

A report on

Roch Community School

**Roch
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA62 6JU**

Date of inspection: May 2026

by

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

About Roch Community School

Name of provider	Roch Community School
Local authority	Pembrokeshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	126
Pupils of statutory school age	111
Number in nursery classes	*
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 21.7%)	7.3%
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 9.2%)	8.7%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	5.6%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1.5%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2024

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	18/05/2026

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website:

mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Summary

The school is a close community where pupils feel safe and well supported. They behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils work well together and engage positively in learning. They take on leadership roles and contribute to school life beneficially.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development supports pupils' personal growth. The school's nurturing ethos ensures that nearly all pupils feel secure and confident that adults will support them.

Nearly all pupils listen well and communicate clearly. Older pupils speak confidently using an increasingly varied vocabulary. Many develop their Welsh language skills suitably.

Most pupils make suitable progress in reading, although younger pupils do not consistently develop a secure knowledge of phonics, which limits their ability to decode unfamiliar words. Many pupils make appropriate progress in developing their writing skills, but do not write at length well or often enough.

Many pupils develop their mathematics skills well. However, they remain limited opportunities for pupils to apply this to solve problems. Most pupils also develop appropriate digital skills and demonstrate a strong understanding of online safety.

The curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of engaging learning experiences. Nevertheless, it lacks sufficient structure and coherence to ensure pupils' knowledge and skills build systematically over time.

Teaching is effective, with well-paced lessons and appropriate challenge. Teachers support pupils' learning well with helpful and constructive feedback. Pupils benefit from effective opportunities to work independently and collaboratively.

Provision for additional learning needs is effective. Targeted interventions, including nurture support, help pupils to develop their literacy skills and improve their well-being successfully.

The headteacher leads with a clear vision. Leadership is increasingly collaborative, with a wider range of staff contributing to school improvement and professional learning. Leaders have suitable systems for self-evaluation and for identifying priorities for improvement. In general, these have a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, persistent absence remains too high and is increasing.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Strengthen the curriculum to ensure that it develops pupils' knowledge and skills systematically and progressively across all areas of learning and experience
- R2 Improve pupils' phonics and writing skills
- R3 Reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The school is a close, caring community where pupils feel safe, valued and well supported. Nearly all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and behave well. They are polite and courteous to adults and to one another, contributing to the school's calm and purposeful ethos. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is planned thoughtfully. It supports many pupils' personal growth. The school's nurturing ethos ensures that nearly all pupils feel safe and secure. They know who to go to if they have a problem and trust that adults will listen to them and treat them with respect.

Most pupils work effectively with partners and in groups from an early age. They collaborate confidently and engage positively in their learning. The school provides pupils with suitable opportunities to take on leadership roles. Pupils make valuable and authentic contributions to school life and understand that their ideas and opinions are valued.

In a short time, the headteacher has worked thoughtfully with staff to develop an engaged and enthusiastic team. He works collaboratively with staff, pupils and parents to promote a shared vision for pupils' learning that underpins the school's priorities. Staff feel well supported by leaders and value the opportunity to contribute to school life.

Across the school, nearly all pupils listen attentively to adults and their peers. They share their ideas and opinions with enthusiasm. Most older pupils speak confidently and articulately, using a varied vocabulary to express themselves clearly. Many pupils develop their Welsh language skills appropriately. They greet others independently and ask and respond to simple questions in daily school life. A few pupils hold more extended conversations confidently.

As pupils move through the school, many make appropriate progress in reading. Younger pupils read age-appropriate texts suitably, although they do not always develop a strong enough understanding of the link between letters and sounds to help them decode and spell unfamiliar words. Many older pupils read fluently and with confidence. They identify and retrieve information from texts accurately. Many develop more advanced reading skills well, such as the ability to infer information from texts that is not stated explicitly.

Many pupils' writing skills develop appropriately over time. Younger pupils structure their writing suitably, using capital letters and full stops correctly. As they progress, many older pupils write independently using appropriate vocabulary and varied punctuation. They understand the features of different types of writing well. However, they do not produce longer pieces of writing effectively or often enough, either in language sessions or across the curriculum.

