



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

A report on

**Mount Airey C.P.
Augustine Way
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA61 1PA**

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by

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

About Mount Airey C.P.

Mount Airey Community Nursery and Infants School is in the town of Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire. It caters for 129 full-time and 43 part-time pupils. There are four mainstream classes, a morning nursery and a learning resource centre for pupils with complex educational needs.

Over the last three years around 22% of pupils were eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils' home language is English and no pupil speaks Welsh fluently. The school identifies around 16% of pupils as having additional learning needs and a few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher took up her post in June 2010 and the school's last inspection was in October 2010.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Most pupils make good progress in literacy and mathematical development learning, but they do not apply their literacy, numeracy or information and communication technology (ICT) skills well enough in work in other areas of learning. Nearly all pupils are happy, enjoy coming to school and benefit from positive working relationships with staff. Teachers provide interesting curriculum experiences that engage most pupils in their learning, but they do not enable pupils to develop successfully as independent learners. The school provides a warm and inclusive environment where all pupils are valued and guided to make appropriate choices. Although senior leaders are committed to achieving the best for pupils, they do not identify or focus well enough on the most important issues requiring improvement.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate and needs improvement

Recommendations

- R1 Provide opportunities for all pupils to make choices about how and what they learn in line with foundation phase principles
- R2 Ensure a sharp focus to self-evaluation and school development planning
- R3 Implement consistent strategies to improve the behaviour of pupils in Year 1 and Year 2
- R4 Improve pupils' ability to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in work across the curriculum
- R5 Develop pupils' ICT skills

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

Many pupils enter the nursery with skills at or above those expected for their age and, by the end of Year 2, most achieve their potential in literacy and mathematical development, producing work of a good standard. In recent years, the school has reduced successfully the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils in these two areas of learning. However, despite these positive achievements, throughout the school, pupils' ability to transfer their literacy and numeracy skills at an equivalent standard to work in other areas of the curriculum is limited. Most pupils in the learning resource centre and mainstream pupils with additional learning needs achieve well in relation to their personal targets.

Pupils in the learning resource centre enter the school with complex needs and levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are significantly below those expected for their age. Over time, nearly all these pupils make good progress relative to their specific learning needs. The development of their communication and social skills in relation to their starting points is particularly strong.

The speaking and listening skills of many pupils in the lower foundation phase classes are developing well. In the reception class, pupils share their ideas clearly and listen carefully to each other in class and small group sessions. For example, they discuss their ideas appropriately about how to sequence correctly the order of putting on clothes when dressing for school in the morning. However, a significant minority of Year 1 and 2 pupils find it difficult to listen carefully to members of staff and to each other and to provide appropriate responses to questions, for example about their work.

Most pupils throughout the school show an interest in reading and this is fostered and stimulated well by the wide range of texts that they study in literacy lessons. These include, for example, stories, poems, posters and non-fiction texts. In the lower foundation phase, most pupils begin to develop their basic reading skills well. Many apply their knowledge of sounds with increasing confidence to decode simple unfamiliar words, but they find it more difficult to use context or picture clues. More able pupils in Year 2, are beginning to use dictionaries correctly to find the meaning and spelling of a range of descriptive words, for example when they write sentences to describe parts of their bodies during the 'Marvellous Me' topic.

Across the school, pupils write for a wide range of audiences and purposes. Most generally present their work neatly and by the end of Year 2, many use a legible, joined script. Most older pupils show a good awareness of basic punctuation and more able pupils use more complex punctuation such as speech and exclamation marks correctly to enhance their writing. These pupils also show a developing awareness of how to use paragraphs to enhance their work. The content of most pupils' writing is developing well in literacy lessons. In Year 2, many pupils write extended pieces independently, showing a good understanding of the features of different types of writing. For example, they write interesting recounts of the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' from the point of view of the giant, which engage the reader well. However, pupils' ability to apply their writing skills to a similar standard in other tasks across the curriculum is more limited.

