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

A report on

Saltney Wood Memorial C.P. School
Boundary Lane
Saltney
Chester
CH4 8LN

Date of inspection: March 2020

by

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

About Saltney Wood Memorial C.P. School

Saltney Wood Memorial School is a community primary school on the outskirts of the City of Chester on the border between Wales and England. It is maintained by Flintshire local authority. There are 163 pupils aged between 3 and 11 on roll, including 11 who attend the part-time nursery.

Around 22% of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. About 31% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, and this figure is above the Welsh average of 18%. Nearly all pupils come from homes where English is the first language. The school has identified approximately 30% of pupils with special educational needs, which is higher than the national average of 21%.

The school was last inspected during the autumn term of 2012. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2010 and the deputy headteacher in September 2012. The headteacher is currently on secondment to the regional consortium. The deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher since September 2019.

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

At Saltney Wood Memorial CP School, most pupils make strong progress as they move through the school. Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school and know what to do if worried or anxious. Working relationships are extremely nurturing and trusting and pupils regard staff as caring and helpful.

Most pupils show good levels of resilience in their work and are keen to develop skills across the curriculum. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and participate in lessons well. Most pupils develop language, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well as they move through the school.

A broad, balanced and exciting curriculum meets the needs of most learners well. The school benefits from strong and effective leadership. All members of staff work well as a team and have a clear understanding of their roles. Members of the governing body work purposefully and are supportive of the school's needs. There is a clear strategic direction for developing the school and there has been a strong track record of improvement over recent years.

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 in Welsh across the school

R2 Increase opportunities for pupils to apply numeracy and extended writing skills across the curriculum

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Around half of pupils enter the school with literacy and numeracy skills below those expected for their age. As they move through the school, most pupils make strong progress in improving their literacy, numeracy and information and communication skills. However, only a minority of pupils make suitable progress in Welsh. Nearly all pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards meeting their individual targets.

Throughout the school, most pupils listen well and engage enthusiastically when talking with staff and other pupils. In the nursery, most pupils join in with familiar rhymes from fairy tales and around half can choose interesting words, for example to describe the size of the giant in Jack and the Beanstalk. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils talk confidently about what they are doing in their independent activities. Nearly all pupils in Years 3 and 4 listen carefully to programmes such as Newsround and most speak clearly and explain their views well. Older key stage 2 pupils use subject specific language effectively, particularly in science.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop good phonic knowledge and they apply this well when reading. In the nursery class, around half of pupils recognise initial sounds. In Year 1, most pupils enjoy reading on a daily basis. They display good awareness of punctuation when reading and alter their tone of voice to suit the character. Most pupils across key stage 2 read fluently and with good understanding. They read a wide range of texts and many older pupils can name a favourite author. Most pupils use organisational features such as an index and glossary to locate information in non-fiction books effectively.

As they move through the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. In reception, many pupils use story maps successfully to sequence popular stories. In Year 1, pupils innovate the story of the gingerbread man, for example by including a dragon who steals the gingerbread man from the fox. Across key stage 2, most pupils make good progress in improving their writing. They use a range of interesting vocabulary when describing characters from books. Most pupils in Years 5 and 6 use contrasting connectives such as 'on the other hand' when writing a balanced argument about the pros and cons of conscription in the Second World War.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills. By the end of the foundation phase, most have sound knowledge of basic number facts and they consolidate their learning through practical activities successfully. For example, they name and identify the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes well when building castles and dungeons as part of their topic work. In key stage 2, most pupils develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts. By Year 6, most pupils add, subtract and simplify fractions well. They calculate areas of squares and rectangles correctly and draw obtuse and acute angles accurately. Most present information using line graphs, for example when comparing the height of shadows created by light sources from varying distances.

