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

A report on

Milton Primary School

Hendre Farm Drive
Newport
NP19 9HB

Date of inspection: October 2022

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Milton Primary School

Name of provider	Milton Primary School
Local authority	Newport City Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	474
Pupils of statutory school age	340
Number in nursery classes	73
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 21.3%)	41%
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 22.2%)	37.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	6.2%
Date of headteacher appointment	September 2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	24/10/2022

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.

Overview

Milton Primary is an inclusive, supportive school where pupils make good progress and develop resilience and independence. It is a school that takes inspiration from, and supports, its local area. Leaders and teachers recognise pupils' particular strengths and areas of need, and support them as individuals. They develop engaging learning experiences that are purposeful and stem from pupils' thoughts and ideas. They support all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, well.

The school's curriculum engages pupils and develops their knowledge, skills and understanding systematically. Most pupils make strong progress and learn to apply skills, such as their literacy and numeracy skills, well. They learn to communicate effectively, developing into thoughtful pupils who are able to discuss contentious issues maturely and sensitively. They show care and concern, and treat others with respect and courtesy.

Leaders work together as a well-organised and dedicated team. They are diligent and conscientious. They recognise the importance of giving pupils experiences that build their confidence and encourage them to be aspirational. They consider regularly the school's strengths and areas for improvement and work hard to address shortcomings. They provide purposeful professional learning experiences for staff that further their knowledge and understanding beneficially.

Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' Welsh and information and communication technology (ICT) skills

R2 Ensure that independent learning tasks challenge pupils consistently well

R3 Sharpen evaluation and improvement strategies so that they focus more on pupils' learning

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time at school, most pupils make good progress in many areas of learning, often from low starting points. Those eligible for free school meals make good progress in line with their peers. Most pupils with additional learning needs, and those with English as an additional language, progress well in relation to their individual targets.

Most pupils develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. Many enter the nursery with language and communication skills below those expected for their age. In their first years at school, they progress rapidly and by the reception class many speak more confidently, for example describing ‘smooth’ conkers and ‘spikey’ pinecones when learning outdoors. By the time they reach Year 6, many pupils discuss challenging topics effectively with a well-developed vocabulary, for instance considering and comparing the rights of same-sex couples in different countries around the world.

The youngest pupils in the school develop their Welsh language skills suitably. For example, many pupils in the reception class use a few Welsh words independently to describe the weather. By Year 2, a majority of pupils ask and answer simple questions in Welsh appropriately, for example asking others ‘Sut wyt ti?’ (How are you?). However, as they move through the older classes, they do not continue to develop these skills as successfully and by Year 6 most pupils’ Welsh language skills are underdeveloped. Many have a limited vocabulary and do not use the few words and phrases they know confidently.

Most pupils across the school develop their reading skills well and many show an enthusiasm for books and stories. In Year 2, most pupils read confidently using punctuation well to make sense of the text. They search non-fiction texts competently to locate specific information and to learn new facts, for example when learning about the lives of blue whales. In Year 3, most pupils read poetry with their peers confidently and are developing their understanding of the features of different poetic styles, such as a Haiku well. Many older pupils build on this progress and develop a range of strategies to become fluent independent readers. By Year 6 many read accurately and with expression. They understand the different ways that stories can be structured, such as describing how writers can put a ‘twist’ in the plot, and make thoughtful comparisons between texts.

Many pupils develop their writing skills effectively. In the nursery, most pupils engage in mark making enthusiastically as they explore using chalks or painting with water in the outdoor area. As they progress through their first years in school, they apply their knowledge of key words to their writing well. Most older pupils plan their writing thoughtfully and use interesting vocabulary choices to engage the reader. They write for a variety of purposes well, such as stories, poetry and letters. However, a few do not apply their knowledge of punctuation or extend their writing well enough. Many pupils apply their literacy skills confidently to other areas of their work, for example when taking useful notes from a short film about the astronaut Mae Jemison, the first black woman to travel into space.

