



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

A report on

Minera Aided Primary School

**Minera Hall Road
Minera
Wrexham
LL11 3YE**

Date of inspection: March 2023

by

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

About Minera Aided Primary School

Name of provider	Minera Aided Primary School
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School
Number of pupils on roll	107
Pupils of statutory school age	86
Number in nursery classes	21
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%)	25.9%
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%)	8.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	5.6%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	05/05/2014
Start date of inspection	06/03/2023

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

Most pupils start Minera Primary School with weak literacy and numeracy skills. From these starting points and over time they do not make sufficient progress in the development of these skills, particularly in the development of writing. Nearly all pupils behave well, and most younger pupils engage enthusiastically in the outdoor learning environment where they begin to learn through exploration.

The school has begun to develop its curriculum in line with Curriculum for Wales based around a range of themes. Teachers are starting to enhance learning suitably through a range of trips and visits. However, provision for the progressive development of key skills such as literacy and numeracy is underdeveloped. As a result, the majority of pupils do not progress as well as they should in these areas.

Teachers and support staff prioritise pupils' well-being and forge positive relationships with them. This supports pupils to feel safe and to be considerate and respectful to others. However, teaching does not consistently meet the needs of all pupils well enough. Too often, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low and the pace of learning is too slow. Teachers rely heavily on standardised test data and do not use day-to-day assessment well enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress they are capable of making.

The school is inclusive and provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is appropriate. As a result, most pupils with ALN make suitable progress against their individual targets. Leaders and teachers promote a strong safeguarding culture, and they develop pupils' spiritual, moral and social skills well. Whilst the school promotes the benefits of healthy eating appropriately, a minority of pupils eat unhealthy snacks at breaktimes.

Following a period of staffing change and uncertainty leaders have put in place a new leadership structure. These roles are at an early stage of development. Leaders have begun to work with staff to address a few improvement priorities including reading and ALN. However, generally, leaders have not monitored the school's work carefully enough. As a result, they do not identify important aspects of the school's provision and teaching that require improvement.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve leadership at all levels ensuring that self-evaluation and school improvement actions focus on identifying and addressing the key improvements in teaching and learning
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching and assessment to ensure that pupils make appropriate progress, particularly in writing
- R3 Improve the curriculum and provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress usually every four to six months.

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils enter the school with literacy and numeracy skills at a level below that expected for their age. During their time at the school, too many pupils do not make enough progress in developing their writing and numeracy skills. Many pupils with ALN make suitable progress towards their individual targets.

The majority of pupils improve their oracy skills quickly, often from low starting points. A minority of younger pupils begin to talk about their actions using appropriate language such as when they describe the methods and ingredients they use to make biscuits. The majority of older pupils listen well to each other and adults and discuss their work with confidence, for example when explaining why different types of pollution are bad for the environment.

Across the school, a majority of pupils do not make enough progress in developing their writing skills. Around a half of younger pupils begin to make suitable progress with their early writing skills. They start to write in short sentences using capital letters and full stops appropriately, such as when they write a story inspired by their class book. Older pupils write for an appropriate range of purposes and audiences. There are a few examples of writing that is well-structured and at a level expected for Year 5 and 6. However, they do not use a wide range of vocabulary and do not use punctuation appropriately. Across the school, pupils do not develop their handwriting well enough and do not present their work with appropriate care.

As they move through the school, the majority of pupils make appropriate progress as readers. Younger pupils use a range of strategies appropriately, including their knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words. Older pupils read with increased fluency and with expression. They use skills such as inference and prediction well and pupils show a suitable understanding of what they have read, discussing maturely why they prefer reading different types of books.

Most younger pupils develop mathematical skills appropriately and use their knowledge to solve simple problems, for example involving money. As they move through the school, a majority of pupils improve their understanding of number well. However, many more able pupils do not always produce work at a standard of which they are capable. Many pupils do not set out their work clearly and a minority regularly make careless errors. Overall, as they move through the school, most pupils do not use their number skills to the level they are capable of in their work across the curriculum.

Most pupils make appropriate progress learning to speak Welsh. Younger pupils learn key words by responding to instructions and when joining in with a range of Welsh songs. The majority of older pupils talk about themselves and their likes and dislikes using appropriate Welsh language patterns and vocabulary. Many older pupils write short Welsh sentences accurately, for example to describe how they are feeling.

Many pupils make suitable progress in improving their digital skills and they use these skills confidently to support their work in other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils program toys correctly to move in simple ways and pupils in Year 3 and 4 use simple branching databases to classify objects. Older pupils use a range of ICT independently on a regular basis.

