



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

A report on

**Ysgol Y Gelli
Ffordd Bethel
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1DU**

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by

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

About Ysgol Y Gelli

Ysgol y Gelli is situated on the outskirts of the town of Caernarfon in Gwynedd. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 228 pupils between three and eleven years old on roll, including 30 part-time nursery age pupils.

A little over 6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national percentage of 19%. Eighty-seven per cent (87%) of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Very few pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school has identified 27% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, but very few have a statement of special educational needs. The percentage with additional learning needs is higher than the national percentage of 21%.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in April 2017 and the school was last inspected in September 2010.

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

Ysgol y Gelli is a happy, caring and inclusive community where pupils feel safe and enjoy their learning experiences in a wholly Welsh environment. Pupils speak Welsh confidently and naturally. There is a very industrious environment at the school, and pupils' courtesy and geniality, in addition to the supportive relationship between them and the staff, are strong features. Most pupils make sound progress during their time at the school.

Under the headteacher's robust leadership, a number of effective strategies have been established to build on the school's previous strengths. A number of elements have already embedded well and are beginning to reap results, such as the self-evaluation procedures and assessment for learning strategies, while others need more time to have a positive effect on pupils' standards. These include provision for pupils with additional learning needs and the way in which teachers challenge more able pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that pupils of all abilities make good progress, particularly in using their numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R2 Ensure that teachers make the best use of progress-tracking procedures to provide appropriate challenges for all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability
- R3 Improve procedures to identify and support pupils with additional learning needs

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, a majority of pupils' basic skills correspond to what is expected for their age. Most pupils make sound progress during their time at the school.

In the foundation phase, most pupils speak confidently and maturely and use a wide range of vocabulary correctly. They listen well and use rich vocabulary in a range of contexts. In key stage 2, most pupils build successfully on their oral skills. They take great pride in their Welsh heritage, and speak Welsh completely spontaneously and naturally with their peers. They are able to express themselves maturely in Welsh and English, for example when expressing an opinion about the challenges that homeless people face over Christmas. Pupils' standards of oracy in both languages are a strength.

Most pupils' reading skills in the foundation phase are developing well. By the end of the phase, many are confident readers. They use their findings to enrich their work, for example when gathering information about Africa. However, a few pupils' lack of fluency limits the flow of their reading. In key stage 2, most pupils are confident readers in both languages. They gather information effectively, for example when searching for facts about famous artists.

In the foundation phase, most pupils write confidently in line with their age and ability. They build letters and simple words effectively and they have an increasingly sound grasp of form. Most spell familiar words confidently and create effective extended pieces, for example when comparing the life of a child in Wales with a child in Botswana. Many punctuate confidently and vary their sentences naturally. By the end of the phase, many pupils write at length to a good standard, but a few do not write as confidently in different contexts, considering their ability. Across key stage 2, most pupils make good progress when writing in Welsh and English. They develop syntax effectively and express themselves confidently in increasingly extended forms. They used models of forms maturely and emulate the work creatively. Many more able pupils create imaginative pieces of a high standard. A good example of this is the way in which they create a portrayal of Hitler as part of their work on the Second World War.

Most pupils' numeracy skills in the foundation phase are developing well. They count confidently and recognise shapes and handle data effectively. By the end of the phase, many apply their skills independently, for example when weighing objects and when using different coins when role-playing in the class shop. Most pupils in key stage 2 have a sound understanding of number strategies and handling shape and data. Many apply their number work confidently, for example when using a database to look at the sale prices of famous artists' pictures. However, with the exception of the music project, pupils do not use their numeracy skills regularly enough or to the same standard in a full range of contexts across the curriculum.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills in the foundation phase are sound. They use a range of multimedia computer programs effectively.

By the end of the phase, most use electronic tablets confidently, for example to create, adapt and record descriptions of characters. Most pupils in key stage 2 use their ICT skills skilfully. They use equipment creatively to create a multimedia presentation that derives from their work on the legend of Cantre'r Gwaelod, and use a spreadsheet program when planning the wedding at Nant Gwrtheyrn.

Most pupils' thinking skills are developing soundly across the school. Most pupils have a good understanding of the different strategies that are in place in the classrooms, and a sound understanding of the effect of these strategies on their progress.

A majority of pupils with additional learning needs make sound progress towards reaching their targets. However, a very few more able pupils do not always achieve to the best of their ability.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils are very well-behaved. Pupils are caring towards each other and treat others with respect. Most show confidence and maturity in line with their age, particularly when communicating with visitors and adults. They are considerate and relate well with each other, and there is a caring atmosphere throughout the school. A notable example of this is the works of the 'Mêts Mawr' (Big Buddies) and 'Mêts Mawr Bach' (Big Little Buddies), which gives pupils an opportunity to keep an eye on their peers in case something is causing them concern.