Most pupils develop their mathematics and numeracy skills successfully. In the reception class, many pupils recognise and name simple shapes and apply this knowledge well when they identify an orange slice as a circle, or a leaf as being 'like a diamond'. Many older pupils use a range of methods to solve number problems and describe their thinking suitably. For example, pupils in Year 4 find the total cost of a shopping list and calculate the required change from £10. By Year 5, many pupils solve mathematical problems with a real-life context confidently. For example, they calculate the quantity of materials they need to make new picnic benches to ensure that they do not order too much of each material. In Year 6, many pupils use their mathematical skills and apply them to their wider learning well. For example, they create tally charts of their friends' screen time and present this information clearly using bar charts.

Overall, pupils' digital skills across the school are underdeveloped. Many pupils in the nursery use battery-operated toys, such as a till, or play simple games on tablet computers confidently. By Year 2, many pupils take digital photos and upload them to a communication app successfully. Many older pupils create simple presentations with pictures and text and send emails successfully. However, important areas of their ICT skills, such as their understanding of spreadsheets and databases, remain weak.

Most pupils' physical skills develop well through a range of experiences and activities. For example, the youngest pupils develop their fine motor skills successfully as they chop onions in the role-play area as they pretend to make vegetable soup. Older pupils develop their throwing skills successfully as they practice chest passes and throwing underarm. Most pupils develop their thinking and problem-solving skills well. Many pupils in Year 2 persevere, and use these skills helpfully, when challenged to build a tower from toothpicks. In Year 4, they use their thinking skills successfully when making sensible predictions about the time taken for objects to fall from different heights.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils enjoy their time at school and have highly positive attitudes to learning. They feel safe and secure in school and are confident that adults will support them if they need help or guidance. Nearly all behave well. They understand the purpose of rules, rewards and sanctions in school and in wider society. Nearly all interact positively and respectfully with adults, visitors and their fellow pupils. They share equipment maturely and play together well.

Most pupils are developing a purposeful understanding of the importance of being healthy and safe. They engage enthusiastically in physical activities including, dance, football and netball, and recognise that this can help them to stay fit. Most pupils understand how to make healthy food choices, for instance choosing vegetables with their meals and having fruit as a snack. They understand how keep themselves safe online. For example, many describe maturely how they should not share passwords or personal information online and how they should deal with cyber bullying.

Most pupils are developing well as ethical, informed citizens and recognise that they are an active part of their own local community. They proudly support local charities, such as those that make food collections for others living nearby and grow their own fruits and vegetables to share with others in their community. Many pupils are

developing an awareness of sustainability and recognise the importance of their actions, for example when recycling.

Most pupils develop well as ambitious learners who take pleasure in sharing their learning and discussing their progress. Most talk positively about challenging work they have done and are positive about trying something new. Many pupils value and demonstrate respect for the contributions of others. They listen to others politely and share their ideas well, for example when discussing a poem about refugees and the lack of empathy that others sometimes show towards them.

Pupils contribute positively to school life and demonstrate appropriate leadership skills in a range of pupil voice groups, such as the eco-team, pupil leaders, prefects and the school council. All pupils undertake their roles conscientiously, for example taking responsibility for leading assemblies and showing visitors around the school. Many groups make a helpful contribution to school life. For example, the school council surveyed pupils to see what school clubs they would like and worked with school leaders to increase the range and diversity of activities on offer.

Nearly all pupils participate enthusiastically in the planning of their learning topics and enjoy sharing their ideas for what they want to learn. Most pupils demonstrate positive levels of interest their work. They engage in tasks with enthusiasm and show pleasure in completing tasks successfully. Most sustain concentration suitably and avoid distractions. They make effective use of their talk partners to help them if they get stuck.

Most pupils react positively to feedback from adults and from their peers. They consider suitably the written comments in their books and the feedback they receive during activities and act upon them appropriately. Older pupils complete pre-task and post-task evaluations independently and are becoming more confident in evaluating their own learning.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has a clear, collective vision for pupils' curriculum experience and is making strong progress towards implementing the Curriculum for Wales. The school's 'meithrin' (nurture) curriculum, developed with the community, focuses on providing learning that is inclusive, inspirational, engaging and meaningful. Each half term, classes focus on an area of learning, such as humanities, and incorporate experiences that reflect their community well. This engages pupils helpfully in purposeful learning. For example, when learning about diversity, Year 5 pupils gathered information on the different countries of origin of their classmates and then researched these countries in order to better understand each other and the different cultures represented in the school.

