



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

A report on

**Morrison Comprehensive School
Heol Maes Eglwys
Morrison
Swansea
SA6 6NH**

Date of inspection: February 2020

by

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

About Morryston Comprehensive School

Morryston Comprehensive School is an English-medium 11-19 school in the north of Swansea.

There are currently 972 pupils on roll, which is lower than at the time of the last inspection in 2015. The school receives pupils from local primary schools and hosts a local authority specialist resource base catering for around 30 pupils with moderate to severe learning difficulties.

Around 24% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average of 16.4%. Approximately 37% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales. A very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups. Most pupils speak English as their first language and only a very few pupils speak Welsh at home. Close to 28% of pupils have a special educational need, which is above the national average of 22.9%. Just over 5% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is also above the national average of 2.2%.

The current headteacher took up post in May 2015. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, one deputy headteacher, three assistant headteachers, and the business manager.

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

Morryston Comprehensive School has a caring and inclusive ethos where many pupils feel safe and consider themselves to be valued members of the school community. These pupils make suitable progress and have positive attitudes to learning. However, a minority of pupils do not engage fully in lessons and make insufficient progress as well as disrupting the learning of others.

The majority of lessons are planned well and enable pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding suitably. Conversely, in a minority of cases, learning activities and assessment practices do not challenge pupils well enough. The school provides all teachers with beneficial professional learning opportunities to prepare them to deliver a curriculum for Wales in the future. However, the school does not have a sufficiently co-ordinated approach to the progressive development of pupils' skills across the current curriculum.

The headteacher demonstrates reflective leadership and his vision for all pupils to engage and achieve is communicated widely. He is supported appropriately by a committed team of staff and together with the governing body they have tackled the budget deficit robustly. However, self-evaluation processes do not focus well enough on key aspects of the school's work. As a result, leadership has not led to sufficient or sustained improvements in the quality of teaching and assessment, attitudes to learning and the standards achieved by all pupils, including the development of their skills.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve teaching and assessment
- R2 Strengthen provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills
- R3 Embed strategies to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning
- R4 Strengthen the quality and impact of leadership at all levels
- R5 Improve pupils' standards and progress in lessons

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

In Morriston Comprehensive School many pupils make sound progress in their learning. However, a minority do not make the progress expected, particularly in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.

A majority of pupils recall prior learning well and demonstrate suitable understanding when, for example, they distinguish between static and dynamic stretches in physical education. A few pupils apply their prior learning effectively to new contexts such as when reflecting on the effective features of non-fiction texts including holiday brochures.

In lessons, many pupils are attentive and listen well for most of the time, though a minority do not listen carefully enough or with respect to the teacher and their peers. This limits how well they comprehend the tasks set and impedes their progress. A majority of pupils respond clearly to the teachers' questions and a few give extended, well-reasoned explanations, for example when discussing character interpretations of the Nurse in 'Romeo and Juliet'. Although only a minority volunteer readily to answer questions from the teacher, nearly all reply suitably, if briefly, when prompted. A majority of pupils make appropriate contributions to paired or group work when they have the opportunity.

A majority of pupils read to extract information effectively, such as when considering life during the Depression from contrasting historical sources. These pupils consider sources suitably taking appropriate note of audience, format and purpose. A few pupils use reading strategies, such as inference, successfully when comparing and contrasting writers' views on boxing.

A few pupils produce engaging writing. They make sophisticated language choices and use different sentence types and punctuation to good effect. When given the opportunity to write at length, a few pupils produce well-structured written accounts, for example to explain the process of gas exchange between the alveolus and blood capillary. A majority of pupils write with suitable accuracy. They communicate their ideas with clarity, for example when planning a modern-day parable in religious education and redraft descriptive writing suitably. However, a minority make frequent errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. They do not organise their work with sufficient care, presentation is at times untidy and tasks remain incomplete. A minority lack the breadth of vocabulary to express their ideas effectively. These pupils do not take enough responsibility for improving the quality of their work and write for a limited range of purposes.

