



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

A report on

Hook C.P. School

**Newtown Road
Hook
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA62 4ND**

Date of inspection: April 2023

by

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

About Hook C.P. School

Name of provider	Hook C.P. School
Local authority	Pembrokeshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	N/A
Number of pupils on roll	83
Pupils of statutory school age	61
Number in nursery classes	11
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%)	9.7%
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%)	19.7%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/02/2015
Start date of inspection	24/04/2023

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

Leaders and staff at Hook County Primary School work with dedication to create a positive and caring environment where pupils are valued, and families feel part of the learning community. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are enthusiastic about their work and appreciate the opportunities they are given to share their ideas about what they would like to learn.

The headteacher has worked effectively with staff, parents, and governors to establish a clear vision for a happy and healthy school with high aspirations for its pupils. The school creates regular opportunities for parents to contribute to the curriculum and feel part of their children's learning.

Leaders know the school well and have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. For example, the school recognises the need to improve pupils' skills in speaking Welsh and to develop more engaging opportunities for them to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum. Where areas for development are identified, leaders ensure that progress is swift, for example when improving pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Teachers are well supported by skilful teaching assistants and plan engaging learning experiences that help to ensure that pupils make good progress over time. They encourage pupils to use a range of strategies to help them become independent and reflective learners. However, in a minority of lessons, learning activities do not provide enough challenge for pupils or allow them to produce work of a high enough standard.

Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school, and show respect to their friends and adults. Staff know pupils well. There is good support for pupils that need extra help, and a strong culture of inclusion across the school, where all pupils are valued and given equal opportunity to be involved in all aspects of school life.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' skills in speaking Welsh
- R2 Refine the provision for independent learning across the school to ensure that there is appropriate challenge for all pupils
- R3 Improve opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

In general, the majority of pupils enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are around those expected for their age. More recently, there is an increasing trend in pupils starting school with a greater range of difficulties in social and communication skills. However, by the time they leave school, most pupils make strong progress from their starting point, including those pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals.

Over time, pupils develop good speaking and listening skills. Most are articulate and confident speakers and respond well to questions, listening carefully to their teachers and each other. Younger pupils talk with enthusiasm about their work, for example when explaining why some objects float and others sink. By Year 6, many pupils are able to develop conversations skilfully by listening carefully and building upon the opinions of others.

Many pupils develop a love of reading and enjoy the range of experiences that staff provide to help them develop these skills. Younger pupils have a good understanding of letter sounds and use this well to help them read unfamiliar words. By Year 3, many pupils read a range of suitable texts accurately and with growing confidence. Older pupils reflect maturely on what they have read and make thoughtful comments about how language is used to engage the reader, for example when setting scenes or describing characters.

Many pupils develop early writing skills suitably. They begin to record their ideas through mark making, forming legible letters, and writing simple words. By Year 3, pupils write for different purposes, for example to create fact files about a range of different animals. They choose appropriate vocabulary to engage the reader and the majority use full stops and capital letters accurately. Older pupils, particularly the more able, use their writing skills skilfully across the curriculum for different purposes. For example, they write thoughtful conclusions about their science investigation into why penguins huddle. However, the quality of handwriting and presentation of a minority of pupils' work is not of a high enough standard.

Overall, many pupils have a positive attitude to learning Welsh and using it around the school. Younger pupils develop suitable Welsh language skills. They respond well to basic commands and have a good recall of suitable sentences and phrases. For example, they talk about how they are feeling and express their likes and dislikes. However, as pupils move through the school, their skills do not develop well enough from these early starting points and many older pupils lack confidence, for example when asking or responding to simple questions in Welsh.

Many pupils make strong progress in developing their mathematical skills. Younger pupils use numbers confidently to collect information and record their results in simple tables. Reception and Year 1 pupils sort and categorise three-dimensional shapes according to their properties. Many older pupils demonstrate sound mathematical skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 convert improper fractions to mixed numbers and calculate the mean and median of whole numbers

accurately. When given the opportunity, many pupils apply their skills effectively across the curriculum, for instance when using line graphs to represent and analyse scientific data. However, overall, they do not apply their skills often enough to solve problems and deepen their learning in more authentic contexts that link to real life situations.

Overall, many pupils develop a good range of digital skills. Younger pupils use digital tools confidently to support their learning across the curriculum, for example when practising their Welsh vocabulary. Older pupils develop their understanding and application of coding techniques well, for example when creating algorithms to control a class robot. Pupils' skills in using spreadsheets to create formula or to choose how to represent data are less well developed.

Most pupils' creative skills are developing well. Younger pupils create large 'muddy pictures' using a range of natural resources during an outdoor learning session. Older pupils apply their creative skills skilfully in music sessions, for example using their understanding of keeping time and echoing beats to produce a musical performance using a range of instruments.

