



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

A report on

Halfway C.P. School

**Havard Road
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA14 8SA**

Date of inspection: December 2022

by

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

About Halfway C.P. School

Name of provider	Halfway C.P. School
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Not applicable
Number of pupils on roll	240
Pupils of statutory school age	170
Number in nursery classes	43
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 23.0%)	17.7%
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 16.1%)	28.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	5.4%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	24/04/2014
Start date of inspection	05/12/2022

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

Halfway CP School is a very caring and welcoming school, which promotes inclusivity in a positive atmosphere for pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy activities and tasks, and they are keen to contribute during lessons. This is due to the effective working relationships that exist with their teachers and other staff.

Staff promote a high level of support and care for pupils in all aspects of school life, which encourages pupils to consider and improve their own well-being effectively. As a result, pupils' behaviour is very good. They demonstrate positive attitudes towards their work, which leads to strong engagement in the life of the school and in their own learning. The school helps pupils to develop confidence in themselves as individuals and to respect the feelings of others. The school environment promotes beneficial learning and well-being opportunities, which includes gardening areas within an outdoor 'Learning Village'.

Teaching helps pupils to make good progress in developing their speaking, listening, reading and digital skills. Pupils also develop suitable independent writing skills and their numeracy skills across the curriculum are satisfactory. However, the quality of feedback from teachers does not impact well enough on the next steps in pupils' learning.

The headteacher provides strong leadership. She is motivated and determined to succeed for the benefit of the pupils and the community. The deputy headteacher, staff and governors share her clear vision. They work together cohesively to ensure that the school is a thriving learning community that provides positive opportunities for its pupils.

The headteacher shares responsibilities effectively among staff and this contributes to a positive whole-school ethos, where staff and pupils feel valued for their contributions to school life. Leaders evaluate the school's work carefully and plan for improvements thoroughly, using established self-evaluation processes. These evaluation and monitoring practices lead to purposeful professional learning opportunities for staff.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve opportunities for pupils to write more extensively and independently
- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to use numeracy skills independently across the curriculum
- R3 Ensure that the quality of teachers' feedback targets the next steps in pupils' learning effectively

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils enter the school with levels that are below the expected level for their age. During their time in school most pupils make good progress in developing a range of skills. By the end of Year 6, most pupils speak, listen, read and use their digital skills well, including most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible to free school meals.

Nearly all pupils develop their speaking and listening skills effectively as they move through the school. The youngest pupils are keen to chat with their teachers and with visitors, and talk happily about what they are doing, such as reception pupils discussing their construction tasks animatedly. By the age of seven, nearly all pupils converse well with peers and adults. For example, Year 1 pupils discuss their predictions sensibly when experimenting with materials, to decide on which one is best to make a waterproof coat. Nearly all Year 6 pupils speak confidently about their work and they listen carefully to questions before answering them articulately. For example, they take great pride in their illustrated Christmas stories and short animations, which they read and present enthusiastically to younger pupils.

Most pupils develop good reading skills. Younger pupils acquire an understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds quickly. They enjoy looking at a wide range of books and develop positive attitudes to reading. By Year 2, most pupils' reading skills are secure and many use a variety of strategies successfully to read unfamiliar words. By Year 4, many pupils are becoming accomplished readers and they read expressively, such as when reading the works of Roald Dahl to each other. By Year 6 most pupils can skim and scan easily and they have good comprehension skills, which they use effectively in their research on the Second World War.

Many pupils develop appropriate writing skills. The youngest children enjoy mark making and writing in the 'Gingerbread House'. They embrace the regular and effective opportunities to develop their independent writing skills. By Year 2, many pupils can write a sequence of simple sentences and use basic punctuation and grammar accurately. Many older pupils write suitably in a range of genres, such as newspaper articles on the Blitz and poems for Remembrance Week. However, even though many pupils enjoy the writing process, they do not write effectively at length and they do not present and edit their work well enough.

Most younger pupils develop their Welsh language skills well. They sing greeting songs, listen to stories and respond to simple requests and commands. For example, they enjoy listening and joining in with the stories of Elen Benfelen and Babi Sinsler. As pupils move through the school, they develop their Welsh skills appropriately and use basic sentence structures and vocabulary to talk about themselves, their hobbies and their families. Many pupils are keen to conduct simple conversations and greetings with visitors.

