



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

A report on

**Abernant Primary School
Abernant
Carmarthen
Carmarthenshire
SA33 5RR**

Date of inspection: November 2017

by

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

About Abernant Primary School

Abernant Primary School is situated near the town of Carmarthen, in Carmarthenshire local authority. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work, and English is introduced in key stage 2.

Abernant Primary School is one of three schools in an informal federation. Ysgol Cynwyl Elfed and Ysgol Llanpumsaint have already formed a formal federation, and Ysgol Abernant is in the process of joining the federation formally.

There are 23 pupils between three and eleven years old on roll. Approximately 52% of pupils speak Welsh at home and there are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has identified approximately 39% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. This is higher than the national percentage.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in January 2015, and the school was last inspected in June 2013.

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

During their time at the school, many pupils make suitable progress over time, in line with their needs and abilities. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes towards learning. Teachers and support staff work appropriately to support pupils' learning. However, teaching is not always challenging enough. The school provides a high level of care, support and guidance for pupils. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and, in a short period of time, she has introduced suitable strategies to improve provision. However, it is too early yet to see the effect of actions on pupils' standards. The governors are very supportive of the school, but they do not yet provide enough challenge.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards of extended writing in both languages across the school
- R2 Raise standards of information and communication technology in both key stages
- R3 Improve standards of reading in English in key stage 2
- R4 Ensure that teaching across the school is challenging and responds to all pupils' needs
- R5 Strengthen the role of leaders at all levels and the governing body, so that they operate more strategically

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

Over a period of time, many pupils' skills on entry to the school are low. During their time at the school, many make suitable progress from their starting points. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in line with their targets. More able pupils do not always achieve highly enough.

Many pupils' oral Welsh skills are developing well. Many listen attentively to presentations and respond confidently. By the end of the foundation phase, many are able to speak enthusiastically about their work and use an increasing range of relevant vocabulary and sentence patterns correctly. By Year 6, many discuss their work confidently and express their ideas clearly and accurately. Many pupils' English communication skills are developing successfully.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop their early reading skills in Welsh effectively. By the end of the foundation phase, many read fluently and re-tell stories confidently. They discuss their favourite characters suitably. A few pupils use their phonics skills successfully when reading unfamiliar words. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils read correctly in Welsh with an understanding that is appropriate for their age and ability. They discuss the main events and characters in their current books appropriately. Many gather information from different texts. However, standards of reading in English in key stage 2 are not as good.

Across the school, pupils' progress in writing is too variable. In the foundation phase, many pupils write appropriately and have a satisfactory understanding of the different purposes of writing. However, they do not write extensively enough across a range of writing forms. In key stage 2, many pupils make appropriate progress in their writing skills in Welsh and English. They choose appropriate words and include purposeful facts to support writing, for example when producing simple reports in science. However, overuse of worksheets limits many pupils' ability to write at length and independently across the school. Standards of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are developing suitably.

In the foundation phase, many pupils use their numeracy skills suitably in relation to their work across the areas of learning; for example, many solve measurement problems appropriately when studying the body. In key stage 2, many pupils develop a suitable understanding of number facts and use measurement skills correctly; for example, in their science lessons, they produce a table for heart rate skilfully. However, pupils do not use their numeracy skills often enough to reason, and when collecting, recording and analysing data. Over-reliance on worksheets often limits pupils' ability to complete their tasks successfully.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe on the internet. Many pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing suitably across the school. By the end of the foundation phase, many use word processing programs appropriately to present information and import pictures into their work. They use simple programs to produce a database. In key stage 2, many pupils use word processing programs confidently, edit text and import pictures. Many use the

internet successfully to search for information. However, a majority of pupils' skills have not been developed fully across the curriculum. Very few develop an effective understanding of how to handle data or create spreadsheets.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and keeping fit. They know about the importance of exercising regularly to live healthily. Members of the healthy and eco committee promote good attitudes towards eating and drinking healthily successfully; for example, they conduct physical activities during break time and encourage pupils to walk a mile a day.

Nearly all pupils are well-behaved during lessons, assemblies, when moving around the school and during leisure time. They treat adults and visitors with respect and show pride when talking about their school. Nearly all pupils are caring towards each other and older pupils care for others during break times and lunch time. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and know who to approach if they have any concerns. Nearly all pupils believe that the school deals well with any instances of bullying.

Most pupils show positive attitudes towards their work. Most respond enthusiastically and maturely to teachers' expectations. In all lessons, they work effectively with their peers in groups and pairs and respect the views of others. Older pupils are keen to shoulder responsibilities, and they play their role well. For example, they help to ensure pupils' order and safety as they leave school assemblies and when they go back into school after playtimes and lunchtime.

Pupils take pride in the good opportunities that they are given to express their opinion and to play a part in their community, for example by taking part in services in the local church. Many pupils share their ideas and offer suggestions to improve aspects of the school, for example in a 'bocs barn' (opinion box) in the school hall. The school council prepares effective questionnaires in order to gather the views of the whole school and inform the school's future procedures. The school council and eco council are active in organising an annual educational visit for the whole school. All of these activities contribute well towards developing pupils' personal and social skills, and ensure that they play a prominent part in the school's life and development.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

The quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. Teachers and support staff manage pupils' behaviour well. The relationship between pupils and adults at the school creates a very friendly and caring ethos. Teachers across the school model the Welsh language effectively.

Teachers remind pupils of their previous learning appropriately and introduce learning objectives clearly. They use open-ended questions to improve pupils' understanding and to help them elaborate on their answers. Teachers use a variety of learning methods and interesting activities to engage pupils' commitment. Teachers succeed in creating an appropriate environment in which most pupils feel safe and eager to learn.