Across the school, most pupils develop their physical skills suitably and take part in a good variety of experiences and activities enthusiastically. Younger pupils develop their dexterity effectively for example when using quills to draw letters or cutting out pictures to create leaflets. Older pupils develop a good range of skills through games and activities or by taking part in a range of team sports or competitions.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils at Hook County Primary are proud of their school and enjoy being a part of its vibrant learning community. They feel safe and cared for and know who to turn to if they need help or support. Pupils are polite and show good manners towards adults and their friends. Nearly all pupils behave well during lessons, breaktimes and when moving around the school.

Most pupils feel that staff value their opinions and take their ideas into account. For example, pupils appreciate that they have a voice in the process of planning their learning tasks. As a result, most pupils are interested in their class topics, embrace new learning experiences, and enjoy finding out about the world around them. They listen carefully to the contributions of others, respond maturely and justify their opinions with valid and thoughtful reasons. For example, older pupils discuss historical photographs depicting apartheid and share their thinking with others.

Many pupils are developing their skills to become effective learners and have a clear understanding of what strategies to use if they find a task difficult. For example, they understand the personal strengths of their classmates, seek their help, and use a range of resources such as laptops and books to support their work. Across the school, most pupils value feedback from their teachers or peers and use this purposefully to improve their work. Pupils use modelled examples effectively to identify the main features of good quality work and apply this understanding to their own learning.

Most pupils take on a wide range of leadership roles and responsibilities around the school. For example, they contribute to the work of the Class Councillors and Eco Warriors. Pupil voice groups have a positive impact across the school. For instance, they contributed to improving provision for digital learning by writing to the parent teacher association to request support to buy additional resources. Pupils are beginning to develop their understanding of their roles in these groups and influence the choices they make about how they approach this work.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online and talk confidently about how to keep their personal information confidential. Pupils are aware of the importance of healthy eating and drinking. For example, they understand how a balanced diet supports their physical and mental health and that sugary drinks can have a negative impact. Nearly all pupils participate enthusiastically in activities that keep their bodies strong and healthy. For example, older pupils enjoy rugby sessions with a Welsh Rugby Union representative and pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 take part in swimming lessons.

Most pupils take part in extra-curricular clubs and take advantage of the good range of activities that are on offer. For example, many enjoy attending activities such as creative writing, sports club and performing arts. These clubs enhance the curriculum and provide further opportunities for pupils to engage with a wider range of learning experiences.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has worked effectively with governors, pupils and parents to establish a clear vision for the curriculum. Learning experiences are engaging and balanced, and they build systematically and coherently on pupils' existing knowledge, skills and experiences to secure progression as they move through the school.

Leaders ensure that pupils and parents have valuable opportunities to support curriculum planning. For example, at the beginning of each class topic, pupils and parents contribute their ideas about how topics can be enhanced or made more relevant to the local area. This has a positive impact on the enthusiasm and engagement in learning across the school community as all feel part of the curriculum building process.

Teachers and support staff monitor pupils progress carefully and adjust their teaching suitably to meet the needs of learners. Staff are beginning to develop useful approaches to assessment to identify the skills that pupils need to improve and use this information to adjust their teaching, for example when planning for writing. Support staff work conscientiously alongside class teachers to ensure that pupils with additional learning needs take an active part in classroom learning experiences and are supported sensitively according to their learning needs.

Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to make decisions about how they wish to extend their own learning. The majority of pupils make good choices and develop their independent learning skills well. However, on occasion, tasks are not sufficiently challenging, and a minority of pupils do not engage purposefully enough with their independent tasks or produce work of high enough quality.

Most lessons are well paced, and many teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and check for understanding. Most teachers provide good verbal feedback to pupils that helps them make progress. Teachers' written feedback helps pupils understand what they are doing well, and pupils often correct basic errors such as punctuation and spelling accurately. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunity for pupils to make more sophisticated improvements to their work, for example when redrafting or extending their writing.

Overall, staff think carefully about how learning experiences and the classroom environment support the developmental needs of pupils. However, in a few instances, activities are overly directed by staff and opportunities for younger pupils to engage in purposeful, and creative play are sometimes less well developed. Most staff are beginning to use the outdoor environment more frequently to support pupils' learning. For example, older pupils create large chalk pie charts on the playground or create houses for hedgehogs as part of their work on biodiversity.

There is a consistent approach to the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the school. Teachers provide good opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills through a well-planned range of activities that support pupils to develop their skills progressively. Provision for developing reading is effective, early reading skills are planned carefully and there are good opportunities for pupils to read more widely as they become more confident. Staff ensure that pupils have a range of experiences across the curriculum to apply their writing skills. Whilst provision for the development of pupils' mathematical skills is suitable, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply these skills across the curriculum.

The school's provision for personal and social education effectively encourages pupils' understanding of their own well-being, of how to make healthy lifestyle choices and promotes pupils' tolerance and understanding of those around them successfully. The school celebrates Welsh culture effectively throughout the year. This includes special events such as an annual Eisteddfod and a whole-school topic called Wonderful Wales, where places, traditions and local history are explored. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their wider understanding of cultures around the world.