Most pupils feel safe at school and are aware of the importance of keeping themselves safe. They have sound knowledge of online safety arrangements and know what to do should anything worry them while they are working online. Nearly all pupils are aware of the need to make healthy choices when eating and drinking, and they are keen to take part in physical activities.

Pupils participate fully in the school's life and work. They are willing to shoulder leadership roles and responsibilities, such as being members of the school council, the recycling crew or the digital leaders. The way in which digital leaders support each other to raise their peers' standards of ICT across the school is a strong element of their work.

Most pupils work confidently and effectively independently, in pairs or in groups. Their understanding of how to improve their work is developing appropriately. Most respect other people's contributions meaningfully and maturely. They listen attentively to each other and are very willing to share ideas, express opinion and consider different points of view. Nearly all pupils show a positive attitude towards their work, and they are enthusiastic and persevere well. Across the school, pupils respond purposefully to opportunities to contribute to the next steps in their learning and to take a more prominent role in guiding their own learning.

Pupils are developing well as conscientious citizens by raising money for various charities, such as the Air Ambulance. A majority of pupils take part successfully in activities such as sports competitions and Eisteddfodau, which develop their self-confidence and wellbeing well.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan effectively to ensure a full and rich range of broad learning experiences for pupils across the school. They provide them with effective support that is targeted carefully to ensure that most make appropriate progress.

The school has a good range of effective schemes of work that ensure that the areas of learning in the foundation phase, the requirements of the national curriculum and the requirements of the agreed syllabus for religious education are given due attention. The schemes provide a firm foundation for developing the curriculum across the school in the long, medium and short-term, and give appropriate consideration to a majority of the requirements of the literacy and numeracy framework. Teachers provide stimulating opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in a wide range of contexts. The structure is appropriate to develop pupils' literacy and ICT skills. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in full in a range of different contexts across the curriculum are limited. As a result, a minority of pupils do not demonstrate number skills to the same standard in other contexts as they demonstrate in their mathematics lessons.

The school ensures rich opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of their area's culture by placing many activities in a local context, such as studying local Welsh artists. This is a prominent feature of the school's work.

Most teachers make effective use of a variety of teaching methods, which ensures that pupils apply themselves fully to their work. Teachers have a sound understanding of the requirements of the curriculum, and they provide tasks and challenges that engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. As a result, nearly all pupils apply themselves fully to their tasks during lessons. However, tasks are not always planned in enough detail to respond fully to the specific needs of a few more able pupils to ensure that they receive enough of a challenge. As a result, a few more able pupils do not develop to the best of their ability.

Across the school, staff provide very effective language models for pupils. This has a positive effect on their language skills. In the foundation phase and key stage 2, teachers make effective use of individual, pair and group activities in order to enrich learning experiences. They use questioning techniques skilfully to encourage pupils to think independently and to express an opinion, for example when discussing and evaluating the work of famous artists.

Assessment for learning strategies are embedded well in the school. Teachers and support staff ensure that they share aims and success criteria regularly with pupils in lessons. The recent work on developing a 'growth mindset' is being implemented effectively by staff. The school places a firm emphasis on ensuring that pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of persevering with their tasks.

The standard of feedback that is given to pupils is robust. Teachers provide concise and effective feedback that, on the whole, enables pupils to understand what they need to do to develop their work further. Teachers ensure that pupils' targets are updated regularly in order to respond in detail to their needs. Where this practice is strongest, opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on the next steps in their learning and to re-draft parts of their work in order to develop further. However, overuse of worksheets slow a very few pupils' progress at times.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

The sound culture of respect, inclusion and fairness within the school promotes its aims effectively. This is reinforced successfully in the purposeful experiences that are provided for pupils, including charitable activities. This encourages pupils to develop as confident and thoughtful citizens. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. However, arrangements in relation to the boys' toilets are not appropriate and this has a negative effect on a few of the younger boys' self-confidence.

The school has suitable arrangements for promoting eating and drinking healthily. Education for sustainable development is appropriate and is promoted by staff through the work of the recycling crew and curricular themes, which are chosen specifically. Through a variety of activities, assemblies of collective worship and reflection, most pupils develop as moral and knowledgeable individuals. Provision to promote pupils' spiritual development and their understanding of beliefs and traditions around the world is effective. A notable example of this is the way in which foundation phase pupils discuss challenging and sensitive issues maturely, such as apartheid in Africa. As a result, most pupils have positive attitudes and a competent understanding of the importance of celebrating and respecting different cultures, and a sound awareness of the importance of fighting against racism.

