



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

A report on

**Overmonnow C.P. School
Rockfield Road
Monmouth
Monmouthshire
NP25 5BA**

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by

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

About Overmonnow C.P. School

Overmonnow Primary School is in Monmouth, in Monmouthshire local authority. There are currently 346 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11, including 34 who attend the nursery part-time. There are 14 classes and a special needs resource base for pupils with statements of special educational needs who live in the wider Monmouthshire area.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 19%. This is close to the national average of 18%. The school identifies 26% of pupils as having additional learning needs, including 23 pupils who have statements of special educational needs. This is above the national average of 21%. Most pupils come from a white ethnic background and speak English as a first language. Very few pupils come from Welsh speaking homes.

The headteacher took up her post in January 2016. The last inspection was in June 2011.

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 enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. Throughout the school, members of staff know individual pupils well. They respond effectively to pupils' personal, social and emotional needs in order to ensure their happiness and wellbeing. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs, both in mainstream classes and in the special needs resource base, is strong.

A notable strength of the school is the good progress that most pupils make in developing their speaking and listening, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They apply these skills effectively in the wide range of interesting learning experiences that teachers provide for them, both indoors and outside.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school based securely on raising standards and ensuring the wellbeing of all pupils. The senior leadership team supports the headteacher effectively and all staff carry out their duties diligently. The governors know the school and its community well and offer a good level of challenge to school leaders.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards further by making full use of available teaching and learning time in all lessons
- R2 Maximise the use of resources, including sharing the expertise of all teaching and support staff throughout the school
- R3 Improve pupils' punctuality

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Pupils of all abilities make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills as they move through the school. Most pupils in the special needs resource base make good progress, often from very low starting points.

Most pupils' listening and speaking skills develop well. They share ideas with increasing confidence in whole class and group discussions. In the foundation phase, most pupils discuss the powers of superheroes enthusiastically and use a widening vocabulary to describe them, such as their capacity to 'disappear' and become 'invisible'. In key stage 2, many pupils engage adults in conversation eagerly and enjoy sharing jokes. By Year 6, most pupils explain their thinking clearly, for example, to justify their reasons for placing lines of a poem about the aurora borealis in a particular order.

Throughout the school, most pupils have a positive attitude to the Welsh language. In the foundation phase, they follow instructions correctly. By Year 2, they express their feelings in simple sentences confidently. In key stage 2, most pupils discuss their hobbies using appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure.

Pupils read for a wide range of purposes in books and online. By Year 2, many pupils understand the difference between fact and fiction and recount elements of favourite stories. They research information on tablet computers and show a good understanding of subject-specific vocabulary in their work on insects, explaining the meaning of words such as 'drone' and 'colony', for example.

In key stage 2, many pupils enjoy reading and use their skills well to support their learning. By Year 6, most pupils become skilled at researching information on the internet and summarising pieces of information, for example, about the First World War. Most pupils read in Welsh with increasing accuracy.

Throughout the school, most pupils make particularly good progress in their handwriting skills and take pride in the presentation of their work. The youngest pupils form letters clearly, with increasing control. By Year 6, most pupils' handwriting is neat, joined and legible.

In the foundation phase, pupils write in a good range of forms and for a variety of purposes. For example, they write recipes for crispy cakes to sell during 'enterprise week' and compose simple acrostic poems for Remembrance Day. Many pupils apply their knowledge of letters and sounds confidently to spell words they want to write.

During key stage 2, many pupils organise extended pieces of writing well. In Year 6, for example, they write an entertaining 'true' story of Red Riding Hood, written from the wolf's point of view. Most use a good range of vocabulary and punctuation, such as speech and exclamation marks. Many pupils write short paragraphs in Welsh with reasonable fluency and accuracy.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop a strong understanding of number and use mathematical language appropriately. They apply their knowledge of standard and non-standard measures, for instance, when estimating and measuring pretend caterpillars. In reception, most pupils learn to recognise and count numbers to 20. By Year 2, they add, subtract, multiply and divide larger numbers and use their knowledge of fractions well to design pizzas with different toppings.