Most younger pupils develop their early mathematical skills well and use this knowledge confidently in their daily activities. As they move through the school, many make good progress in understanding concepts, such as place value and capacity. However, opportunities for pupils to solve problems and develop mathematical reasoning skills are at an early stage of development. This limits their ability to apply their mathematical knowledge in more challenging or unfamiliar contexts.

Most pupils make suitable progress in developing an appropriate range of digital skills. They apply these skills purposefully across the curriculum, for example when presenting information or recording their work. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of age-appropriate online safety. This enables them to apply safe practices routinely when using digital devices.

Teachers provide pupils with interesting and engaging learning experiences. They ensure that lessons are well paced and offer pupils appropriate challenge. They ask thoughtful questions and provide constructive feedback that helps pupils to understand how to improve their work. Most teachers provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to work independently and in small groups. As a result, many pupils' creative and independent

skills develop well. The youngest pupils select and use resources thoughtfully, for instance when constructing model houses. Many older pupils work collaboratively to apply their thinking skills successfully during group 'missions'. These experiences help pupils develop as confident, learners who can make decisions collaboratively.

The learning environment is purposeful and stimulating. Teachers are beginning to use the outdoor areas more effectively to support pupils' learning. In many cases, the youngest pupils benefit from a useful balance of adult-led and child-led learning experiences. However, in a few instances, overly long adult-led sessions or a lack of timely adult support hinders pupils' engagement and progress.

The curriculum offers a breadth of interesting learning experiences that support pupils to make effective progress in many areas of learning and experience. Teachers regularly talk to pupils about what they would like to learn, and this influences learning activities meaningfully. Older pupils have suitable opportunities to learn about people from different backgrounds and cultures from around the world. However, there is currently insufficient structure and coherence in the curriculum to ensure that pupils' learning develops systematically and progressively across all areas of learning and experience. There are limited opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity of different types of relationships.

The school has appropriate systems in place to identify, and to monitor the progress of, pupils who need extra support and those with additional learning needs. Leaders ensure that there are a suitable range of interventions, delivered by skilled support staff, to support these pupils' literacy skills and their well-being. As a result, these pupils make suitable progress towards their individual targets. The recently developed nurture provision has a positive impact on pupils' confidence and social development. However, support for pupils who need help with their mathematics and numeracy skills is less effective.

Leaders are continuing to work to develop an effective leadership structure that supports both day-to-day management and longer-term improvement. A wider range of staff now contribute helpfully to school and national priorities, such as the development of a broad and effective curriculum. They plan professional learning thoughtfully and align it carefully with school priorities, such as developing teachers' understanding of effective pedagogy in mathematics. This work is still at an early stage of development.

Improvements in national priorities, such as pupils' attendance, have been more limited. In general, the school has appropriate systems to monitor and manage pupils' attendance.

Where attendance falls below school targets, leaders respond consistently. Despite this, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is too high and continues to grow.

Leaders have developed a range of appropriate processes to evaluate the school's work. This includes the careful consideration of first-hand evidence that helps them identify strengths and areas for improvement accurately. From their monitoring, leaders develop appropriate strategies to address priorities, such as improving pupils' phonics and writing skills. In a few cases, these strategies do not focus sharply enough on pupils' learning and progress.

Governors are committed to the school. They ensure that leaders maintain an effective culture of safeguarding. Through valuable participation in self-evaluation activities, they have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This allows them to support and challenge leaders effectively.

Over recent years, the school has developed a notable budget deficit. Leaders and governors understand the school's financial position well and are considering how to manage spending over the next few years to reduce this figure. However, they do not yet have an agreed plan to address the overspend. They do not always ensure that grants, such as the Pupil Development Grant, are focused purposefully enough.

Additional information

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

The school's arrangements for site management do not give any cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

The school currently has a large deficit budget with no agreed plan to reduce the overspend. Leaders do not use of the pupil development grant purposefully enough.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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