The curriculum builds upon skills and knowledge progressively as pupils move through the school. Staff, governors and parents worked together collaboratively to create a broad set of age-related expectations, and this ensure that pupils develop skills systematically. Teachers are developing approaches to ensure that learning is influenced well by pupils and at the start of each topic, pupils contribute what they already know and where they would like the learning to go next. This helps to ensure pupil engagement and allows staff to create valuable learning experiences. For example, in their 'this is me' topic, pupils in Year 2 identified that they wanted to be brave and try to perform in front of others. As a result, they were taught a dance by

an outside expert, which they went on to perform to parents. These experiences contribute to pupils developing as confident and independent individuals.

The curriculum reflects well local issues, as well as those found in Wales and the wider world. For example, pupils work with the local authority's 'Ringland Regeneration' project to learn about changes to the local area and the development of more housing for local residents. The curriculum supports pupils to learn about their own and other's rights, and older pupils participate maturely in discussions to compare and contrast laws locally with those found in a variety of countries across the world. Learning promotes equality for minority ethnic communities and groups effectively. For example, pupils learn about the history and experiences of black communities by studying the work of the street artist Graf and by examining the treatment of black, female scientists who contributed to the moon landings.

Leaders have developed appropriate plans to help structure the development of pupils' ICT skills. However, these are not yet implemented consistently enough and as a result, pupils do not yet have a strong enough understanding of important areas, such as spreadsheets and databases. There are suitable strategies for developing pupils' Welsh language skills. These includes short daily Welsh sessions and points systems for encouraging the use of incidental Welsh. However, these strategies are yet to have a sufficient impact and, as a result, pupils' confidence and ability to speak in Welsh is underdeveloped.

All staff have strong relationships with pupils, and this helps to ensure that pupils engage well in school and are confident in the school environment. Nearly all teachers give clear, helpful explanations and instructions that promote learning. They model vocabulary well, supporting pupils to develop their language skills, for example helping pupils in the nursery to use a range of different words for big, such as gigantic and huge.

Many teachers use questioning well to engage pupils and take their learning forward. For example, when discussing the properties of natural materials, they question pupils' encouragingly, allowing them to provide more detailed descriptions. Most teachers provide a worthwhile range of engaging learning activities that enthuse pupils and inspire them to take part, for example through reading a letter written by a witch. In a majority of cases, learning is appropriately challenging, particularly sessions which are led by adults. However, independent activities are not consistently challenging enough and do not always allow pupils to make appropriate progress.

Most teachers engage pupils effectively during whole class sessions and employ a variety of strategies to gain instant feedback from pupils. This ensures that teachers are able to receive feedback from all pupils in order to understand current levels of understanding. Teachers often provide focused verbal and written feedback to pupils that helps them to develop and improve their work. This is particularly evident in pupils' writing. Teachers and support staff establish a constructive classroom climate where pupils are happy to share their learning and to discuss their progress with their peers. Nearly all teachers provide opportunities for pupils to 'red pen respond' to comments that they have made, and this extends pupils' learning and promotes a culture of continual improvement.

Care, support and guidance

Staff support pupils' emotional and social needs well. They create a particularly warm and caring learning environment where pupils feel valued and safe. The school has strong provision to support pupils' health and well-being, for example since the recent pandemic they have increased the number of staff trained to support pupils with their emotional well-being and routinely provide pupils with opportunities to talk to staff when they feel the need. The calm atmosphere throughout the school reflects the success of this provision well.

The support and provision for pupils with additional learning needs is strong. Teachers use assessment well to monitor all pupils' progress and identify those who need extra-support carefully. They track the progress of all pupils effectively and address identified concerns rigorously. They make good use of intervention strategies, including the school's own resource classes, to address needs well. Dedicated staff work conscientiously with individual pupils to provide a caring, supportive environment where everyone celebrates the achievement of all. For example, staff identify pupils' reading needs using a wide range of information and provide good quality, organised reading sessions focusing on the development of reading strategies. As a result, most pupils identified as needing additional support make good progress towards their personal targets.