Many pupils develop their physical skills well through the wide range of opportunities that the school provides for them. Younger pupils use the school's outdoor area well to develop physically, for example by climbing trees and when using swings and climbing frames. Most older pupils develop a wide range of skills by taking part in broad range of physical activities.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils behave well in class and throughout the school day. They are considerate and respectful and relate well to each other and adults. Most pupils are proud of their school and feel safe and secure within its positive and caring environment. They are confident that adults will listen to their concerns and deal with any problems that arise.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. From an early age, many of the youngest pupils settle into school well and begin to engage appropriately with the activities presented to them. Across the school, most pupils collaborate well and show respect for the ideas of others when working in small groups or pairs. They engage well with their work and play co-operatively whilst supporting each other in the outdoor area.

Most pupils know how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They understand the importance of a balanced diet and how to keep both their bodies and minds healthy. For example, most pupils understand the need to access water during lesson time to stay hydrated. However, a minority of pupils eat unhealthy snacks during break times. Many pupils know how to stay safe online and older pupils can explain why it is not safe to share their online password.

Most pupils participate in a variety of physical activities with enthusiasm, including extra-curricular activities such as netball and basketball. Many are physically active during playtimes. They participate in team games such as football or small group activities using hoops and cones. They particularly enjoy using the school outdoor equipment and share resources considerately. Most younger pupils are enthusiastic about using the wide range of outdoor learning equipment to develop their physical skills. Many older pupils enjoy representing the school through their participation in a variety of sports teams.

Many pupils enjoy the recently introduced opportunities to influence aspects of school life through a range of pupil voice committees. These include the Senedd, Criw Cymraeg, Eco and Digital leaders. Recent examples of these groups taking on leadership responsibility include an event to show support for the Welsh national football team that was organised by the Criw Cymraeg. The majority of pupils, including those with ALN, are beginning to contribute to the wider life of the school. For instance, those pupils who are not elected as members of the school committees, are starting to take responsibility for other areas, such as looking after

their classroom or looking after younger pupils during whole school assemblies. However, pupils do not currently influence how and what they learn to any notable extent.

Many pupils respond well to questions in class to share their knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 1 and 2 respond to questions about their research in mathematics appropriately. However, across the school most pupils do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school provides a range of interesting themes that support aspects of pupils' development such as their health and well-being appropriately. However, provision to develop important aspects of pupils' skills, including their numeracy and writing skills, is ineffective. The school does not have a clear plan to for the progressive development of pupils' skills as they move through the school. This limits the progress of too many pupils.

The school plans its curriculum over a two-year cycle, organised into similar termly themes for all classes. Teachers consider pupils' needs when planning the timing of themes. For example, in the autumn term there is a focus on health and well-being to support pupils starting in their new classes. However, it is unclear how the school plans to develop pupils' skills over time in key areas such as literacy and numeracy.

The school enriches its curriculum and learning experiences appropriately. Staff make good use of the school's extensive outdoor learning environment and teachers use places of interest within the locality effectively to inspire learning. For example, visits to the local quarry help to develop pupils' understanding of local history, whilst visits to Chester Zoo provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to learn about endangered animals. The school provides many new, exciting experiences for pupils, such as fencing, and older pupils benefit from a residential visit to develop their outdoor skills. Pupils in the younger classes have regular access to the school outdoor areas and these high-quality learning environments enable pupils to learn enthusiastically through exploration. Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to climb and explore in the school's muddy areas. These experiences, in combination and over time, help pupils to develop social relationships with their peers effectively.

Teachers and other adults develop good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. Generally, teaching assistants support pupils' learning and well-being appropriately, for example, by implementing specific intervention and support programmes. Teachers' feedback to pupils does not support pupils' progress well enough. Teachers do not consistently identify important errors in pupils' work. This means that pupils repeat the same mistakes. In addition, teachers do not identify the next steps in learning for pupils well enough. Overall, too many lessons do not systematically build on pupils' prior learning.

The majority of staff use questioning well to move learning on and at times to clarify pupils' understanding. On a few occasions, teachers use pupils' responses to questions appropriately to adapt their teaching to meet pupil needs. Often, teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are not high enough and this limits the progress pupils make. In the majority of lessons, the pace of teaching is too slow,

and this reduces the time for effective learning to take place. The school's assessment processes are over-reliant on data from standardised tests. Teachers do not use day-to-day assessment well enough to identify pupils' next steps in learning. As a result, teachers and leaders do not have a clear picture of the progress made by all pupils.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring community, where staff and pupils show respect for each other. Teachers and teaching assistants respond sensitively to pupils' emotional and social needs. The school's supportive and inclusive ethos has a positive effect on pupils' well-being and their attitudes to school.

