



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

A report on

Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant Primary School

**Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant
Oswestry
Salop
SY10 0EL**

Date of inspection: June 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant Primary School

Name of provider	Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant Primary School
Local authority	Powys County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh-medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	73
Pupils of statutory school age	61
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 21.3%)</i>	9.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 22.2%)</i>	21.37%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	37.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	
Date of headteacher appointment	05/01/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	13/06/2022

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a) The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant is a happy and homely school. All staff work together successfully to create a familial, friendly and Welsh ethos. As a result, pupils enjoy attending school very much. The school has a clear vision to develop the curriculum, namely 'Learning Flows, Future Grows'. This vision supports teachers to provide a rich range of interesting learning experiences that engage and maintain pupils' enthusiasm and meet their needs successfully.

On the whole, teachers' assessments are valid, accurate and reliable. Teachers' oral and written feedback helps pupils to know how well they are doing. However, feedback does not always support pupils usefully to identify the next steps in their learning. Pupils develop their basic skills strongly on their journey through the school. They develop as confident mathematicians and have a firm grasp of both Welsh and English. However, they do not refine pieces of extended writing sufficiently to enable them to develop their writing skills further.

There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life through different pupil voice groups. This has had an influence on the school's work in the community, both locally and more widely, by looking at global events. Pupils show very positive attitudes towards their learning and persevere effectively during their activities. They are extremely polite to each other and to adults.

A particular strength across the school is the frequent opportunities to develop a wide range of pupils' skills through the very effective use of information and communication technology (ICT). Thorough planning ensures continuity and progression in pupils' experiences through the school. As a result, most pupils develop a wide range of digital skills to a very high standard.

On the whole, the school's priorities derive from leaders' knowledge of their school. The improvement plan has been reviewed recently and, overall, includes suitable activities to lead to improving the priority areas. However, strategic planning is not always specific or incisive enough.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' extended writing skills
- R2 Improve the quality and consistency of teachers' feedback to ensure that pupils know what to do to improve their work
- R3 Sharpen strategic planning to drive priorities

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum in a modern way, to be disseminated on the Estyn website.

Main findings

Learning

Pupils make sound progress in learning and acquiring skills during their time at the school. They develop well from their starting points and specific groups of pupils, such as those with additional learning needs (ALN), make strong progress in line with their individual targets.

In the English stream, most pupils' speaking and listening skills are developing well throughout the school. They begin to read English by using suitable strategies from an early age and, by the end of their time at the school, many pupils are fluent and confident readers. For example, they read about current affairs and express their views on different subjects intelligently. By the end of Year 2, most develop their Welsh speaking and listening skills suitably. For example, they convey personal details and preferences and ask and respond to simple questions while discussing the weather. On the whole, older pupils continue to show a positive attitude towards speaking Welsh. They develop listening skills in order to gain an increasing understanding of the language and build on the basic vocabulary and syntactical styles they have learned further down the school. In the Welsh stream, most pupils develop effective listening skills and become increasingly confident Welsh speakers from an early age. As a result, they can participate fully in lessons through the medium of Welsh, whatever their linguistic background. Many develop their Welsh reading skills suitably and use their understanding of phonics to sound out and decode unfamiliar words. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 read clues to discover where on the school grounds the pirate has left his treasure chest. From Year 3 onwards, most begin to develop their English reading skills well and become fluent readers by the time they leave the school.

Most pupils across both language streams develop suitable writing skills. By the end of Year 2, they write appropriately for different purposes, for example when writing poems about space. When they are given an opportunity to do so, older pupils write appropriately in a variety of genres. For example, they write a newspaper article about the egg of an imaginary dragon and a formal letter asking a software company to invest in a game they have designed. On the whole, they do not refine extended pieces of writing sufficiently to enable them to develop their writing skills further.

Across the school, many pupils develop their numeracy skills successfully. Younger pupils develop a sound understanding of number, for example when calculating the number of insects in different parts of the school grounds and working out the perimeter of different parts of the village of Handa. By Year 3, most pupils' handle data confidently, for example by creating a bar chart to show the favourite breed of sheep of pupils in the class. Older pupils apply their number skills effectively to considering real-life situations, for example by calculating the profit that can be made by selling different items in a bakery.

Most pupils develop a wide range of digital skills to a very high standard. For example, younger pupils present information about volcanoes by adding images and text, compose music and begin to use a code to program devices. As they move through the school, most develop their digital skills further successfully. For example,

they use their coding skills to create a watch that counts the pupils' steps as they walk around the school to keep fit.