Staff monitor pupils' attendance robustly, including the attendance of vulnerable groups. They have well-established strategies for supporting families and addressing persistent absence that promote improved levels of attendance. The school actively supports pupils to develop a beneficial understanding of being healthy, for instance teaching pupils how to make healthy eating choices, selling fruit and encouraging pupils to rehydrate regularly. There are valuable and worthwhile opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through visits to places, such as a local Roman fort, residential visits to a Welsh language centre and visits to a local environmental study area at Llys Werry to take part in pond dipping.

The school provides beneficial opportunities to support pupils to take wider responsibilities and to contribute to the life and work of the school. Members of pupil groups participate enthusiastically in establishing initiatives, including setting up a pop-up shop to sell school uniform, as well as supporting a project with the local church to prepare food packs for families in the locality.

There are regular opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual development through collective worship, and links with local churches. Pupils have effective opportunities to discuss and reflect on their own beliefs, and values of other members of their school community during events such as Eid and Diwali. The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to take part in performances in celebrations including the annual Eisteddfod and harvest service. Pupils throughout the school celebrate international links positively. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoy a topic where they compared Wales with Poland, celebrating the culture, music, geography and recipes of both countries.

The school promotes a culture of safety, empathy, care and support. All staff understand well their place in maintaining a strong culture of safeguarding pupils, and the school's arrangements meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management

Since beginning at the newly amalgamated school, the headteacher has created an inclusive ethos amongst staff, pupils and parents. Working with her senior team, she has communicated a clear vision based on ensuring that all pupils are nurtured and encouraged to have high aspirations. As a result, the school community works together successfully.

To help ensure positive progress, leaders develop appropriate strategic approaches that focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning to meet all pupils' needs. For example, leaders use the approach of celebrate, support, share, refine and renewal, to support their evaluation of the quality of teaching. This brings about positive changes by facilitating the sharing of effective practice and supporting needed improvements.

Leaders understand well the need to challenge the impact of poverty on educational attainment, for example by developing the role of an engagement officer to support disadvantaged families. They generally allocate grant funding well, although in a very few cases the pupil development grant is not targeted sharply enough.

The governing body is highly supportive of the school. Governors understand the school's development priorities well and recognise the need for improvements, such as in pupils' attendance. They question leaders thoughtfully and monitor how the school works towards national priorities, such as the curriculum for Wales. They support well the school's effective promotion of healthy eating and drinking. However, their understanding of the school's finances and grant spending is not always strong enough.

School leaders take part in a useful range of self-evaluation activities. These planned activities allow them to monitor the implementation and impact of many improvement strategies suitably. Monitoring often focuses well on evaluating the school's provision and identifies many strengths and areas for improvement helpfully. However, evaluation and improvement planning does not focus sharply enough on pupils' learning. As a result, leaders do not always identify a few needed improvements, such as in areas of pupils' ICT skills.

Leaders prioritise improvement actions carefully. They have a clear rationale for priorities, based on their understanding of the school's current performance. For example, leaders identify accurately that pupils' Welsh language skills need improvement. They arrange improvement actions into two 'rapid action cycles' each year and this allows them to manage their work productively across the whole school year. Most staff understand their role in whole-school improvement well and the actions that they need to take to ensure that priorities are implemented effectively. As a result, most improvement actions bring about positive and helpful change. For example, recent work on improving pupils' well-being has resulted in better identification of pupils who need emotional support and high levels of pupil well-being throughout the school. This further supports the school's effective safeguarding culture.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the importance of professional learning and its role in bringing about change. They identify individual's needs well through monitoring and performance management. They consider training that all staff need and build this into their development plans well. For example, to improve pupils'

oracy skills they engage training from outside experts and then use staff meeting time to deliver further related professional learning sessions. They ensure that staff benefit from relevant training to support the implementation of important national priorities, such as additional learning needs reform.

Leaders take direct action to help develop the knowledge and skills of all staff, including aspiring leaders. For example, the headteacher and other senior staff work together with less experienced leaders to monitor areas of the school's work, such as teaching. This helps to develop the skills of middle leaders in evaluating the school's provision and identifying areas for improvement.

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' wellbeing, 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

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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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