Many pupils have a positive attitude towards learning Welsh and a minority make suitable progress in developing their Welsh language skills. Pupils in the foundation phase respond well to familiar instructions and they ask and answer simple questions appropriately. As they progress through key stage two, most pupils write sentences with the support of a framework. For example, most Year 6 pupils express their likes and dislikes in simple sentences. However, across the school, the majority of pupils do not communicate confidently using a wide enough range of vocabulary and sentence patterns in Welsh.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop their ICT skills well. For example, they control a programmable toy competently and use computers confidently to practise their numeracy and spelling skills. Most record, save and retrieve their work using a commercial programme independently. Most pupils in key stage 2 make good progress as they move through the school. They present information linked to their topic work well. For example, younger pupils create presentations about the Celts and older pupils create posters and use green screens to advertise a Hollywood film. Most Year 6 pupils use spreadsheets confidently as part of their science work on identifying the best material to use for making parachutes.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils behave very well during lessons and at break times. They are very polite and courteous and treat other pupils, staff and visitors with respect. Most pupils speak maturely about their feelings and express their opinions well. They care for each other and they work and play together successfully. They show pride in their school and feel safe within its positive learning environment. Nearly all pupils, in line with their age, understand the importance of online safety.

Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their work and develop good independent learning skills as they move through the school. During lessons, they demonstrate positive engagement with their learning and concentrate appropriately. Many are keen to share and discuss their work confidently with each other and visitors.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep healthy and know the importance of regular physical exercise. Many pupils participate enthusiastically in a suitable range of extra-curricular activities such as netball, hockey and football. Nearly all pupils know the importance of a balanced diet and enjoy eating healthy snacks at school.

Most pupils contribute to the development of termly topics by offering suggestions and ideas to be included. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 decided to explore how the Tudors travelled, what schools were like and the foods they ate.

Many pupils undertake additional responsibilities conscientiously. They display a sound understanding of the importance and purpose of their roles. Members of the school council influence school life appropriately. For example, they introduced additional play equipment onto the yard and worked with senior leaders to develop child friendly policies.

Members of the eco-committee understand the importance of conserving resources and encourage pupils to recycle paper and plastic. They participate in initiatives to improve the school grounds, such as working with parents to tidy the grounds and to plant flowers, vegetables and herbs in containers around the school.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

School staff develop excellent working relationships with pupils and this ensures that nearly all pupils are happy to try new activities confidently. Across the school, staff make good use of a variety of teaching methods and plan learning experiences that engage pupils' interests well. Teachers and support staff work effectively as a team and the quality of input and questioning from many support staff moves learning forward at a good pace. This ensures that most pupils apply themselves fully to their tasks. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they match tasks to pupils' needs well in lesson to ensure that most learners receive the appropriate amount of support and challenge. They check that pupils understand their work regularly, providing prompt verbal feedback. Teachers provide a clear set of progression steps in ICT that equip pupils to use ICT effectively, for example when evaluating their own work and identifying the next steps in their learning online.

Nearly all teachers have a strong knowledge of the ethos and principles of the foundation phase. Staff plan a wide range of opportunities that allow pupils to develop independent skills successfully in both the indoor and outdoor learning areas. Across the school, staff create an exciting and well-organised learning environment that includes an exceptionally stimulating and exciting forest school area.

Most teachers take very good account of the pupils' interests and suggestions to plan relevant and interesting learning opportunities that include a variety of real life learning experiences. Each new topic provides valuable opportunities for pupils to ask questions as to what they want to explore. For example, Year 5 pupils carry out activities including codebreaking and bridge building to launch their topic about the Second World War.

Learning experiences reflect the context of the school, the local area and Wales successfully. Teachers enhance the curriculum appropriately through a range of educational visits and visitors. These include a creative visual arts project work with a Welsh artist and a local school, providing pupils with the opportunity to use a range of art media such as hot wax, textile paint and a heat press.

The school has comprehensive plans in place to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and teachers are beginning to consider the new curriculum when planning learning activities. Staff plan good opportunities for pupils to develop their English and mathematics skills as they move through the school. However, they do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in other subjects.

Staff plan a wide and varied range of opportunities to enable pupils to make appropriate progress in the development of Welsh language skills. The school's provision for ICT is developing well.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has a caring and inclusive ethos within a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment. Staff know individual pupils well and respond effectively to their personal and emotional needs to ensure their happiness and wellbeing.