In key stage 2, most pupils develop a sound understanding of number and place value. They use increasingly complex calculations effectively in their work across the curriculum. For example, in lower key stage 2, most pupils convert confidently from one metric unit to another. In upper key stage 2, most pupils understand fraction, decimal and percentage equivalences and find the perimeter and area of compound shapes competently.

Across the school, pupils use a wide range of ICT skills effectively to support their learning. In the foundation phase, many pupils search websites efficiently to find relevant information, use images and add text to create a document, such as an information sheet on dinosaurs.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils can plan a presentation, manipulate images, incorporate sounds and produce a video or animation, such as the 'Fire Ant,' to a good standard. Most pupils use the internet well to research topics. For example, they create good power point presentations to demonstrate how mountains are formed.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils feel safe, secure and enjoy school. The positive working relationships that pupils have with adults enhance their sense of wellbeing strongly. Most pupils know where to go for advice and support if they are worried or upset. They feel confident that adults will listen and respond promptly to any concerns they may have. In the special needs resource base, pupils have appropriate independent learning skills. Pupils with additional speech and language needs use pictures successfully to communicate so that adults can respond and ensure their wellbeing.

Across the school, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Many are not scared of making a mistake and persevere with a task in order to complete it successfully. For example, they sustain their concentration well when tackling numeracy problems. However, a few pupils sometimes find it difficult to maintain their concentration when introductions to lessons are prolonged.

Most pupils behave well in class, during assemblies and around the school. They co-operate productively with each other when working in pairs and groups and generally settle well to their work. However, a minority of pupils in key stage 2 do not move easily between different lessons and activities, with the result that they do not make best use of their time for learning.

The independent learning skills of most pupils develop well. They use self-help strategies effectively, for example to spell unfamiliar words, before asking an adult for support. In the foundation phase, pupils often make choices about how and what they learn. In upper key stage 2, pupils regularly undertake independent research

projects using the internet, such as creating a timeline on the development of the motorcar, and make sensible choices about their learning when given the opportunity.

Most pupils are aware of the importance of making healthy life style choices. Many participate enthusiastically in after-school sporting and dance clubs, in addition to regular physical education lessons. Older pupils organise a daily fruit tuck shop, which is popular with pupils and helps them understand that fruit is an important part of a healthy diet. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the problems linked to drugs misuse, alcohol and tobacco and the dangers of anti-social behaviour.

Many pupils assume leadership roles in a wide variety of pupil-led groups, such as the 'criw Cymraeg', 'eco warriors' and 'heddlu bach' (mini police). They undertake their responsibilities conscientiously. For instance, the digital leaders remind pupils regularly about the importance of e-safety, so that nearly all pupils understand how to keep safe when working online.

Members of the different committees represent all pupils' views well and make a positive contribution to school improvement. For example, the school council worked with the parent teacher association to acquire an outdoor classroom, following pupils' suggestions. Most pupils show mature understanding of the reasons why the school sometimes has to refuse their requests. For example, pupils wanted to build a tree house in the grounds, but understood that this was not possible due to health and safety risks and the fact that the trees were not suitable.

Most pupils develop their social and life skills well through a wide range of opportunities. For instance, they frequently engage in group and paired discussions during lessons where most listen respectfully to the contributions of others. 'Buddies' do their best to ensure that no pupil feels lonely at break times. Most pupils are developing a good degree of empathy towards others. For example, they raise significant amounts of money for charities such as Children in Need.

Most pupils understand the importance of good attendance. However, a few are late in the morning, which means they miss the start of the first lesson of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The foundation phase curriculum engages pupils effectively in learning. There are many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn through play, experimenting, solving problems and making decisions. Topics such as 'superheroes' and 'wriggle and crawl' capture pupils' imagination and interest successfully. There is a good balance between adult-led learning activities and those that pupils complete independently.

