



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

**A report on**

**Milford Haven School  
Steynton Road  
Milford Haven  
Pembrokeshire  
SA73 1AE**

**Date of inspection: November 2017**

**by**

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

## About Milford Haven School

Milford Haven School is an English-medium 11 to 18 mixed comprehensive school maintained by Pembrokeshire local authority. There are currently 911 pupils on roll, which includes 79 pupils in the sixth form. These figures are lower than at the time of the last inspection, when there were 1,080 pupils, including 154 in the sixth form.

The school serves the town of Milford Haven and the surrounding rural area. Around 23% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average of 17%. Almost 27% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales. Most pupils come from a white, British background and 1.8% of pupils speak English as an additional language. Currently, 20% of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is lower than the national average of 25.1%. One per cent of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is lower than the national average of 2.4%.

The school has been without a substantive headteacher since the end of September 2017. The deputy headteacher has taken up the post of acting headteacher during this time. The rest of the senior leadership team consists of a deputy headteacher, an assistant headteacher and three interim senior leaders.

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

Milford Haven School has an inclusive and caring ethos. The majority of teachers establish good working relationships with pupils which foster learning well. The majority of pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and make suitable progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. The poor behaviour and negative attitudes of a minority of pupils have a detrimental effect on school life as well as impacting on learning across all year groups. As a result, a minority of pupils make insufficient progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills.

During the last three years, leadership has impacted positively on improving performance in the majority of key performance indicators at key stage 4. On the whole, leaders have a sound broad understanding of many of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. However, the school does not have a sufficiently co-ordinated approach to the progressive development of pupils' skills across the curriculum and teaching requires urgent improvement. Policies and procedures to manage behaviour are ineffective.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Raise standards at key stage 4 and improve the progress made by all pupils in lessons, in particular their development of literacy and numeracy skills
- R2 Improve pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning
- R3 Improve the quality of teaching
- R4 Strengthen the planning for the development of pupils' skills
- R5 Improve the quality and impact of leadership, particularly through the strengthening of arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning
- R6 Address the deficit budget

## **What happens next**

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress about 12 months after the publication of this report.

## Main findings

### **Standards: Adequate and needs improvement**

Since 2013, the school has secured consistently improved outcomes in many performance indicators at the end of key stage 4. However, although outcomes in the majority of performance indicators in 2017 compare favourably with those in similar schools, the progress made by the majority of pupils in lessons is less strong. The literacy and numeracy skills of the majority of pupils are underdeveloped. Overall, the majority of pupils do not make strong enough progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

In the majority of lessons, pupils make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding. They have suitable recall of prior learning and they apply their knowledge appropriately when completing new work. In these lessons, the majority of pupils develop a clear understanding of new concepts. In a few lessons, where there are purposeful activities and engaging tasks, many pupils make strong progress in their learning. For example, in geography, pupils summarise their findings coherently and draw valid conclusions when describing the effects of seismic activity on people and the environment.

In a few lessons, many pupils make strong progress in developing their communication and social skills. For example, in English they are able to discuss and argue the two sides of the debate over capital punishment well. During tutor periods, pupils engage well in class discussions on topical themes, social issues and current affairs.

In lessons, the majority of pupils listen attentively to teachers and to their peers. However, a minority of pupils do not listen carefully enough to teachers' instructions and as a result they do not make sufficient progress in tasks. In a few lessons, when given the opportunity, many pupils speak confidently and articulate their ideas well. They offer thoughtful extended responses, for example when they hold well-reasoned discussions around aspects of Robert Mugabe's leadership in history. However, a few pupils provide brief, underdeveloped verbal responses to teachers' questions.

The majority of pupils make sound progress in developing their basic reading skills and in their enjoyment of reading. Many locate information confidently and a minority annotate texts suitably. In a few subjects, higher ability pupils analyse texts in depth and detail, for example when examining how teenagers are portrayed in the media. However, due to lack of opportunity, the majority of pupils make limited progress in important reading skills such as making inferences and deductions from texts.

The majority of pupils write coherently and accurately in line with their age and ability, but only around half pay sufficient attention to their punctuation, grammar and spelling. Many pupils use a suitable range of subject specific vocabulary appropriately. However, many pupils only produce short pieces of writing in a limited range of styles. In a few subjects, where pupils are given suitable opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes and audiences, they make strong development in their writing. For example, they write diary entries depicting sympathetically the life and emotions of a migrant worker from Mexico.

The quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is inconsistent across subjects. A minority of pupils do not routinely make the necessary corrections to their work and, overall, pupil response to teacher feedback is limited.

