



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Y Dderwen  
Heol Spurrell  
Carmarthen  
SA31 1TG**

**Date of inspection: March 2017**

**by**

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

## Summary

At Ysgol y Dderwen, most pupils achieve well and a few make excellent progress. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are excellent and they persevere with tasks particularly well. Many teachers provide interesting experiences that engage most pupils' interest effectively. Staff work together skilfully in order to ensure a caring ethos and excellent wellbeing for pupils. Leaders set high expectations and a purposeful vision for the school. They use information from effective self-evaluation processes to identify sensible priorities for improvement and to ensure improvement.

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will maintain the high standards and quality of provision and address the recommendations.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice that was seen during the inspection.

## Recommendations

- R1 Provide enough opportunities for pupils to make decisions and choices in relation to their learning
- R2 Ensure that teachers' feedback enables pupils to know exactly what they need to do in order to improve their skills
- R3 Provide more creative opportunities for pupils to broaden their knowledge and understanding
- R4 Monitor progress in addressing all aspects that are identified in the self-evaluation process

## Main findings

### 1: Standards

Good

On entry to the school, most pupils' basic skills at least correspond to what is expected for their age. As they move through the school, they make at least strong progress and achieve well by Year 6. A few more able pupils make excellent progress. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress towards their targets from their starting points.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which most pupils communicate to a high standard in Welsh. During their time at the school, they make exceptional progress in their oral skills. Throughout the Foundation Phase, most pupils listen carefully and discuss their work confidently by using an increasing range of language patterns and vocabulary. Across key stage 2, most show genuine respect when listening to others' points of view. They speak maturely in Welsh and English and use formal language when appropriate, for example when presenting the school's radio programme. When discussing in Welsh, their use local dialect completely naturally when conducting a conversation.

Most pupils begin to identify letters and develop their awareness of phonics soon after starting at the school. By Year 2, most are able to use their reading skills successfully across the curriculum, for example when researching information about different animals. Many pupils make sound progress in their learning across key stage 2 in both languages. They skim read for information skilfully to gather information, for example when researching information about Passover during religious education lessons. Many pupils develop translanguaging skills of a high standard when reading and handling information.

Most pupils develop effective writing skills. Most have a sound awareness of different forms of writing. In the Foundation Phase, most write clearly, vary sentences and enrich their work with a wide range of adjectives and similes. When writing stories, a few of the most able pupils have a particularly good understanding of how to bring characters to life for the reader, for example when writing the story of the three mice and the big black cat. Many pupils in key stage 2 build increasingly on their writing skills in both languages. They have an effective understanding of writing mechanisms, but they do not always write creatively enough to hold the reader's attention completely effectively. A few of the most able pupils write extended pieces of a high standard. They write maturely and consider the audience carefully.

Most pupils' numeracy skills are developing effectively across the school. In the Foundation Phase, many apply their skills successfully when solving problems in the learning areas; for example, Year 2 pupils solve time problems and record their answers on analogue and digital clocks. In key stage 2, many pupils use various number strategies successfully in order to calculate. A majority make sensible choices based on a good range of checking strategies in order to decide whether their answers are correct. In general, most transfer their numeracy skills effectively, particularly in their science lessons, for example when measuring angles in order to

conduct research on friction. They work successfully to solve problems within the boundaries of activities. However, at times, they are not completely confident when applying what they have learnt previously in other subjects.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are effective across the school. In the Reception class, many pupils give a toy simple instructions in order to move it around a path. Across the Foundation Phase, most pupils use their skills confidently across the areas of learning, for example when using QR codes to solve problems. In key stage 2, most create multimedia presentations confidently in order to present their work. They use a formula competently to create a spreadsheet to calculate the cost of party food.

<b>2: Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
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Nearly all pupils' behaviour in lessons, assemblies, while moving around the school and during pupils' leisure time, is consistently excellent. Pupils are caring of each other, and treat adults and visitors with a particular level of respect and maturity. This is an excellent feature of the school. Nearly all pupils give careful consideration to their friends' needs, for example when helping each other during lunch times. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and enjoy attending each day.

Most pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay healthy, and pupils of all ages express this clearly when discussing their daily routines; for example, in the under 5s unit, pupils speak confidently about which foods are healthy and which are less healthy. Pupils in the Foundation Phase enjoy using climbing equipment and bicycles. This develops nearly all pupils' physical skills effectively. Most pupils are very enthusiastic when running the 'daily mile' and are very knowledgeable when discussing the importance of keeping fit.