Most pupils develop their mathematical understanding and skills well as they move through the school. The youngest pupils develop their knowledge of number through rhymes and songs and outdoor learning opportunities. By Year 2, many pupils

calculate the answers to number problems using two-digit numbers confidently. Older pupils use number operations successfully and develop successful data handling skills. For example, older pupils draw accurate line graphs to show the temperatures of penguins huddled together compared to one standing alone. However, many pupils do not apply their numeracy skills well enough across the curriculum.

Nearly all pupils develop strong digital skills, and they use these across the curriculum successfully. They use a range of software and devices, including word processing, coding, spreadsheets and multimedia presentations. For example, in Year 5, pupils create presentations on the theme of diversity using the life of Mo Farah as a stimulus. Many pupils email effectively and nearly all pupils use of digital devices and educational games to develop and reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills.

Most pupils develop their creative skills well. The youngest pupils enjoy making gingerbread men cupcakes in small groups, whilst older pupils play a range of instruments, such as mini flutes, and sing in the school choir expressively. Most pupils take on challenges and complete them to the best of their ability. As a result, they develop sound problem-solving skills, such as when Year 4 pupils use different types of electrical circuits to light up Christmas cards.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are very happy in school and feel safe and secure. Most pupils behave very well in lessons and assemblies, when moving around the school, and at break and lunch times. They have respect for each other and the adults that work with them. Nearly all pupils know who to go to if they are worried or upset, and they feel that staff look after them well. A minority of pupils make good use of the suggestion boxes in the school foyer to express their ideas and concerns. Nearly all pupils express their views through the annual 'Bully Busters' questionnaire, and nearly all feel that any incidents are dealt with well. Most pupils have a strong awareness of how to stay safe online and know what to do if they see something that worries or upsets them.

Nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and feel that the school gives them plenty of opportunities for exercise. Many pupils engage in daily physical activity enthusiastically, for example playing parachute games on the playground. Many pupils attend the after-school variety club which offers a range of sports and artistic activities, and many pupils compete in football and rugby tournaments both in and out of school. Overall, most pupils have a positive attitude to physical activity, and are keen to participate in a wide range of activities that the school offers, such swimming, golf, bowls and cricket. Nearly all pupils develop a sound understanding of a healthy lifestyle and explain confidently why this is important to their future life.

Many pupils engage well with others when working in small groups or pairs and approach their learning with enthusiasm. Most pupils demonstrate respect and care for each other and the adults that they work with. A majority of pupils sustain concentration for appropriate lengths of times when working in class and are keen to please their teachers and complete their tasks. However, many do not use a wide range of strategies well enough when experiencing challenges in their work, and

many pupils rely too heavily on support from adults. As a result, many pupils' levels of independence are underdeveloped, especially with extended writing and numeracy tasks.

Many pupils are involved in leadership roles that have a positive impact on the life of the school. For example, the Rights Respecting Council promote diversity through assemblies, and the Healthy Schools group promote the sale of fresh fruit. These pupils take their roles seriously and they are keen to further develop their impact as ethical informed citizens. For example, through their 'Rainscape Project' to collect and make use of rainwater. A group of pupils lead the Eco Committee in this work, and it has a positive impact on the school. Additionally, many pupils run a reducing waste project across the school to use more blue bags instead of black bags. The whole school also participates in a Recycled Fashion Show, where pupils make their own garments from clean rubbish to save it going to landfill sites. A few pupils on the Eco and Fairtrade committee presented the work of the school to local councillors to demonstrate their good understanding of the importance of sustainability.

Many pupils develop their enterprising skills purposefully, for example through creating a fruit tuck shop. The pupils use the profits from this project effectively and as a result, they are planning the provision of free fruit for pupils, as part of their social enterprise initiative. Nearly all pupils design, make and sell products for their summer and Christmas fetes every year as part of the whole school 'Biz Project'. As a result, most pupils have a good understanding of basic business skills, how to manage profits and losses and how to apply these skills in real-life contexts.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school curriculum reflects the principles and culture of the Curriculum for Wales successfully. The school works closely with pupils, parents, staff and governors to create a vision for the school's bespoke curriculum, which is engaging, challenging and accessible to all pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils learn about the history of the local coastline, for example by researching the atrocities of the Swansea Blitz in the Second World War. They also extend pupils' learning further by using well-planned visits as stimuli to promote the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, such as to the Roman settlement in Caerleon.

Staff plan interesting half termly topics, which provide stimulating experiences for pupils, that build on their previous learning and develops their skills effectively. Teachers ensure that pupils contribute ideas and suggestions to the planning process in class, which provides pupils with a sense of ownership in their learning. Staff use a whole school approach to provide pupils with opportunities to acquire the necessary skills to learn effectively. For example, teachers use guided group sessions well to enhance pupils' reading skills effectively and encourage pupils purposefully to use electronic tablets to support the development of their literacy and mathematical skills. These include comprehension tasks in language and collecting data, creating charts, word processing and spelling challenges. However, teachers do not provide enough worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills independently and to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum.