The majority of pupils across the ability range have sound numeracy skills. For example, they are confident when simplifying fractions, calculating probability and rounding numbers. Generally, they apply their skills suitably in subjects other than mathematics, for example when completing unit conversion and measuring tasks in science. In a very few instances, pupils apply their numeracy skills confidently to new situations.

In a minority of subjects, pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well for a suitable range of activities. For example, they produce digital presentations in modern foreign languages and create spreadsheets and surveys in Welsh Baccalaureate lessons. In a few subjects, particularly at key stage 4, pupils develop useful animation skills and confidently use computer-aided design programs.

Performance at key stage 4 has improved consistently since 2013. However, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics did not compare favourably with levels in similar schools until 2017. Very few pupils gain five A\*-A grades at GCSE or equivalent and the school's performance in this indicator is lower than that of similar schools over time.

At key stage 4, the performance of boys has been below the average for boys in similar schools for the last five years. The performance of girls over the same period was below that of girls in similar schools until 2017, when they performed better than girls in similar schools.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has been variable over time and has been below the average for the same group of pupils in similar schools in two out of the last three years. Pupils with additional learning needs make valuable progress against their targets overall.

Most pupils make insufficient progress in developing their Welsh language skills in lessons and around the school. Since 2014, the proportion of pupils gaining a full course level 2 qualification in Welsh is significantly low.

At the end of Year 11, most pupils remain in full-time education, employment or training.

In the sixth form, performance over time in the key indicators has been variable. Performance in the average wider points score has been below that of similar schools in two out of the last three years. Performance in the higher grades has also been below that of similar schools in two out of the last three years. Performance in the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification at advanced level in 2017 is well above that of similar schools. Many sixth form pupils are positive about their learning and have ambitious aspirations for their future. Many engage well with peers and their teachers and articulate their ideas clearly and confidently when they discuss topical issues and current affairs. They generally demonstrate high standards in their work and have well-developed subject knowledge.

## **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement**

The poor behaviour and negative attitudes of a minority of pupils has a detrimental effect on school life as well as disrupting the learning across all year groups. A minority of pupils do not show enough consideration for fellow pupils during break and lunchtimes or when moving around the school, although they are polite to visitors. A few pupils do not treat their peers or staff members with respect and are discourteous when challenged about their actions or behaviour.

In lessons, a majority of pupils demonstrate generally positive attitudes to learning. They arrive promptly, behave well and show interest in their work. However, a few pupils arrive late to lessons and this disrupts their own learning and that of others. A minority of pupils are slow to settle in lessons and are disengaged for long periods of time. These pupils demonstrate poor attitudes to learning and show limited interest in their work. As a result, they make insufficient progress.

Many pupils feel safe in school and know where to go to ask for help. The majority of pupils feel that the school responds suitably to incidents of bullying.

Around half of pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy living and that the school helps them understand how unhealthy eating and drinking can affect their health. For example, pupils devise and prepare a healthy lunch menu in technology. A few pupils participate in the school's wide range of extra-curricular activities, for example by representing the school in musical or sporting activities or participating in the local authority's Active Young People programme. A few pupils lead valuable activities such as preparing an assembly on anti-bullying, organising the Year 11 prom and planning fund raising activities for local charities. Over time, pupils have participated well in a wide range of fund-raising activities and have raised a substantial amount of money for good causes.

Through the school council, pupils share their views about a range of matters including decisions about the design of the new library and sports kit. Pupils' participation in decision-making is developing well. For example the digital leaders have written a 'Digital Licence' policy about pupils using their own devices in school.

Attendance rates have improved but have been below modelled outcomes for two of the last three years. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is improving and is higher than the attendance of the same group of pupils in similar schools. Over the last two years, the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions has increased significantly and is high.

## **Teaching and learning experiences: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement**

Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory.

Most teachers have sound, up-to-date subject knowledge and are good language models. The majority establish good working relationships with pupils that foster learning well. For example, in tutor periods, teachers and pupils engage in beneficial discussions about what motivates and inspires the pupils. They also discuss

arrangements for the class to work in partnership with a local church to support a charity at Christmas. The majority of teachers manage pupil behaviour suitably. However, in many lessons, teacher introductions to activities are too long and they direct the learning too much. As a result, pupils lose interest and do not develop their independent learning skills well enough.

Overall, a majority of teachers have low expectations of pupils in terms of academic achievement and attitudes to learning. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not challenge sufficiently pupils who do not persevere with tasks or who display negative attitudes.

A minority of teachers prepare interesting resources to stimulate learning. For example, showing a film clip about an accident on Everest captures pupils' imagination in an English lesson. In a few lessons, teachers make effective use of current events in the news to provide the context for the learning, for example discussions on upcoming presidential elections in other countries during a history lesson.