Most pupils develop their mathematical skills well. Pupils usually build purposefully on previous learning, such as moving from recognising coins, through to paying for items and giving change. Most pupils have a good understanding of relationships between numbers and use a range of number, measuring and data handling skills effectively in their mathematics. However, across the school only occasionally do pupils represent their work successfully in their own way or apply their skills to solve problems effectively. When they do apply their skills, for example to work out for how long Father Christmas had an afternoon nap, they work effectively. Overall, pupils' ability to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

Most pupils develop a narrow range of skills in ICT but most use these with confidence. For example, pupils in Year 1 develop their understanding of the use of logical instructions successfully when programming a simple robot to move across a grid. By the end of the foundation phase, they use paint programs well to create colourful writing in Welsh as part of their topic on space. However, most pupils do not develop a wide enough range of ICT skills that they apply independently to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Pupils listen to a wide range of Welsh across an interesting range of topics and many respond appropriately to instructions and commands in the language throughout the school day. A few pupils have the confidence to ask and answer basic questions using familiar vocabulary, for example to talk about the weather or how they are feeling. However, a majority of pupils do not practise speaking and repeating the language patterns that they learn often enough, to ensure that these become part of their everyday vocabulary.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe in school. Positive working relationships with all adults enhance pupils' sense of wellbeing effectively. Pupils know whom to go to if they have a concern and they have confidence in staff to address any issues that arise quickly and efficiently.

Most pupils enjoy their learning and are enthusiastic in lessons. The work pupils undertake in cross-curricular topics enables most to develop a clear understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. A good example of this is the 'Healthy Living Project' where Year 2 pupils describe accurately what sort of food choices help to support health and wellbeing. Nearly all pupils show a good understanding of the importance of how to keep themselves safe online. For instance, Year 2 pupils create posters encouraging younger pupils to make safe online choices following the advice of 'Mizzle Mouse and Electra Elephant'.

Pupils in Year 2 benefit from attending the varied activities available to them after school, such as drama and recorder clubs, which help enhance their creativity. Sport and eco clubs are also popular. However, these clubs are not available to younger pupils.

A few pupils begin to develop skills to help with leadership roles. For example, 'Cryw Cymreig' members encourage the use of incidental Welsh by greeting pupils as they arrive for assembly. School council members have a strong voice in the running of the school, such as when they decide on ways to encourage recycling.

Many lower foundation phase pupils engage well in their learning. They concentrate successfully and avoid distractions. For instance, they become engrossed in the changes to the ingredients when making playdough and they speak enthusiastically about this. Nearly all stay on task for appropriate lengths of time, and try to complete their work. However, a minority of Year 1 and 2 pupils do not engage well enough to allow effective learning to take place. Across the school, a majority of pupils behave appropriately in assemblies and at lunch times. A very few need support to manage their behaviour.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Overall, teaching is adequate and needs improvement. All staff plan an interesting range of lessons and tasks to engage most pupils in their learning. For example, in the reception class, pupils dress up as pirates and walk the plank to practise and develop their Welsh vocabulary and other skills in an enjoyable way. In literacy and mathematical development lessons throughout the school, most pupils receive appropriate levels of challenge to achieve their potential. However, in other tasks across the curriculum, there is often a lack of challenge due to the absence of effective planning for the progressive development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. This is particularly the case for more able Year 1 and 2 pupils.

All teachers identify clear learning objectives, which they generally share with pupils. They use these suitably to review the learning at the end of tasks. In the lower foundation phase classes, staff use questioning well to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. For example, many nursery pupils talk confidently about their learning choices and experiences in 'Plan, Do and Review' sessions. Learning support assistants work well in co-operation with teachers and good working relationships support the learning of most pupils. However, the lack of consistent and effective behaviour management in classes for Year 1 and 2 pupils means that a small minority of pupils disrupt the learning, to the detriment of others.

In the early years, staff provide good feedback to children to help them understand what they do well and what they need to do to improve their learning. Teachers ensure that Year 1 and 2 pupils have a good understanding of their 'rocket targets' for literacy and mathematical development and many pupils use these to improve aspects of their work successfully, for example to ensure more consistent use of full stops and capital letters in writing tasks.

Staff plan a rich curriculum that includes a good variety of outdoor learning opportunities and a wide range of visits and visitors to enhance learning further. For instance, visits to the local beach with staff from the 'Darwin Ecological Centre' to study marine life and the 'Splatt Cymru Project' enhance pupils' wellbeing effectively. Activities often stem from the study of a range of interesting literary texts, for example 'Rosie's Walk', which motivated pupils in Year 1 to design their own assault courses, with detailed written instructions for contestants. In many classes, despite the provision of these interesting learning experiences, there is over-direction of pupils' learning. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to work independently or to make choices about how and what they learn in line with foundation phase principles. In many tasks, pupils do not reach their potential as their learning is constrained by the overuse of worksheets.

In the learning resource centre, staff plan a range of interesting learning experiences that make good use of the environment and develop pupils' communication skills effectively, while providing appropriate choices for pupils about their learning.

Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills covers a range of appropriate topics. Teachers use the language well throughout the school day to give simple commands and instructions, but they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to speak and repeat the language patterns introduced in Welsh lessons. This means that most pupils do not retain or understand well enough a range of vocabulary to enable them to answer basic questions to consolidate their learning. For example, in Year 1, pupils struggle to indicate whether they enjoy a range of different sporting activities. The development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of their Welsh heritage and culture is not planned well enough. There is occasional provision within the curriculum for pupils to study Welsh authors and artists. For example, pupils in Year 2 draw a series of interesting portraits in the style of Shani Rhys Jones. However, overall, this aspect of the curriculum is underdeveloped.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school provides a beneficial range of programmes to support identified pupils to make progress, such as valuable support for vulnerable pupils with emotional needs. All classes provide a nurturing environment that benefits pupils' wellbeing. There are appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and to safeguard pupils. The home-school liaison officer works well with parents to encourage improved levels of attendance and punctuality.

There are very positive relationships with most parents, and the school provides them with appropriate information about their child's progress. Recently improved communication, such as the on-line reward system, provides parents with speedy feedback on their children's behaviour and achievements. This system is very popular with both pupils and parents.

Whole school pupil tracking is effective and systems identify clearly the progress of specific groups and individuals. Staff use this information well overall to target support appropriately for identified pupils, particularly those with additional learning needs. Individual education plans contain clear targets that provide appropriate steps for pupils to improve their learning successfully. Most targeted pupils make good progress in line with their ability. Targets in behaviour support plans are less effective as they do not focus enough on the specific aspects that pupils need to achieve to improve their behaviour.

The 'Splat Cymru' project is a good example of how the school helps pupils to understand moral issues such as celebrating that people are different and unique. The successful integration of pupils from the learning resource centre into mainstream classes supports this well. In the lower foundation phase classes, staff encourage pupils to co-operate closely, such as when they work together to recreate the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' with puppets. There are suitable opportunities in assemblies for pupils to reflect on a range of social and spiritual issues, such as fairness and tolerance. Staff provide a range of interesting activities to develop pupils' cultural awareness, for example through a visit to the local church to recreate a christening.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

Senior leaders' vision for school improvement focuses clearly on meeting the needs of pupils and ensuring their wellbeing. All staff are committed to providing the best care and support for pupils. They understand and respond to the needs of individuals and place this at the heart of their work.

In addition to her responsibility at Mount Airey, the headteacher has led another local school since September 2015. This commitment has meant that much of her time has been engaged in overseeing actions to improve the quality of provision and raise standards there. Despite the commitment of senior leaders, this has led to a gap in leadership that has allowed the improvement in quality of provision in a few areas of Mount Airey to stall. For example, a lack of consistent high expectations of behaviour across all classes has resulted in frequent low-level disruption amongst a few Year 1 and 2 pupils that has a negative impact on the learning of others.

The governing body supports the work of the school well. Governors have a detailed understanding of the performance of individual pupils through their scrutiny of anonymised data and use this well to ask questions about how the school is supporting individuals and groups of pupils. They ask challenging questions of senior leaders and request further clarification on specific issues to deepen their understanding of the school's performance, for example requesting information about support to improve teaching where there are identified shortcomings. Governors have created an effective sub-committee structure that oversees the work of the school efficiently and feeds information to full governing body meetings.

The school has a successful record of bringing about improvement in a few areas. For example, teachers have worked collaboratively to improve the quality of feedback to pupils. This ensures that many pupils have a clear understanding of what they do well and what they need to do to improve. In addition, senior leaders and staff in the learning resource centre have worked well with the local special school to ensure the provision of high quality learning experiences for pupils with complex needs.

Senior leaders work with other staff to undertake a wide range of monitoring activities. These include lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and, recently, meeting with pupils to gauge their opinions on the work of the school. Senior leaders use this information well to ensure consistency when implementing initiatives, such as a new approach to the teaching of mathematical skills. However, they do not evaluate progress in subsequent monitoring activities systematically to ensure the success of revised practice.

The school's self-evaluation and school improvement processes target many areas for improvement and cover a very wide range of the school's work. There is a clear link between the school's self-evaluation report and the contents of the school improvement plan. However, these processes do not identify the key areas that the school needs to improve well enough. For example, senior leaders have not identified shortcomings in the quality of foundation phase provision and the impact this has on the development of pupils' independent learning skills.

Senior leaders and governors manage the school's resources well. They ensure that there are ample teachers and support staff to meet the needs of pupils. They have overseen the development of the school's outdoor learning spaces well. This is a valuable asset for delivering the foundation phase curriculum.

Copies of the report

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

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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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