Nearly all pupils show a very positive attitude towards their work and they persevere with their tasks particularly well. They show exceptional resilience when facing challenges in their work and succeed in overcoming obstacles very well. They work very effectively with their peers and respect other people's views. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and are very glad of the opportunities that they receive. In the Foundation Phase, pupils prepare milk for other pupils without adult guidance. In Year 6, all pupils have specific responsibilities, for example as language ambassadors and having responsibility for broadcasting the school's radio programme live each week. This develops their social and life skills very robustly.

Outside the school, a majority of pupils contribute well to their learning by taking part in extra-curricular activities, for example sports and local, regional and national Eisteddfodau. They take pride in performing in front of other pupils in school assemblies.

<b>3: Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of teaching across the school is good and derives from a successful working relationship between pupils, teachers and learning assistants. This leads to effective co-operation and an innate desire to succeed among most pupils.

The school places pupils in specific learning groups. A unique feature of this procedure is the responsibility that is given to teachers to teach a core subject or a specific area of study to a range of classes through cross-curricular themes. Through careful planning, many teachers develop skilful expertise in specific aspects of the curriculum, which enriches provision beneficially. This leads to robust standards among many pupils, particularly in oracy and science work.

Schemes of work have a firm focus on enabling most pupils to use their skills successfully in order to have full access to the curriculum. Many teachers provide beneficial experiences in welcoming areas, which engage most pupils' interest effectively. However, teachers do not always provide enough creative opportunities for pupils to broaden their knowledge and understanding effectively, for example through overuse of worksheets. This limits many pupils' ability to complete challenging work. The school's activity to meet the requirements of the Digital Competency Framework is developing strongly, and provision to develop most pupils' ICT skills is very good.

The principles of the Foundation Phase have been established appropriately. Continuous access to the outdoor areas ensures that many pupils benefit from interesting activities. Many teachers provide effective focus and continuous activities, which include beneficial opportunities for pupils to investigate, role play, build and practice their physical skills. This fosters pupils who have positive attitudes towards learning and persevere for extended periods. However, at times, a focus on recording tasks hinders opportunities for pupils to learn through play and through live experiences, particularly at the beginning of the Foundation Phase. In key stage 2, many teachers provide valuable opportunities to enable pupils to solve problems and develop their thinking skills. Across the school, many activities tend to be led by adults, and there are not enough effective opportunities to enable pupils across the school to make decisions and choices about their education.

Nearly all members of staff are excellent language models and place prominence on developing and embracing the Carmarthenshire dialect. They encourage pupils to use the Welsh language during formal and informal activities. As a result, many older pupils have sound translanguaging skills and develop as competent and confident bilingual learners.

Many teachers have high expectations. They use a wide variety of assessment for learning styles effectively. For example, they create success criteria effectively in order to evaluate to what extent pupils have succeeded in making progress during lessons. A majority provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work and encourage them to set suitable targets for improvement. A purposeful pace and skilful questioning broaden most pupils' understanding effectively, particularly those who are more able.

Most teachers mark pupils' work purposefully and give pupils beneficial oral feedback. Comments identify strengths in addition to what they need to do in order to improve the content and presentation of work. However, feedback is not always specific enough to explain what they need to do in order to improve their skills when completing subsequent work.

<b>4: Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The school has effective systems for tracking pupils' progress on their journey through the school. Teachers use this information appropriately in order to identify pupils who need additional support in literacy or numeracy in order to arrange intervention, when necessary. Teachers make suitable use of assessment outcomes across the core subjects and areas of learning, in order to plan the next steps in weekly plans. The quality of interventions is effective and pupils make progress towards their targets. All pupils with additional learning needs have an appropriate learning plan. However, individual targets are not always specific enough to identify the small steps that they need to make the most effective progress in their learning.

The school has specific strategies that succeed in supporting pupils' emotional and social needs effectively, for example its attachment awareness programme. This contributes well to the caring and familial ethos within the school. The school helps parents to support their children effectively, for example by providing training sessions on the school's mathematics methodology.