The school plans well to challenge stereotypes and to study diversity effectively. This includes projects that focus on Welsh sporting icons with disabilities and how they

overcome difficulties to succeed. The school also invites visitors to deliver thoughtful programmes that teach pupils sensibly about the harmful effects of racism and bullying in society. The school encourages pupils to explore the plight of refugees and this has led to a collective understanding among pupils and staff that the school is a welcoming and safe place for families seeking sanctuary. As a result of these caring and well-planned learning opportunities, the school provides a warm, welcoming and safe environment for all.

Planning for the curriculum supports pupils' personal and social development very well. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work together and review their learning and well-being. All staff use curriculum resources effectively to provide personalised support for vulnerable pupils, such as those with social and emotional difficulties.

Teachers' planning encourages pupils to reflect on global issues effectively. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 talk eloquently about environmental issues affecting the planet and the importance of sustainability. Staff also make good use of the extensive school grounds and the locality to enrich learning and to promote outdoor learning. All classes use the school's gardens and growing areas to teach a range of social and practical skills successfully, such as harvesting rainwater and growing fruit and vegetables.

The school demonstrates a positive attitude towards the Welsh language and culture. Staff model the language very well and they promote the advantages of learning Welsh effectively and this has a suitable impact on pupils' Welsh oracy skills.

Nearly all of the teaching is good across the school. Teachers and support staff work together well to create high quality and well-resourced learning environments. The positive relationship between adults and pupils has a beneficial effect on nearly all pupils' behaviour and well-being. Teachers make effective use of support staff to advance pupils' learning. Staff share clear objectives with pupils in lessons and use a range of resources beneficially to create purposeful learning experiences in classes. Teachers and support staff also use skilful questions to assess pupils' understanding, in order to move their learning on.

Teachers provide relevant opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and that of their peers. Teachers' verbal feedback is good; however, the quality of written feedback is inconsistent. This hinders the understanding of pupils of what they need to do to improve their work and progress to the next step in their learning. School reports to parents and carers provide detailed information about their child's progress and attitudes to learning, which include useful targets for improvement.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a supportive community, and staff encourage pupils to contribute to its caring and friendly ethos successfully. The strong relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are a positive feature of the school. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and they respond intuitively to the pupils' emotional and social needs. Through effective use of the well-planned nurture room and breakout areas in classes, the school provides purposeful support for pupils' physical and emotional health and well-being. This reassuring and warm atmosphere helps nearly all pupils to settle effortlessly into school life and it

contributes well to their happiness in school. These sensible and thoughtful practices encourage pupils to engage in the life of the school and in their own learning.

The provision for pupils identified as having ALN is thorough. The school's ALN co-ordinator works effectively in partnership with the headteacher and staff members. Together, they ensure that pupils' needs are identified early, and that the tracking and support for individuals and groups of pupils begin promptly after identification. Thorough pupil progress reviews result in staff members having a deeper understanding of the needs of pupils and specific targets to support their learning. The school interacts beneficially with a range of specialist services to secure additional, timely resources and to offer specialist support to pupils with a range of academic, physical, emotional and social needs. These arrangements ensure that nearly all targeted pupils make good progress in relation to their abilities.

The school ensures that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities take on leadership roles effectively on a variety of purposeful groups. This provision develops their understanding of the importance of active citizenship well. As a result, the school provides pupils with worthwhile opportunities to participate in making decisions to improve the school. For example, members of the School Council lead on aspects of diversity projects, such as presenting assemblies on poverty and equal rights for all ethnicities. The pupils therefore learn that acts, such as raising money during the school's 'Ukraine Day', supports children living through dangerous circumstances.

The school has a beneficial range of opportunities that helps pupils to develop a good understanding of their Welsh heritage. For example, as part of a local history project, pupils study the transatlantic flight of Amelia Earhart and her local memorial. The school effectively promotes Welsh cultural aspects such as a chairing ceremony as part of its Eisteddfod celebrations. St David's Day celebrations also contribute strongly towards a positive Welsh ethos, as does the history of rugby in Llanelli. Additionally, following a visit from a prominent Welsh language vlogger, the Criw Cymraeg lead activities, such as 'Cymro a Chymraes yr Wythnos', to promote pupils' daily use of Welsh. This type of effective provision allows pupils to engage willingly with school life and to feel proud of the school's family ethos.