Many pupils solve simple numerical problems competently when they are given worked examples to follow, such as calculating pressure from applied force and surface area. These pupils plot a variety of graphs accurately, for example when recording the variation of river depth with distance downstream. A few can use their graphs to explain their findings competently. Many pupils understand how to organise data, for example by using Venn diagrams when classifying tectonic events. Most pupils can use a protractor and ruler to construct triangles with suitable attention to accuracy. However, they cannot always apply this skill in other contexts such as to measure angles of reflection and refraction in science.

Most pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) competently to research, for word processing and presentations. They carry out a limited range of programming tasks in computing using a variety of coding software and design story boards in creative media.

In a few subjects, such as textiles and art, pupils produce particularly detailed, well-presented notes and designs, and show considerable creativity. For example, they use colour rendering and movement effectively and demonstrate great pride in their work. A few pupils who participate in the vocational 'Morryston MILE' programme demonstrate their developing thinking skills well when they apply driving theory and respond to simulated situations.

A majority of pupils are entered for a GCSE qualification in Welsh. Most of these pupils gain a level 2 qualification. When opportunities arise, more able pupils write at length in Welsh about topics that interest them, such as personal sporting activities. These pupils have a good understanding of tense and write well in the first and third person. A majority of pupils are able to locate and use other basic retrieval strategies to gather information for example when evaluating the poem 'Bwyd y Byd'. However, a minority have difficulty with their pronunciation, lack basic vocabulary and the confidence to answer in full sentences.

At the end of Year 11, nearly all pupils remain in education, employment or training.

Over the last three years pupils' performance in many indicators at key stage 4 generally compares well to modelled outcomes. Overall, outcomes for more able learners over this period remain strong. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with expectations.

Performance in the sixth form has improved over time and is generally in line with that expected. Performance is stronger for pupils who take A levels than those who follow vocational programmes of study. The completion rate for both types of study is similar to that nationally.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement

Many pupils feel safe in school and know whom they can turn to if they require help. Most believe that the school deals well with any incidents of bullying.

Most pupils arrive promptly to lessons and a majority are ready to learn and participate well. Many work together well in pairs and groups on specific tasks, supporting each other effectively. They demonstrate a positive attitude towards staff and other pupils. Although many pupils behave well around the school a minority do not focus suitably during lessons, hindering their own learning and that of others. For example, they talk while the teacher is talking, distract others, do not apply themselves to tasks set and generally lack resilience. A few pupils do not engage appropriately with staff and their peers.

Generally, pupils participate enthusiastically in a broad range of sporting activities at lunchtimes and after school, for example football, rugby, netball, basketball and swimming. Many pupils are developing well as ethical, informed citizens and show care and concern for others. For example, key stage 4 pupils visit local care homes

and organise engaging activities, as well as a Christmas tea and entertainment. In addition, pupils undertake a range of fund-raising activities for charities such as Cancer Research UK and the 'Race for Life'. Pupils in the sixth form organise many of these school-wide charity events and participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and trips including to Iceland, Auschwitz and the Imperial War Museum.

The pupil leadership team has influenced beneficially recent changes in the school such as improvements to the canteen menu and managing lunchtime queues. The Eco team has focused its work purposefully on sustainability to ensure that the school environment is managed well. However, the work of the pupil leadership team is at an early stage of development and has had limited impact on influencing changes to teaching and learning in the school.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Most teachers have strong subject knowledge and in many lessons create a positive learning environment.

The majority of lessons are planned well. In these lessons, teachers set out appropriate learning objectives to give purpose and structure to the lesson and provide clear explanations and examples, which support pupils to make good progress. In these instances, teachers match tasks to pupils' abilities well. This results in appropriate levels of pupil engagement and a beneficial pace to their learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers employ a broad range of questioning strategies that enable pupils to demonstrate their understanding.

Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to supporting the progress of pupils with additional learning needs.

In a minority of lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough. They do not plan well enough to support pupils in making sufficient progress or in developing their skills. A minority of teachers do not use questioning effectively to consolidate pupils' learning, or ensure that they involve all pupils in class discussion. A similar proportion do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough. In a few lessons, the learning is over-directed by the teacher, and pupils are not given enough opportunities to think for themselves, to discover new knowledge, or to learn independently.