In key stage 2, stimulating topics, such as 'frozen kingdom' and 'alchemy island', provide an interesting context for pupils' learning and enable them to apply their knowledge and skills purposefully across the curriculum. For example, pupils use their literacy skills well to write a chronological report on the Titanic and a final diary for Scott of the Antarctic.

Teachers make good use of the indoor and outdoor environments, including the forest school, to plan worthwhile opportunities for pupils to apply their developing

skills. In the foundation phase, imaginative role-play areas, such as the 'creepy crawly corner', enable pupils to pretend to be bug hunters and use their literacy and numeracy skills independently to record their findings. Staff in the special needs resource base use areas such as the sensory light room effectively to support the learning and wellbeing of pupils with specific needs.

The curriculum successfully raises pupils' awareness and interest in the traditions, culture and history of the local area and Wales. For example, visits to places such as Monmouth museum and Cardiff castle enhance their understanding of the topics they study. Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills is effective. Most pupils develop positive attitudes to learning the language and make good progress.

Weeks devoted to specific themes are particularly successful in giving pupils a real-life context for their learning. During 'enterprise week', for example, pupils use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills creatively to make products for a tabletop sale. Pupils in the foundation phase make salt dough ornaments and calendars, while pupils in key stage 2 create working clocks and key rings.

Throughout the school, teachers use a wide range of resources, teaching techniques and grouping arrangements effectively to help pupils learn. Lessons build well on pupils' previous learning. Generally, there is a good degree of challenge for pupils of all abilities, including individualised learning for pupils in the special needs resource base. Teachers check pupils' understanding carefully as they work and address any misconceptions well.

The quality of teachers' oral and written feedback to pupils is consistently good. They give pupils clear criteria for the successful completion of their work, so that they know what teachers expect of them. Most pupils find teachers' comments helpful in improving their work and benefit from the regular opportunities they receive to evaluate their own work and that of other pupils.

Most lessons proceed at a good pace. In key stage 2, however, teachers do not manage transitions within and between lessons consistently well. This means that pupils lose learning time and so do not always make as much progress as they could. Lesson introductions occasionally take too long, so that a minority of pupils begin to lose focus.

Teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting pupils' learning, for example, by questioning pupils effectively during learning activities. However, teachers do not always make best use of teaching assistants' time and skills, for instance during teacher-led lesson introductions.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has a caring ethos where all staff are committed to providing a safe and stimulating learning environment where every child matters. A powerful example is the creation of valuable opportunities for nearly all Year 6 pupils to take responsibility in a wide range of effective pupil-led forums, such as the school council, eco warriors and the 'criw Cymraeg'. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social education. Staff know their pupils very well and the school draws effectively on the expertise offered by specialist external agencies, such as social services and health professionals, to provide additional support to meet their needs when necessary.

There is a comprehensive system for identifying and tracking all pupils' progress on their journey through the school. Teachers use a wide range of information effectively to provide extra challenge, or support for pupils.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs, both in the mainstream and in the special needs resource base, is strong. Additional learning needs coordinators work effectively with teachers and support staff to tailor provision to meet the needs of pupils with learning, emotional or behavioural needs. Pupils' individual development plans include clear and measurable targets that support them to make the best progress. The 'Owls' nurture group for vulnerable pupils contributes positively to their self-esteem, confidence and capacity to control their emotions. As a result, most pupils in this group demonstrate improved levels of attendance and engagement in school life.

Parents receive useful information about their child's progress during parents' evenings and informative end-of-year pupil reports. The school's website and social media feed is effective in keeping parents and carers informed of events and class activities. The school provides useful workshops for parents to help them to support their child's learning at home.

The school promotes healthy eating and drinking well. For example, older pupils take a leading role in selling fruit at playtimes. There are regular opportunities for pupils to participate in physical education lessons, including swimming and dance. A broad range of after school sports clubs, such as rugby, trampolining and netball, benefit pupils' fitness levels well.