The school places a strong emphasis on providing a rich and varied range of trips and visits that support the curriculum and engage pupils in their learning. For example, these include local visits to Parc Howard, the lifeboat station and wider afield to the Royal Mint for the older pupils. These experiences provide varied opportunities for pupils to learn about the history of the town and the roles of support workers and national businesses in South Wales.

Staff enable pupils to make strong contributions to the life of their community. They use the experiences positively so that pupils develop respect and that they understand that caring for others is important. For example, pupils support a local food bank by taking part in a harvest festival, which contributes to pupils' understanding that supporting the less fortunate is important in society.

All staff understand their roles and responsibilities in contributing robustly to pupils' safety and well-being. They ensure that pupils' well-being and safety are prominent elements of school life. Leaders embed a culture of purposeful safeguarding processes among all staff and these practices are an integral part of their daily

responsibilities. As a result, the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. The school has effective systems to monitor and improve attendance. Following the pandemic, rates of attendance dropped significantly. However, recent measures taken by the school have led to improvements.

Leadership and management

The headteacher works conscientiously with the deputy headteacher, governors, staff, pupils and parents to develop a shared vision and high aspirations for the school. Her diligent work and clear thinking on how to improve the school reflect the school's motto, 'Learning Together, Growing Together', successfully.

The headteacher leads the school purposefully. She ensures that all staff focus on creating a warm, family atmosphere, where all pupils and adults feel included in school life. Along with the deputy headteacher, they model effectively the values and aspirations that the school community encourages, such as respect, ambition and collaboration. As a result, relationships across the school are strong and there is a shared commitment to improve the school's practices and pupils' outcomes.

Governors are supportive of the school. They understand their roles and fulfil their responsibilities proficiently, for example in areas such financial management and health and safety matters. They keep up to date with national priorities, such as the Curriculum for Wales and the need to address the risks of pupil deprivation. Link governors are assigned to each curriculum area of learning and experience and hold the school to account sensibly as these areas progress. For example, they support the school's pro-active approach to develop greater consistency in teachers' planning and to enhance pupil voice opportunities.

Governors contribute a positive and well-placed voice as critical friends to move the school forward. They have an accurate and detailed picture of the school gained through first-hand visits, talking and listening to pupils, regular discussions and informative reports from the headteacher. They also liaise sensibly with staff to ensure that policies and procedures promote the importance of healthy eating and drinking among pupils.

Staff fulfil their roles and responsibilities well and feel that they contribute purposefully to the school improvement process. For example, they plan in departmental teams to develop a shared understanding when designing the curriculum. They also develop new systems confidently to determine pupils' starting points at the school and to evaluate pupils' progress as they move from class to class.

Leaders have established a range of appropriate monitoring activities to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development. They gather a range of first-hand evidence effectively to inform their views of the school. For example, they analyse how well the pupils are progressing from their starting points and consider the views of pupils and parents carefully. Leaders use findings from the self-evaluation processes adeptly to set realistic targets in the school's development plan. They also identify, share and apply the most effective practices, noted in their monitoring processes, across the school. For example, there are opportunities for staff to share

each other's most innovative classroom and planning practices. As a result, the findings of leaders' monitoring leads to beneficial professional learning opportunities for staff.

Leaders and staff develop pupils' use of most of the school grounds creatively, particularly for the youngest pupils. They have increased covered outdoor facilities, which has allowed pupils more opportunities to choose where and how they learn. For example, nursery and reception pupils learn to dress appropriately for learning first-hand about cooking in the school's 'Learning Village'. However, the outdoor provision is not equitable, across all classes, for pupils under the age of seven.

The headteacher and staff collaborate well with other schools and external partners, such as to plan for and implement the Curriculum for Wales. Arrangements to promote professional development for all staff link well with the school's priorities for improvement, for example by leaders attempting to embed the school's assessment practices, and through implementing the new ALN Code of Practice.

Parents and carers are kept well informed of school developments. For example, the school uses electronic newsletters and the school's communication app regularly. Additionally, staff and senior leaders meet parents and carers at drop-off and pick-up times to maintain a close contact with the extended school community. As a result, parents and carers feel that the school is a safe and caring family environment. They appreciate how quickly leaders and staff respond to any concerns and suggestions that they raise.

Leaders manage the budget carefully and ensure that spending decisions are in line with the school's priorities for improvement. This includes the pupil development grant, which the school uses wisely for specific interventions across the school, such as emotional and nurturing sessions for pupils.

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

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:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2023: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 10/02/2023