By providing effective sessions with a focus on personal and social education, the school succeeds in ensuring that most pupils have a very good understanding of the effect of lifestyle choices on their health. For example, pupils show a sound understanding of the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit, and they speak confidently about the need to use a strong password to keep personal details safe on the internet. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to influence elements of the school's work, for example by offering ideas to the school council in the red and green boxes. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to offer ideas at the beginning of a theme and through the 'Mae gen i syniad' (I have an idea) system for activities in the continuous provision areas in the Foundation Phase. However, in general, opportunities for them to influence what they learn effectively enough are limited.

Respecting different cultures, promoting aspects of diversity, anti-racism and developing fairness and equal opportunities are strong elements of the school's culture. There is a clear emphasis on promoting the school's agreed values, and this has a positive influence on pupils' behaviour. Teachers plan a wide range of challenging activities in order to develop a very good awareness and appreciation of Welsh history, culture and traditions among most pupils.

Provision to develop pupils' creative and physical arts skills is exceptional. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to experiment with a variety of art media to draw, create sculptures and make jewellery when studying the work of famous artists. Through lessons, opportunities to perform and compete at the school and in Eisteddfodau, most pupils are given valuable opportunities to engage in the creative arts. In addition, they are given an opportunities to visit a local theatre each year, and education in theatre companies motivate pupils by performing at the school.

Arrangements for managing the site and safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

<b>5: Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The headteacher's innovative and robust leadership sets a clear strategic direction for developing the school. The headteacher is supported effectively by the assistant headteachers. Together, they set high expectations and a purposeful vision, which are shared successfully with the school community. The headteacher distributes responsibilities effectively and staff work together very skilfully to ensure a caring ethos and excellent wellbeing for pupils.

Leaders have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use information from rigorous and extensive self-evaluation processes, such as scrutinising books, lesson observations and data analysis, to identify sensible priorities for improvement to be included in the school development plan. As a result, they set a clear strategic direction for the school, which is based on first-hand evidence.

Governors challenge and support the school thoroughly, and they have an incisive understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need to be developed further. They play a prominent and leading part in the self-evaluation process and in setting priorities for improvement. Governors work with the headteacher, the senior management team and subject leaders effectively, for example in order to evaluate progress carefully and ensure that the school development plan has led to visible improvements in standards and provision. As a result, leaders know well how effective their improvement plans are and show a good record of making improvements that have led to a positive effect on pupils' learning and wellbeing. However, aspects still need to be improved despite having already been identified in the self-evaluation process, for example the over-use of ready-made worksheets. In addition, leaders do not always review the whole provision regularly enough in order to evaluate the effect on attaining high standards.

Leaders co-ordinate the work of addressing priorities for improvement effectively. Teachers are aware of their responsibilities and their contribution towards achieving the priorities for improvement. Rigorous and fair performance management ensures that there is a sensible focus to staff targets. This contributes effectively towards meeting the priorities clearly. In addition, there is useful professional development for staff, which develops their competence further in order to achieve this improvement work successfully. There is a wide range of valuable opportunities for staff to improve their skills and professional knowledge, and to share good practice with other schools. This has a positive effect on planning, teaching and maintaining valuable partnerships. A good example of this is the school's effective work to develop the Digital Competency Framework with local schools.

Through a clear staffing structure, unambiguous responsibilities and teams of teachers working within effective learning communities, distributed leadership has a positive effect on improving pupils' standards and wellbeing and strengthening provision. For example, internal learning communities for literacy and numeracy

ensure that teams of teachers contribute effectively towards meeting the measurable criteria within the school development plan. These teams create specific sub-plans for improvement, which inform their work effectively and ensure accountability and ownership for subject leaders, teachers and support staff. As a result, the school is a strong learning community and leadership improves aspects of provision and maintains good standards skilfully.

Leaders ensure purposeful use of the school's budget in order to improve provision and standards, and expenditure links sensibly to the priorities in the school development plan. Good use is made of the Pupil Deprivation Grant to improve provision for developing the literacy and numeracy skills and wellbeing of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

The school is staffed appropriately and support staff are an integral part of the team, and contribute suitably to pupils' standards, wellbeing and social skills. Teachers' expertise is used meaningfully to enrich teaching and learning through the classroom organisation whereby they teach a core subject or a specific area of study.



## About the school

Ysgol y Dderwen is situated in the market town of Carmarthen in Carmarthenshire. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 363 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 44 full-time and 22 part-time nursery age children. They are divided into 13 classes, which include 12 mixed-age classes.