A range of well-established procedures and strategies, such as the use of house points and an online rewards system, promotes good behaviour effectively. Pupils receive consistent messages about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Strategies to support the very few pupils with specific social, emotional or behavioural difficulties are usually effective.

The school develops pupils' spiritual and cultural attitudes well. Collective worship sessions, often based on Christianity and other, or themes such as anti-bullying, promote pupils' understanding of religious and moral issues effectively. For example, pupils in the foundation phase learn about Diwali and pupils in key stage 2 show empathy when learning about orphans in Uganda. As a result, most pupils are developing well as ethical and informed citizens.

There are beneficial partnerships with the local and wider community. For instance, pupils in upper key stage 2 and pupils from the special needs resource base visit the local community centre for a tea dance. The 'heddlu bach' (the mini police) group create and distribute firework safety posters around the community, alerting people to the need to keep safe on bonfire night. Visitors to the school help raise pupil aspirations for future careers and provide an insight into the world of work. For example, a local paramedic and pharmacist shared their work with pupils in the foundation phase as part of their Betsi Cadwallader topic.

The school has a range of strategies to promote good attendance, including working closely with the local authority. These are beginning to have a positive impact on rates of attendance. However, the school does not monitor punctuality, and promote its importance, rigorously enough.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school based securely on raising standards and ensuring the wellbeing of all pupils. She leads by example, setting high expectations for herself and others. The headteacher challenges staff appropriately and develops their expertise successfully. As a result, the quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school.

The headteacher distributes leadership roles suitably and staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. The senior leadership team supports the headteacher well and all staff carry out their duties diligently.

The governors know the school and the community it serves well. They are very supportive and discharge their responsibilities effectively. The governors receive detailed reports from the headteacher, participate in learning walks and analyse school data thoroughly. As a result, they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The governing body is an effective critical friend, offering a good level of challenge to school leaders, for example regarding attendance and finance.

The school has established robust systems to monitor its effectiveness. Leaders use a wide range of relevant evidence to evaluate the school's work, such as the scrutiny of pupils' books and lesson observations. Leaders of specific areas of learning have a good understanding of the strengths and shortcomings within their areas of responsibility and make an effective contribution to the school's self-evaluation of its overall performance.

All teachers are involved in the self-evaluation process, so have a clear understanding of where the school needs to improve. Leaders take good account of the views of parents. For example, the school changed its homework policy in response to a survey of parents' opinions on this topic. However, a minority of support staff are not directly involved in evaluating the school's work.

Overall, the school's improvement processes are effective. It has therefore made good progress in all aspects of its work in recent years, including raising pupils' standards of achievement.

The performance management procedures for teachers are effective and appraisal systems for support staff are developing well. Leaders ensure that all staff access relevant opportunities to support their professional development. These opportunities link closely with the school's improvement priorities. For example, helpful training for staff supported the implementation of a more consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. As a result, the behaviour of most pupils is good throughout the day.

The school is developing well as a professional learning community. It works effectively with the cluster of local schools, which supports the school's capacity for continuous improvement well. Teachers support each other effectively within the school by making reciprocal visits to each other's classrooms to share good practice and to mentor each other. This contributes productively to the consistently good quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. However, leaders do not always ensure that they spread the expertise of all teachers and support staff throughout the school. For example, the school does not draw as much as it could on the expertise of staff in the special needs resource base to support vulnerable pupils in the mainstream. There are also missed opportunities for staff and pupils in both settings to share resources to benefit all pupils in the school.

Leaders ensure that spending decisions link well to the school's priorities for improvement. For instance, the school makes good use of the pupil development grant by directing available funds to improve the wellbeing and outcomes of pupils entitled to free school meals through effective intervention programmes. Overall, the governing body and headteacher manage the school's budget efficiently.

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.

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