Across the school, personal and social education plans are implemented effectively and have a positive effect on nearly all pupils' behaviour, empathy and emotional development.

The school has been a part of the Lead Creative Schools project with a specific focus on developing numeracy skills through music. The effect of this is that the pupils who are involved with the project show appropriate progress in their numeracy skills in the context of the project, although not as much in other subjects. Pupils are given extensive opportunities to develop their creative and cultural skills by performing in a variety of presentations and concerts within the school and the wider community. This develops their self-confidence and their co-operation skills effectively.

The school is in the process of adapting its arrangements for pupils with additional learning needs in line with the current guidance. The school now has appropriate and methodical procedures to identify pupils' needs. However, over time, these procedures have not been robust enough. This cohort's progress has not been tracked or evaluated in enough detail to identify and measure progress, nor to plan for the next steps in their development. These pupils now have individual development plans that include input from the pupil and the parent and, on the whole, targets are suitable. However, these arrangements have not yet become embedded.

The school makes effective use of external agencies to support pupils' needs. Learning assistants are used effectively to support pupils by implementing a variety of intervention programmes in areas such as numeracy and literacy. As a result, many pupils make good progress towards achieving the individual targets that are set for them. There is a very supportive relationship between assistants and pupils, which contributes significantly to the school's caring ethos and the way in which they trust each other.

The school has appropriate procedures for tracking pupils' progress, which have been refined recently. A suitable range of internal and national assessments are used to assess pupils' achievement. However, the school does not make effective enough use of the findings to ensure an appropriate challenge for a few pupils, particularly those who are more able. On the whole, the school sets appropriate targets for its pupils, but their progress towards achieving them is not tracked in enough detail to identify the milestones along the way and feed into the next steps in planning.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has a robust and creative vision that is based on creating a happy school where pupils are given valuable opportunities to develop to their full potential. The headteacher conveys this vision very successfully to staff, governors, pupils and parents. As a result, other leaders, staff and governors have a clear awareness of her expectations and of pupils' standard of achievement. The headteacher has leadership skills of a very high standard. In a short period of time, she has implemented a number of very effective strategies that have enriched provision, improved the standard of teaching and developed a growth mindset among the school's staff. This ensures a strong commitment to acting effectively in order to raise pupils' standards and promote their wellbeing. The school's staffing structure now enables all teachers and support staff to feel ownership for the school's policies and ways of operating.

Under the current headteacher's effective leadership, governors have a sound understanding of the school's performance. They have responsibility for specific aspects of current priorities. By working closely with leaders and conducting lesson observations and scrutinising books, they now play a more active role in the school's monitoring processes. They use the findings of these procedures effectively in order to make decisions and set a clear strategic direction for the school's work.

The school's self-evaluation is a very comprehensive and rigorous document that provides an accurate picture of its situation. As a result of the detailed and robust evaluation procedures, leaders now have rigorous knowledge of the school's performance, and this has had a positive effect on the aspects of provision that were in need of improvement; for example, by monitoring pupils' work, the need to ensure differentiated tasks to respond to all pupils' needs was identified. Although these are recent procedures, they are beginning to have an effect on many pupils' achievement.

The priorities in the school development plan derive directly from the aspects for development that were identified in the self-evaluation report, and focus specifically on raising standards. The plan includes very clear priorities for improvement, in addition to actions, a timetable, staff responsibilities and financial requirements. The school's leaders complete detailed reviews of progress in relation to the previous plan's priorities regularly.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which leaders provide valuable opportunities for all staff to develop professionally. As a result, staff take a leading role in developing specific areas of the curriculum and staff training. Through very effective quality improvement procedures and the 'growth mindset' scheme, teachers

now have higher expectations of themselves and pupils. The school responds successfully to local and national priorities. A good example of this is the way in which the school has addressed the digital competence framework. This is developed further through purposeful co-operation with schools in the catchment area. This has a positive effect on the ICT skills of pupils and staff.

The school has effective arrangements for monitoring expenditure. Effective use is made of the resources that are available to enrich the curriculum, and staff work together very effectively to create a stimulating learning environment that engages pupils' interest. Decisions about expenditure link closely with the priorities for improvement. The school uses the pupil development grant economically to ensure appropriate provision and to raise standards in both key stages.

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.

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