In the majority of lessons, teachers do not plan effectively enough to meet the needs of all pupils. They do not plan sufficiently demanding activities to enable pupils to make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

A few teachers use skilful questioning to develop pupils' responses and understanding. These teachers challenge pupils' thinking and engage them in their learning successfully. Many teachers, however, do not probe pupils' thinking and understanding well enough. This has a detrimental effect on the progress of more able pupils in particular.

Around half of teachers provide helpful verbal feedback in lessons. A minority of teachers provide useful written feedback in books that shows pupils clearly how to improve their work. However, the majority of written feedback does not inform pupils clearly enough how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. Only a few teachers ensure that pupils respond positively to their comments.

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils. It builds suitably on pupils' learning from previous key stages. In key stage 4, the school provides an appropriate choice of academic and vocational subjects to meet the needs of pupils, such as computer science and hair and beauty.

In the sixth form, the school works collaboratively with Pembrokeshire South Federation in order to provide a suitable range of curriculum choice. The school organises the curriculum well to deliver national priorities. It works creatively to improve learning opportunities for pupils with additional learning needs through the provision of interesting and valuable courses. However, provision for more able and talented pupils has not had sufficient impact on outcomes for this group of pupils. A few curriculum areas produce carefully considered schemes of work in order to plan for the development of pupils' learning. However, generally, planning for progression in subject-specific skills and in literacy and numeracy skills is weak across many subjects.

The school works well with its partner primary schools to plan to develop suitable literacy and numeracy activities for skills pupils during the transition period. The school identifies pupils with weak literacy and numeracy skills on entry and provides an effective programme of intervention.

The school does not have a co-ordinated approach to the progressive development of pupils' skills across the curriculum. Although the literacy and numeracy framework is planned and identified clearly across the curriculum, the school does not evaluate the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well enough. In a minority of curriculum areas there are valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. For example, in geography, 'Go 4 it' booklets provide a relevant context for the development of pupils' numeracy skills.

In key stage 4 and in the sixth form, the development of skills through the Welsh Baccalaureate is a strong feature. The school has suitable arrangements for the introduction of the digital competence framework. However, the development of ICT skills across the curriculum is in the early stages of development.

Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop and practise their Welsh language skills outside of Welsh lessons.

#### **Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement**

Overall, the school has an inclusive and caring ethos. However, policies and procedures to manage behaviour and to promote positive attitudes to learning are insufficiently effective.

The school monitors and tracks the general progress of individuals and groups of pupils suitably across all key stages. It makes appropriate use of this information to identify pupils who require additional academic support. The school provides a wide range of suitable interventions for these pupils and makes appropriate use of learning coaches, for example to support pupils in key stage 4. Effective tracking and monitoring have had a positive impact on outcomes in the majority of performance indicators at the end of Year 11, but have had insufficient impact on a few important aspects such as outcomes for more able pupils over time. In addition, the school does not have strong enough systems to monitor the attendance and behaviour of groups of pupils as they move through the school.

The school supports the pupils with additional learning needs well and tracks their progress against the targets in their individual development plans suitably. These plans include useful strategies to support teaching and learning. However, there is inconsistency in how well teachers apply these strategies in lessons. The school provides valuable opportunities for parents of pupils with additional learning needs to visit the school informally.

Reports to parents contain useful comments and identify beneficial targets for further improvement. The school provides effective communication to parents to celebrate the successes and achievements of pupils. This includes regular newsletters and social media posts.

The school has valuable transition arrangements for pupils joining the school and for those moving into the sixth form. Well-planned transition arrangements with local primary schools, including the 'Whale of a time' programme, enable pupils to settle quickly in Year 7. The school provides pupils with appropriate advice and guidance at the end of key stage 3 and key stage 4 to help them make informed decisions about their future learning and career choices.

Pupils benefit from a worthwhile range of extra-curricular sporting and cultural experiences, for example surfing, wheelchair rugby, dance and the annual eisteddfod. In addition, there are varied and valuable local and overseas trips which contribute effectively to pupils' learning experiences. For example, the school organises visits to the Hay on Wye Literature Festival, Chateau de Broutel in France and trips to international netball and rugby fixtures. There is a suitable range of extra-curricular activities to develop pupils' creative skills. This includes a theatre group, a wind and brass band and a school choir.

The school provides the most vulnerable learners with effective support. It provides a comprehensive range of helpful interventions to support the social development of these pupils. This includes valuable programmes to help pupils to develop their social, emotional and communication skills, specific support for young carers and regular coffee mornings in order to engage with the parents of these pupils.

The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their social, spiritual and moral understanding through personal and social education lessons. Assemblies, religious education lessons and registration periods provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on a range of moral issues and to celebrate diversity and equality. Pupils have suitable opportunities to learn about making healthy lifestyle choices. The school's arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking are appropriate.