In many lessons, teachers provide useful verbal feedback and monitor pupils' progress carefully. However, in general, there is too much inconsistency in the effectiveness of assessment. Written feedback is too variable and teachers do not ensure often enough that pupils respond purposefully to any further tasks set to improve their work.

The school plans and adapts its curriculum to meet the needs and interests of most groups of pupils. Curriculum leaders have identified appropriately where opportunities exist for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum in key stage 3. The majority of subject areas set a range of suitable tasks for pupils to practise these skills. For example, in history lessons, pupils plan and write about the experience of a child factory worker. A programme of suitable intervention is in place to support pupils who have weak literacy and numeracy skills.

However, planning for and co-ordination of the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not precise enough. Overall, the school does not monitor effectively the suitability of opportunities to help pupils to develop competence in those skills. The school's co-ordination of its provision for developing pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is at an early stage of development.

At key stage 4, most pupils can choose from a valuable range of academic and vocational courses that allows for suitable progression to the sixth form or further education. However, as a result of their choices, a few pupils in key stage 4 have limited opportunities to participate in physical education lessons. The school has recently strengthened the alternative curriculum provision for vulnerable pupils and this provides relevant learning experiences and basic skill development as well as opportunities to gain formal qualifications. It works appropriately in partnership with a local school to provide a broad range of academic and vocational courses in the sixth form.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to engage in worthwhile curriculum enrichment activities. These include educational visits abroad, for example to Rome, and programmes that impact positively on the local community, such as a beach clean and work with the local hospital's children's ward.

The school provides valuable activities for more able pupils, such as links with academics from universities and the 'Seren' and 'Seren Bach' networks.

In 2019, the majority of pupils were entered for a Welsh GCSE qualification. The school offers relevant opportunities for pupils to develop their appreciation of Welsh heritage and culture, for example through the school Eisteddfod and visits to Llangrannog. However, pupils have few opportunities to use Welsh outside of Welsh lessons.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

Morryston Comprehensive School has a caring and inclusive ethos and provides appropriate care, support and guidance for all pupils, in particular for those who face significant challenges.

The school tracks closely the progress of all pupils. This enables progress leaders and curriculum leaders to have a good understanding of the effort and attainment of pupils. However, the division of responsibilities between pastoral and curriculum leaders for dealing with pupil underperformance does not lead to robust monitoring, mentoring and securing improvements in pupils' work.

Behaviour is tracked suitably. Most pupils understand the expected standards of behaviour. Strategies to create positive working relationships between staff and pupils are not embedded despite clear guidance. This is because not all teachers apply the principles of the behaviour policy consistently.

The school provides valuable support for pupils with social and emotional needs. The beneficial and wide-ranging support within school and from outside agencies ensures that the wellbeing of these pupils is supported particularly effectively.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs has been strengthened recently. These pupils are guided and supported appropriately, for example with alternative curriculum choices and discreet teaching groups. However, these arrangements are at an early stage of development and it is too soon to judge their effectiveness.

Communication with parents is sound. For example, the school communicates through social media, a newsletter and offers messages of congratulations to parents for good pupil behaviour and attendance where appropriate. Interim and annual reports provide parents with valuable information regarding pupil progress, and include appropriate targets for improvement.

The school helps pupils to understand suitably issues relating to equality and diversity. The school responds appropriately to the very few incidents of bullying. Pupils are encouraged to develop understanding and respect through the values of a Rights Respecting School.

The school has beneficial arrangements to help pupils make a smooth transition into Year 7. Appropriate activities support pupils to settle quickly and effectively into their new school. The comprehensive personal and social education programme usefully supports pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. It provides useful guidance and information to prepare pupils for adult life on important aspects such as relationships, sexuality and online safety.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to promote healthy eating and drinking. In response to pupil feedback, the canteen offers "No Meat Monday" and there is a range of helpful opportunities for sport and fitness activities to encourage pupils to lead healthy lifestyles.

There is a valuable range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school to all pupils. Opportunities include movie, coding and production clubs and effective educational visits, for example the Year 7 trip to a wildlife park to research the ethical issues relating to animal captivity.