There are effective systems in place to track and monitor pupils' progress. Teachers use this information effectively to identify pupils with special education needs and to provide suitable support to meet their needs. Experienced and knowledgeable staff deliver an effective range of intervention programmes to improve pupils' literacy skills and emotional wellbeing. These promote pupils' progress and self-esteem successfully.

The school works successfully with a wide range of agencies including the inclusion outreach team and educational psychology service. These partnerships support vulnerable pupils and their families well.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves healthy effectively and makes appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Staff provide numerous opportunities for pupils to keep healthy through sporting activities including organising events in partnership with other schools.

Staff provide suitable opportunities for pupils to contribute towards the life and the work of the school. These opportunities help pupils to understand the importance of contributing to community life.

The school develops pupils' awareness of how to stay safe effectively by inviting the local community police officer and the fire service in to speak to pupils. Staff ensure that pupils understand how to keep safe online. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school works successfully with parents by organising workshops that help them to support their children. These include workshops on cooking healthy meals on a budget and the administration of emergency first aid. As a result, parents appreciate the help and guidance they receive from the school.

The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral and social understanding purposefully through regular assemblies and curriculum work. A notable example of successfully celebrating diversity are the regular opportunities for all pupils to share their home culture and heritage traditions with their peers.

Staff encourage pupils to be responsible citizens who are willing to help others. For example, key stage 2 pupils looked at tackling loneliness and social isolation in elderly people. They made postcards of kindness and sent them to elderly people in residential homes.

Leadership and management: Good

The school has a successful culture of staff and leadership development. This has ensured continuity in the effectiveness of school leadership during the recent absence of the headteacher for a period of secondment to the regional education consortium. The acting headteacher and her leadership team have maintained a clear focus on school improvement and led the school successfully.

All senior leaders set an effective tone for the leadership of the school and a strong and empowered team of staff work together well to drive forward strategic priorities for improvement. The school has robust systems to evaluate the quality of provision and this, alongside the good opportunities for staff to share best practice, contributes successfully to the quality of teaching throughout the school.

Leaders identify school strengths and areas for development well by taking account of a suitably wide range of first-hand evidence. For example, they analyse information on pupil progress, the quality of provision and they carry out regular progress pit stop reviews to ensure that pupil targets are individualised. Leaders use this information successfully to set focused priorities for improvement. The school development plan contains a manageable number of priorities that reflect the current needs of the school effectively. Priorities have clear success criteria that enable leaders to monitor progress against targets regularly. Overall, the school has a good track record of making improvements. However, in a few instances, leaders have not addressed identified areas for development, such as the need to improve pupils' extended writing skills across the curriculum, well enough.

The governing body is very supportive, has a good understanding of the day to day work of the school and knows the community it serves well. Through regular, detailed reports from school leaders, governors have a sound understanding of pupils' attainment and progress. However, their role in evaluating the effectiveness of school's provision and in setting strategic priorities for improvement is at an early stage of development. Governors have a good awareness of national priorities and support the school well by allocating funds to meet the priorities. For example, the recent investment into purchasing more ICT equipment is having a positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils.

Leaders support the professional development of staff successfully, ensuring that there are effective procedures to manage the performance of all staff. These procedures link well to individual developmental needs and school improvement priorities. All staff benefit from a relevant range of training opportunities, which have a positive effect on pupil outcomes. Notable examples include the implementation of a revised method of teaching reading. As a result, the standards of reading throughout the school are good. School leaders encourage all staff to improve their practice through action based research projects. A recent example of success is the introduction of an innovative method of providing feedback to pupils. This is having a positive influence on pupils' understanding of how to improve their work. Teachers benefit from useful working partnerships with local schools, for example to improve the processes to monitor pupils' progress. As a result, the school has implemented a system to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils effectively.

The school is well resourced. Both the indoor and outdoor areas are bright, stimulating and very well organised, and they support teaching and learning successfully. The acting headteacher and the governing body manage the school budget very carefully and expenditure supports priorities in the school development plan effectively. Leaders make good use of the pupil development grant to meet the need of learners eligible for free school meals. For example, timely intervention activities contribute well to the good progress made by identified pupils and ensure their successful inclusion into school life.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent 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 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' wellbeing, 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)

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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Publication date: 07/05/2020