Nearly all staff make effective use of visits to engage pupils' interest and support the curriculum. For example, pupils take part in a trip to Carew Castle, to develop their understanding of life in Tudor times. Older pupils enjoy a residential visit, taking part in outdoor activities that develop team building and independence skills.

Care, support and guidance

Teachers and staff across the school know their pupils well. They create calm and productive classrooms where pupils feel safe to express their opinions and feel valued. Teachers and support staff respond skilfully to pupils' emotional, social, and educational needs and manage pupils' behaviour effectively. They reinforce positive attitudes to learning and ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them. As a result, most pupils engage purposefully with their learning tasks and treat others with respect.

The school has made valuable progress towards ALN reform and staff work well together to identify and support pupils' needs effectively. The ALN co-ordinator and staff ensure that the progress of pupils is monitored carefully and they work well to provide purposeful support. There are a suitable range of intervention strategies led by well-trained support staff who meet pupils' needs effectively. For example, targeted support for pupils' literacy and numeracy skills helps them progress towards their individual goals successfully. Leaders utilise outside agencies suitably, such as speech and language specialists, to provide further expertise and support for pupils when required.

The school ensures that all pupils take on leadership roles through a variety of purposeful groups. This provision develops their understanding of the importance of active citizenship and making a difference to their school. For example, pupils have recently suggested improvements to the school playground markings.

There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral and social awareness through classroom activities and collective worship. These include assemblies that focus on values such as courage and link to religious stories. Close links with the community provide further valuable opportunities to be active citizens, such as laying wreaths for Remembrance Day or delivering flowers to local residents attending the 'Hook Warm Spaces' event. The school also helps pupils to develop an understanding of inequality in society, for example through raising money for a range of local and national charities to support those in need.

The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to take part in performances to develop their skills and self-confidence. For example, pupils take part in Eisteddfodau and all pupils participate in class assemblies where they present to their families. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular clubs, such as creative writing, sports club and performing arts. These provide valuable enrichment to further develop all pupils' interests beyond the classroom.

The school has a suitable culture of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that there are robust policies and procedures in place that all staff follow to ensure the safety of learners and staff. The school curriculum supports pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe online, for example through internet safety days.

The school's procedures for monitoring attendance are appropriate. There is good communication with parents with a clear emphasis on the importance of attending school regularly. Where necessary, the school works suitably in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer to provide additional support for families.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has worked very effectively since his appointment to strengthen the place of Hook Primary School within the local community. He is a strong role model who works with commitment to create a shared sense of responsibility for pupils' learning across the school community. He has clear expectations for the quality of teaching and works skilfully alongside staff to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities. As a result, staff are well supported to develop and improve their own practice and improve the learning experiences for pupils.

Governors support the school well. They have a sound understanding of its strengths and areas for development and gather a suitable range of evidence to monitor progress. A particular strength is the involvement of the pupil voice group who present regularly to governors on the progress the school is making, for example in developing Curriculum for Wales or improving their independent learning skills. Governors provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge. They work effectively with leaders to ensure the school uses its financial resources wisely, including the Pupil Development Grant, to support the learning of all pupils. They ensure that there are suitable arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. Leaders have developed strong processes to ensure that staff understand their responsibilities towards safeguarding and keeping pupils safe.

Leaders and staff develop strong and effective links with parents, for example by valuing their input into developing the school's curriculum or seeking and responding to their views on homework. As a result, parents are firm advocates for the school and appreciate the support and guidance that staff provide for their children, particularly those who require additional support. Leaders are well supported by a dedicated parent teacher association. They work together to minimise the impact of poverty on pupils' learning experiences, for example by supplementing the cost of school trips or residential visits.

Leaders use a wide range of evaluative approaches to decide upon the school's priorities for improvement. These include regular learning walks, book scrutinies, parent engagement and receiving useful advice from local authority officers. Leaders use this information successfully to identify suitable areas for improvement, for example in raising standards of maths across the curriculum.

Nearly all teachers take on a variety of leadership roles and these are beginning to have a clear impact on the direction of the school. For example, staff produce useful reviews of each area of learning and experience and set clear targets for improvement that begin to identify the link between good quality teaching and how this supports pupils' learning. However, these roles are still at an early stage of development and have not had sufficient time to make enough impact, for example in improving pupils' standards in speaking Welsh.

Staff and leaders work systematically to check on progress towards whole-school targets and address any challenges that arise. As a result, the school is developing a strong culture of reflective practice to support continual improvement. This is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils learning, for example in improving pupils' listening and speaking skills.

Leaders develop useful opportunities for professional learning, which support the individual needs of staff as well as school improvement priorities. Staff reflect purposefully on their own practice and are beginning to take responsibility for the next steps in their own professional learning. Leaders support staff to seek out opportunities to improve their own practice and share their expertise throughout the school, for example when investigating the impact of retrieval practice on pupils learning. There are good opportunities for teachers to collaborate with colleagues across the cluster and link well with similar schools to share their expertise and experiences, for example of how they provide effective education for pupils in mixed age classes.

Overall, pupils are attending school more regularly this year compared to last year, when the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact nationally on school attendance.

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