Where teaching is not as good, presentations are too long, the pace of lessons is too slow and activities do not always challenge pupils successfully enough. Overuse of worksheets also inhibits many pupils' writing and numeracy skills across the school.

Teachers' use of assessment for learning strategies is developing well. They introduce learning objectives to pupils effectively and set purposeful criteria for them. Teachers provide pupils with suitable feedback and identify what they have achieved well and what they need to do in order to improve. Pupils are given good opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to respond to their comments.

Teachers ensure that learning experiences build appropriately on pupils' previous experiences. However, the whole school has not developed strategies to ensure a purposeful challenge to stretch pupils, particularly those who are more able. Learning experiences are enriched by inviting visitors to the school and through visits to different places, such as Pentre Bach.

The school has incorporated the literacy and numeracy framework appropriately in its plans. This ensures suitable opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum in both key stages. The school is currently in the process of strengthening provision to develop pupils' ICT skills further.

The school's commitment to promoting pupils' use of the Welsh language and respect towards the language is good. An example of this is pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment when singing Welsh songs in assemblies. Provision to develop the Welsh dimension is promoted effectively. A prominent place is given to local and national culture, for example by competing in the Urdd Eisteddfod and local Eisteddfodau. The school ensures valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about Welsh history and culture, for example through visits to places of interest, such as the Urdd centre at Llangrannog, the Big Pit and the National Assembly. The school makes good use of visitors, such as poets, artists, veterinary surgeons and local farmers to develop pupils' awareness of their area.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring community and the high level of care and co-operation between staff and pupils contributes well to pupils' wellbeing. Staff provide strong support and assistance to pupils. Staff know the pupils and their families well and have a positive relationship with them.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy eating and drinking habits and ensures that there are beneficial opportunities for them to take part in exercise sessions in physical education lessons. The school also provides a range of extra-curricular experiences in order to promote pupils' fitness effectively, including the sports club a mile a day.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, the school promotes moral aspects successfully by visiting the village church and chapel, and pupils are given opportunities to perform at them regularly, such as at the harvest service and at Christmas time. The school has a rich personal and social education programme that promotes aspects such as equality, diversity and sustainability effectively. The emphasis on developing values is prominent in the school's life.

The school has robust systems for tracking pupils' progress. Teachers use a range of information and test results appropriately to plan and provide additional support for specific groups. Teachers make good use of data across the areas of learning and core subjects.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which staff identify pupils' additional learning and personal needs from an early age. Support staff and teachers provide high quality support for pupils. A wide and comprehensive range of intervention programmes and strategies enables pupils and groups of pupils to make good progress in their learning. Individual education plans for pupils with additional learning needs are specific and measurable, and pupils and parents play an important part in the process of setting targets. Early intervention ensures that pupils receive the necessary support in order for them to succeed in their work as they move through the school.

Provision to develop pupils' creative skills is successful. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to develop their skills through music activities, competing in Eisteddfodau and contributing to art workshops. Pupils are also given regular opportunities to visit touring theatre companies.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are appropriate and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

Since returning to the school, the headteacher has set a purposeful strategic direction for developing the school. The headteacher has high expectations for the school's future and an increasing understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. In a short period of time, she has made a number of key improvements to the school and has introduced suitable strategies to raise standards, for example by introducing specific procedures to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, it is too early yet to see the effect of improvements on pupils' standards.

The headteacher has a clear vision that is based on raising pupils' standards and wellbeing. Staff and governors share the same vision. They are beginning to focus purposefully on priorities and to contribute to strategic decisions. The school has recently restructured staff responsibilities, and everyone has appropriate responsibilities and clear job descriptions. Staff meetings are held regularly, and recent meetings have focused thoroughly on raising standards and making progress against the school's priorities.

The school has suitable systems for managing teachers' performance, and objectives link suitably with the school's areas for development. On the whole, processes have an appropriate effect on teaching and learning, for example in the consistent way in which assessment for learning strategies are used.

The school responds appropriately to local and national priorities. For example, it has begun to prepare for the new curriculum and is planning and preparing purposefully to implement the digital competence framework.

Governors are very supportive of the school's work. They meet regularly and fulfil their duties conscientiously. They have a satisfactory understanding of the school's performance and know how it compares with other similar schools. Governors have begun to take part in a variety of self-evaluation activities, but these procedures have not yet had enough time to become established. Their role in challenging the school's leadership is limited.

The headteacher and teachers have developed a suitable understanding of most of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. On the whole, the self-evaluation report is evaluative and uses a suitable variety of first-hand evidence, including scrutinising pupils' books and the outcomes of lesson observations. The headteacher's recent monitoring reports are, on the whole, analytical. Staff discuss processes' findings in staff meetings, and this helps to better develop the staff's understanding of the school's standards. However, it is too early yet to measure the full effect of these procedures on standards.

In general, there is a suitable link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation report and the priorities in the school development plan. The plan focuses clearly on improving provision and raising standards. It includes appropriate strategies for action, in addition to suitable success criteria and monitoring arrangements.

The headteacher ensures that there are suitable opportunities for the professional development of teachers and support staff. For example, the training that was provided to improve methods of tracking pupils' progress has led to effective use of these strategies in the classrooms. The school also plans appropriately to work purposefully with other schools in the informal federation to raise pupils' standards of literacy and numeracy.

The headteacher and governors manage the budget carefully and ensure that expenditure links well with the plans for improvement. The school uses the pupil development grant purposefully to make measurable progress against specific targets and for specific pupils' social skills.

The school has a range of resources of appropriate quality. The rooms provide an attractive learning environment. Foundation phase pupils make good use of the outdoor areas for learning and play. The building is well-maintained.

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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