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

A report on

Maes yr Haul Primary School

Broadlands
Ffordd Tirion
CF31 5EG

Date of inspection: October 2024

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Maes yr Haul Primary School

Name of provider	Maes yr Haul Primary School
Local authority	Bridgend County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	492
Pupils of statutory school age	360
Number in nursery classes	72
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%)	9.3%
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%)	*
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1.9%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	14/05/2018
Start date of inspection	07/10/2024

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

Maes yr Haul Primary School is a caring school. Leaders have created a positive ethos that promotes well-being, and mutual respect. Staff are supported well to develop their leadership skills, and to meet the needs of nearly all pupils, including those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). The relationships between all members of the school reflect the positive ethos. Nearly all pupils enjoy school. They behave exceptionally well and show respect for each other, staff, and visitors. From strong starting points when they join the school, nearly all pupils make appropriate progress with literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

Self-evaluation activities allow leaders to identify strengths and areas for improvement appropriately. Senior teachers make research informed decisions to implement and bring about change effectively. One example of effective practice is how leaders have successfully implemented ALN Reform. However, senior leaders do not monitor the quality of teaching, across the school, well enough and in a minority of lessons, activities do not always challenge pupils to make as much progress as they could.

The school has made suitable progress in developing a broad and inclusive curriculum which provides many opportunities for pupils to engage in a range of stimulating learning experiences. However, provision to develop pupils' wider understanding of the diverse culture of modern Wales is underdeveloped and opportunities for pupils to learn about a broad range of differing identities and experiences is limited.

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy learning. Teachers have recently introduced regular, focused sessions to develop pupils' Welsh language skills more systematically. However, this has yet to impact significantly on pupils' ability to use a suitable variety of spoken Welsh with increasing confidence as they move through the school.

Parents appreciate that their views and opinions are considered and value the opportunities that they receive to visit school.

Recommendations

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

R1　Ensure learning experiences challenge all pupils sufficiently

R2　Review the school's curriculum to ensure it reflects the purposes of Curriculum for Wales

R3　Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school with a strong focus on the well-being of pupils and staff. Across the school, there are strong working relationships between pupils and staff. Nearly all pupils enjoy school and interact positively with their peers. They are consistently polite and respectful.

Teachers give clear instructions in lessons and use effective questioning to check pupils' understanding. Where teaching is most effective, teachers have a clear aim for what pupils should achieve and ensure that this builds purposefully on what they have learned previously. In the best instances, they provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to consolidate and apply their skills in differing contexts. For example, younger pupils use their digital and creative skills to strengthen their understanding of how to sequence and organise instructions effectively. However, in a minority of lessons, teaching moves at too slow a pace and independent activities do not always challenge pupils to make as much progress as they could.

Senior teachers have made strong progress with implementing ALN reform. The school has comprehensive systems to identify and support pupils with ALN and staff receive professional learning which supports them in their roles effectively. However, senior leaders do not always prioritise other school improvement priorities well enough and this impacts on the school's capacity to make timely improvements in a few areas, for example, developing pupils' Welsh language skills and creating a curriculum that reflects the purposes of Curriculum for Wales.

Teachers plan effectively for the progressive development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills. They use consistent strategies to build pupils' knowledge of letter sounds and to extend their vocabulary and comprehension skills beneficially. As a result, most pupils become confident, articulate speakers and show understanding and enjoyment in their reading. These skills impact positively on the quality of pupils' writing. Most pupils make suitable progress in developing their numeracy skills. They build readily on their early understanding of number to develop a broad range of strategies to calculate effectively. Teachers provide stimulating opportunities for older pupils to use their mathematical understanding to reason logically, for example, to select and synthesise relevant information from a series of clues to solve a problem.

Teachers generally develop pupils' physical and creative skills well. They plan lessons and activities that support pupils to use and express their imagination and to develop specific techniques effectively. For example, younger pupils use percussion

instruments to represent high and low notes in music skilfully. Nearly all pupils use their digital skills confidently to support and advance their learning across the curriculum. Teachers have recently introduced regular, focused sessions to develop pupils' Welsh language skills more systematically. However, this has yet to impact significantly on pupils' ability to use a suitable variety of spoken Welsh with increasing confidence as they move through the school.

Across the school, most pupils collaborate well. They try their ideas out cooperatively and reflect constructively on their progress, learning from mistakes. Most persevere for an appropriate length of time. Teachers provide helpful verbal feedback to pupils that enables them to correct mistakes and to edit and improve their work. Most pupils are proud of their work and value the feedback teachers provide. Many pupils are keen to challenge themselves, for instance by selecting more complex tasks to complete.

Teachers provide a variety of learning experiences that motivate most pupils successfully. They plan engaging topics that sustain pupils' interest and provide suitable opportunities for pupils to influence what they learn. Leaders are beginning to refine the school's curriculum to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of their local area and its heritage. However, provision to develop pupils' wider understanding of the diverse culture of modern Wales is underdeveloped. Opportunities for pupils to learn about a broad range of differing identities and experiences is limited. This restricts pupils' ability to develop as ethically informed citizens.

There is an appropriate culture of safeguarding across the school. Pupils feel safe and know that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon. However, leaders do not always monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding administration and systems for reporting to governors well enough. The school has robust systems to monitor pupils' attendance and works closely with external partners to support families in need of additional help and advice. Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of attending school regularly.

Many pupils have appropriate opportunities to take on leadership roles within the school and take their leadership responsibilities seriously. Through the varied leadership groups, they have good opportunities to consider important aspects of school life, such as how to inform pupils of how to keep safe when playing online.

The school has a strong track record of supporting student teachers through their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and developing teachers' leadership skills. Teachers with responsibility for leading areas of learning make research informed decisions to implement and bring about change effectively. For example, the recent work on improving writing across different genres and developing pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics. In addition, they monitor their areas of responsibility well to measure the impact on classroom practice and pupil progress. However, the school's senior leaders do not monitor the quality of teaching across the school well enough to identify aspects of teaching in need of improvement.

Senior leaders and governors use the pupil development grant well to support pupils from low-income families, for example, by subsidising school trips and providing reduced cost school uniform. Governors are supportive of the school and fulfil the role of critical friend well. They have a suitable understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has a positive relationship with parents, it is a welcoming environment where leaders and staff value parents' views.

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.

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