Approximately 5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national percentage. Many pupils speak Welsh at home, and a very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 9% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, but very few have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in January 2014 and the school was last inspected in March 2010.

The school is currently a pioneer school and is working with the Welsh Government and other schools to develop a new curriculum for Wales.

## Appendix 1: Summary table of inspection areas

<b>Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

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

<b>Excellent</b>	Strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate, needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory, needs urgent improvement</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

## Appendix 2: Performance data

### 6692116 - YSGOL Y DDERWEN

Number of pupils on roll	347
Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) - 3 year average	4.5
FSM band	1 (FSM<=8%)

#### Foundation Phase

	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Number of pupils in Year 2 cohort</b>	43	47	44	49
<b>Achieving the Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) (%)</b>	95.3	95.7	97.7	100.0
Benchmark quartile	2	2	2	1
<b>Language, literacy and communication skills - English (LCE)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	*	*	*	*
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	*	*	*	*
Benchmark quartile	*	*	*	*
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	*	*	*	*
Benchmark quartile	*	*	*	*
<b>Language, literacy and communication skills - Welsh (LCW)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	43	47	44	49
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	95.3	95.7	97.7	100.0
Benchmark quartile	2	2	2	1
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	30.2	34.0	59.1	61.2
Benchmark quartile	3	3	1	1
<b>Mathematical development (MDT)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	43	47	44	49
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	100.0	100.0	97.7	100.0
Benchmark quartile	1	1	2	1
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	30.2	38.3	59.1	61.2
Benchmark quartile	3	3	1	1
<b>Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity (PSD)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	43	47	44	49
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Benchmark quartile	1	1	1	1
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	55.8	57.4	68.2	79.6
Benchmark quartile	3	3	3	2

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) represents the percentage of pupils achieving outcome 5 or above in PSD, LCE/LCW, and MDT in combination.

\* This item may disclose information on individuals, or it is not sufficiently robust for publication, not applicable or is otherwise unavailable.

The benchmark quartile compares the performance of one school against others who have similar levels of pupils with free school meals (FSM). FSM is used as a proxy of social deprivation in schools. This allows a comparison of the performance of a school against others who are in the same FSM category, and who might therefore have a similar intake of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

A school in benchmark quartile 1 is in the highest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are higher than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds. A school in benchmark quartile 4 is in the lowest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are lower than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

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March 2017

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FSM band	1 (FSM<=8%)

**Key stage 2**

	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Number of pupils in Year 6 cohort</b>	26	35	36	42
<b>Achieving the core subject indicator (CSI) (%)</b>	100.0	97.1	94.4	97.6
Benchmark quartile	1	2	3	2
<b>English</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	26	35	36	42
Achieving level 4+ (%)	92.3	100.0	97.2	97.6
Benchmark quartile	3	1	2	3
Achieving level 5+ (%)	50.0	40.0	61.1	57.1
Benchmark quartile	2	3	1	2
<b>Welsh first language</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	26	35	36	42
Achieving level 4+ (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.6
Benchmark quartile	1	1	1	2
Achieving level 5+ (%)	46.2	45.7	52.8	52.4
Benchmark quartile	2	2	2	2
<b>Mathematics</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	26	35	36	42
Achieving level 4+ (%)	100.0	97.1	94.4	97.6
Benchmark quartile	1	2	3	3
Achieving level 5+ (%)	38.5	51.4	58.3	57.1
Benchmark quartile	3	2	2	2
<b>Science</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	26	35	36	42
Achieving level 4+ (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Benchmark quartile	1	1	1	1
Achieving level 5+ (%)	34.6	48.6	61.1	54.8
Benchmark quartile	3	2	2	2

The core subject indicator (CSI) represents the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

\* This item may disclose information on individuals, or it is not sufficiently robust for publication, not applicable or is otherwise unavailable.

The benchmark quartile compares the performance of one school against others who have similar levels of pupils with free school meals (FSM). FSM is used as a proxy of social deprivation in schools. This allows a comparison of the performance of a school against others who are in the same FSM category, and who might therefore have a similar intake of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

A school in benchmark quartile 1 is in the highest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are higher than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds. A school in benchmark quartile 4 is in the lowest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are lower than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.

<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/index.html?lang=eng>

## 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))

We used this inspection to pilot developments to the common inspection framework, the inspection process and the inspection report format. We will review these arrangements and make any changes required before introducing them nationally in September 2017.

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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