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

### 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' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 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 | FPR | FPY1 | FPY2 | 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:

|                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Foundation Phase | Reception, 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          |



## **Glossary of terms – Primary**

### **National Curriculum**

#### **Expected National Curriculum levels**

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

#### **Core subject indicator in all key stages**

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

#### **All-Wales Core Data sets**

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.