The school provides pupils with opportunities for worthwhile involvement in the local community and wider world. Pupils raise funds to buy gifts for the children's ward in the local hospital and fundraising also supports children in Zambia as part of the 'Global Classroom'. This promotes pupils' understanding of the needs and rights of others and develops an understanding of their culture, the local community and a diverse world.

The school offers helpful advice to pupils as they make option and career related choices. Careful consideration is given to learning pathways in curriculum design and the option process to ensure provision is appropriate for individual pupils. The makeup of the pupil leadership team is inclusive and draws pupils from all year groups. However, the role of this group is underdeveloped and the impact of student voice overall is limited. There are few opportunities for pupils to participate in decision-making in the school and to influence what and how they learn.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

Leaders have adopted suitable strategies and arrangements to promote, support and monitor developments in key areas of the school's work. While leadership at all levels is contributing suitably to strengthening particular aspects of provision, these improvements have not had sufficient or sustained impact on pupils' attitudes to learning, the quality of teaching including the development of pupils' skills and the standards that pupils achieve.

The headteacher provides focused and reflective leadership. He articulates a clear vision to 'Inspire, Engage and Achieve'. This vision is underpinned by the supportive working relationships between staff and pupils that help raise aspirations and contribute to the generally purposeful learning environment. Together with the leadership team, the headteacher has set out clear expectations, and established appropriate systems and routines to guide all areas of the school's work. These strategies are contributing suitably to rewarding achievement and managing pupils' behaviour.

Leaders at all levels understand clearly their roles and responsibilities to address the school's priorities. Line management arrangements are well defined to monitor and support staff to achieve specific objectives. Senior leaders provide suitable guidance to help staff analyse performance data carefully and to identify relevant aspects in need of improvement in their areas of work. Meetings between subject leaders and their line managers focus primarily on monitoring pupils' progress and identifying those pupils who are underperforming and require further support. However, the work of progress leaders does not focus closely enough on improving outcomes for these pupils.

There is a systematic programme of monitoring activities that includes extensive learning walks. Annual departmental reviews and evaluations are informed suitably by thorough analyses of data, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. These reviews are contributing beneficially to staff self-reflection. They help provide leaders with an appropriate understanding of particular strengths and relevant areas for improvement. However, lesson observations and reviews do not focus closely enough on standards and pupils' progress and the development of their skills. As a result, leaders have an overly generous view of the quality of teaching and learning.

Senior leaders set out clearly the school's improvement priorities and identify a useful range of initiatives and actions to achieve specific objectives. Middle leaders take appropriate responsibility for addressing these priorities within their areas of work. However, leaders do not always recognise well enough the link between standards and provision. As a result there is not a sufficiently sharp and focused emphasis across the school on improving the quality of teaching and assessment and on promoting the development of pupils' skills.

The school has suitable systems for managing the performance of staff. These help to identify clear and relevant professional learning objectives that link directly to school priorities. These include strengthening pupils' oracy skills and developing effective behaviour management strategies. The school is fostering a collaborative culture through encouraging an 'open classroom' approach to identify and promote good practice in teaching and learning. Leaders have established beneficial links

with a range of providers, working in a peer engagement programme to support further professional learning. However, there is no robust evaluation of the impact of these activities on the quality of teaching and attitudes to learning.

The school has tackled the current budget deficit robustly. The headteacher, governors, business manager, and local authority have worked together effectively to resolve this situation quickly. The school has taken a series of decisive actions to reduce the deficit and is now on course to complete the financial year with a surplus budget, one year ahead of schedule. As a result, however, senior leaders and middle leaders with responsibility for skills currently do not have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities fully and this is restricting school development.

The school uses its resources, including the pupil development grant effectively to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment. In the main this has a positive impact on the outcomes of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Governors show a strong commitment to the school. They support the school in many aspects of its work. Through their evolving links with specific subject areas, and their participation in departmental reviews and learning walks, governors are developing a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The governing body works closely with senior leaders to determine the school's strategic direction. Governors are prepared to question and challenge leaders appropriately about particular proposals and initiatives to improve provision.

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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