The school's arrangements to manage behaviour and deal with incidents of poor behaviour are not effective enough. At all levels, there is too much variation in staff's tolerance of low level disruption in lessons and around the school and in their consistency in applying the behaviour policy. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour have become more widespread and fixed term exclusions have increased significantly.

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

### **Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement**

Leadership at the school is currently undergoing a period of transition. Since October 2017, the deputy headteacher has undertaken the role of acting headteacher. At the time of the inspection, a minority of senior leaders are seconded to the leadership team in a temporary capacity facilitated by Schools Challenge Cymru programme funding. These secondments will come to an end during the academic year.

During a very short period, the acting headteacher has communicated a clear vision for school improvement, with an emphasis on strengthening the community focus and promoting high aspirations. Staff, parents and pupils are supportive of her interim leadership and she has fostered a strong team ethos amongst staff.

In the last three years, leadership has impacted positively on improving performance in the majority of performance indicators at key stage 4, as well as improving arrangements for tracking pupils' progress. However, leaders have not set high enough expectations around pupil behaviour, attitudes to learning and the quality of teaching. Action to improve behaviour has not been swift enough and, as a result, behaviour has deteriorated.

Roles and responsibilities for senior and middle leaders are generally clear. However, in a few instances, strategic responsibilities are not outlined clearly enough to enable leaders to monitor the work of those they line manage. Line management meetings focus well on pupil progress and outcomes at key stage 4 and the sixth form. However, there is not enough discussion about or evaluation of the quality of provision. As a result, the majority of middle leaders do not have a clear enough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching in their departments.

On the whole, senior leaders have a sound understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. The self-evaluation report identifies many of these strengths and areas for improvement and includes an appropriate analysis of performance data. However, there are a few important omissions in the report, such as the deficit budget and standards in Welsh. Leaders have made limited use of findings from lesson observations and work scrutiny to evaluate the standards of pupils' skills in particular.

There are clear links between the self-evaluation report and the school improvement plan and priorities in the plan are broadly appropriate in the majority of areas. However, because leaders have not identified a few important areas in need of improvement, they are not addressed in the improvement plan. A few of the targets for improvement are insufficiently precise.

Leaders complete a suitable range of helpful self-evaluation activities such as lesson observations, work scrutiny, pupil interviews and departmental and thematic reviews. However, the school does not evaluate the quality or value of these activities well enough, or make best use of the findings from them. As a result, leaders do not have a wholly clear and accurate picture of the effectiveness of their work or the key areas that require improvement. For example, evaluations of lessons are over-generous in their judgements and do not focus sufficiently on pupils' progress or the standards of their skills. This makes it difficult for leaders to plan for improvement precisely enough.

Where self-evaluation and improvement planning has been effective, leaders have focused closely on specific areas of the school's work, evaluated the provision and its impact carefully and implemented precise actions. For instance, through listening to pupils and scrutinising their work, leaders recognised that the assessment system needed to change and acted decisively to implement a new policy, which is now more effective. Although the self-evaluation and improvement planning activities are valuable in themselves, there are too many of them, they generate too much paperwork and their purpose is not clear enough. Consequently, leaders have not focused closely enough on improving specific aspects such as pupils' behaviour.

The quality of departmental self-evaluation and improvement planning varies widely. In general, departmental self-evaluation reports do not provide a rounded evaluation of pupils' standards and progress because many make limited use of findings from lessons and work scrutiny and do not analyse detailed examination data closely enough.

Performance management processes are sound, and align suitably with the school's improvement priorities. During the last three years, leaders have focussed appropriately on developing a culture of collaboration where staff value opportunities to discuss and share their practice. However, underperformance is not tackled robustly enough.

Staff have access to a suitable range of training both within the school and with external providers. This includes weekly breakfast sessions to promote best practice in teaching. These activities have not secured sufficient improvements in the quality of teaching. The school has a comprehensive programme of support for newly qualified teachers, but support and training for senior leaders are underdeveloped. Overall, the impact of professional learning activities is not evaluated well enough.

The governing body is committed to the school and has a good understanding of the school's context. Governors' understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement is generally sound. In a few areas, they have not challenged the school robustly enough to address shortcomings, particularly in relation to pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning.

The school is staffed and resourced appropriately. The few members of staff who teach outside their subject specialism are supported suitably. The acting headteacher, governing body and business manager monitor the school's budget appropriately. However, the school currently has a deficit budget.

The school makes suitable use of grant funding such as the pupil development grant. The outcomes of pupils eligible for free school meals in key stage 4 are variable over time.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	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: 01/02/2018