Staff use suitable systems to monitor the progress of pupils with ALN. They recognise the importance of early intervention and provide caring support for individuals and groups of pupils with ALN. Teachers create useful one-page profiles for all pupils with ALN. These detail valuable information about a pupil's strengths and what helps them to learn. Staff produce effective individual development plans that contain realistic targets for pupils and they provide appropriate support based on each pupil's needs. Staff monitor these pupils' progress carefully. As a result, most pupils with ALN make at least suitable progress against individual targets from their starting points.

Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to provide a wide range of purposeful intervention programmes to improve pupils' emotional well-being, their speech, language, and reading skills. These activities support targeted pupils successfully, for example by helping them to manage their feelings and to control their emotions effectively.

Staff work proactively with other professionals and services to support families sensitively. Where necessary, they ensure there is a network of support for the whole family when dealing with difficult circumstances. This work has led to positive outcomes for pupils, for example by improving rates of attendance and progress in learning.

Staff promote the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, and social skills well. For example, older pupils worked with a local disability group to design a suitable game for people with visual impairment. Pupils have beneficial opportunities to reflect on values such as, forgiveness, compassion and perseverance.

The school's curriculum offers valuable experiences for pupils to develop their understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, the Criw Cymraeg devised a poster competition to promote the Welsh language, whilst older pupils studied the work of artist Owain Fon Williams and produced paintings in his style. The school participates regularly in the school Eisteddfod enabling pupils to further develop their understanding of Welsh heritage and culture.

The school has introduced various pupil voice groups, and these are beginning to enable pupils to have opportunity to contribute to the wider life of school. For example, the digital leaders have recently promoted anti-bullying and online safety through the provision of training to their peers.

The school encourages healthy lifestyles purposefully. It provides weekly sports lessons, successful extra-curricular activities, school visits and swimming lessons. There are regular opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of sporting activities including basketball, football and netball. These have raised pupils' awareness of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and keep physically fit. However, despite this, a minority of pupils continue to bring unhealthy snacks into school for breaktime.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff provide pupils with secure indoor and outdoor environments in which they can learn safely. All staff have received recent safeguarding training. They are aware of the school's procedures to report any concerns. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management

Following a period of turbulence in staffing and leadership, the headteacher and governing body have established a new leadership team to include an assistant headteacher and a new ALN co-ordinator. These roles are at an early stage of development and influence.

Recently, leaders' actions have led to a few school improvements including progress made in supporting pupils with ALN and the development of pupils' reading skills. However, overtime leaders have not always demonstrated the capacity to secure necessary improvements. This has had a negative impact on teaching and learning.

Leaders have begun to implement a programme of monitoring activity which includes talking to pupils to gather their views. However, overall, leaders do not consider a wide enough range of first-hand evidence to form an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning that takes place at the school. Generally, there is an over-reliance on the use of data from standardised tests as a means of identifying strengths and areas for development. As a result, leaders do not always identify the most important aspects of teaching and learning that require improvement. This means that leaders are unable to identify appropriate developmental targets for teachers which, in turn, limits the effectiveness of processes such as performance management at the school.

The headteacher and ALN co-ordinator monitor the progress of pupils with ALN well. This contributes positively to the school's provision for pupils with ALN and supports these pupils to make appropriate progress.

Leaders work appropriately with partner schools across the local cluster and the wider region. This work provides worthwhile opportunities for collaboration, for instance to improve arrangements for transition. There are a few beneficial professional learning opportunities for staff, for example to support them to implement the new national arrangements to support pupils with ALN. However, leaders do not always strategically plan staff development across the school so that it impacts positively on school improvement.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They have positive relationships with senior leaders and an appropriate awareness of national priorities for improvement.

For example, they have an appropriate understanding of ALN reform and the steps the school has taken to address this priority. However, they do not have a clear enough picture of the school's current position or of the lack of progress that too many pupils make as they move through the school. Governors work with the headteacher to manage finances appropriately and have successfully recovered a deficit budget over the last year. Governors ensure that food and drink provided by the school complies with legislation. However, they do not ensure appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking, for example at break times.

Leaders have a suitable understanding of the impact of poverty on pupils' progress. They ensure that the cost of school activities is not a barrier to school learning by subsidising or funding school trips or by securing grants to fund activities. However, leaders do not monitor use of the Pupil Development Grant well enough to determine the difference it makes to pupils' progress or well-being.

Leaders promote a caring, inclusive environment where pupils feel valued. They prioritise the well-being of all members of the school community appropriately. This has impacted positively on pupil well-being. Leaders promote staff well-being effectively by providing high levels of care, and support to the team. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.

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: 11/05/2023