Pupils' creative skills are developing well throughout the school. Most use a variety of materials skilfully to produce artwork. For example, younger pupils make impressive chalk pictures of the Milky Way and experiment with paint and clay to make Celtic shapes. Older pupils interpret the Blitz dramatically by combining a silhouette and colour and draw rainforest animals skilfully. Many develop their musical skills effectively, for example by composing a musical sentence with percussion instruments and they have recently begun to develop their keyboard playing skills suitably.

Nearly all pupils develop their physical skills well throughout the school. For example, they take part in a variety of lessons that promote their health and wellbeing, such as playing team games and taking part in athletics, dance and gymnastics sessions.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons, while moving around the school and during their leisure time. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. They enjoy taking part in lessons and engage well with the activities that are prepared for them and work successfully with their peers. All are able to concentrate for long periods and complete tasks successfully. They respond appropriately when facing challenges, for example by referring to the '*Yeti Dal Ati*' the school has adopted to promote perseverance. They listen to the contributions of adults and their friends and respond appropriately. In the best examples, they are beginning to develop well as independent learners, for example when older pupils work in groups to plan a computer game about sea pollution and when younger pupils take part in independent tasks during 'Over to you' sessions. In lessons, most pupils respond positively to oral feedback from staff. When they are given an opportunity to do so, a few pupils are beginning to refine and improve their work successfully as a result of written feedback.

Pupils are given valuable opportunities to join groups that are responsible for different aspects of school life, with members beginning to have a positive influence. For example, the *Criw Cymraeg* have encouraged their peers to learn the national anthem this year and they are responsible for promoting Welsh culture by playing Welsh music at lunch time on a weekly basis. The Digital Leaders promote online safety by placing posters around the school relating it to children's rights to be safe and they have recently established an after-school club for pupils to practise their digital skills.

Most pupils feel safe at school and know whom to approach if they have any concerns. Many appreciate the support of their peers; for example, they attend the '*Cwtsh*' on the school playground at lunchtime to spend time with the 'buddies' who run the facility. Many make healthy choices during their leisure time. For example, they use a range of resources provided by members of the school's Sports Council and fixed equipment, such as the adventure course. Pupils appreciate that teachers listen to their views and support them to make improvements to the school. For example, leaders have recently supported the plans of members of the eco council to develop a wildlife pond on the school grounds.

Many pupils contribute to projects that promote their wellbeing. For example, the ‘*Sebon â Chalon*’ project allows pupils to develop as ethical and adventurous citizens. During the project, they learn about children’s rights to clean water and develop empathy towards children in Africa who find it difficult to access water. Pupils suggest fundraising ideas, such as making their own soap, and develop their enterprise skills effectively. For example, they vote for their favourite fragrance and use data handling software skilfully to present the results to prioritise which soap to make. Then, they advertise online and in the community newspaper, sell the produce in the community and write to local businesses to ask for support. They use software purposefully to track the profit. As a result, pupils develop their awareness of fairness, equality, sustainability and children’s rights very successfully.

Following the pandemic, inspectors are not reporting on pupil attendance rates during the 2021-2022 academic year. Instead, the school’s provision for monitoring and improving attendance will be reported on as part of Inspection Area 4.

Teaching and learning experiences

The acting headteacher has a clear vision for the curriculum, namely ‘Learning Flows, Future Grows’. This is based on the famous local story of William Morgan translating the Bible into Welsh. This vision supports teachers to provide a rich range of learning experiences that engage and hold pupils’ interest and meet their needs successfully. Teaching is rich with interesting learning experiences that support learners to be ambitious and confident within a Welsh context.

Staff promote pupils’ use of the Welsh language robustly and this reinforces their learning and their enjoyment of using the language well. All adults model polished language and encourage and support pupils to use Welsh of a high and consistent standard that is natural to their local area. As a result, many pupils make appropriate progress in acquiring and developing their Welsh language skills.

Teachers plan activities skilfully that support pupils to make sound progress in their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. One of the most effective features of provision is that teachers tailor learning activities skilfully and take advantage of stimulating activities to challenge pupils to succeed. For example, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy and creative skills effectively by designing and creating a garden to attract bees. As a result, these learning experiences support pupils to develop their skills in authentic learning contexts.

On the whole, the curriculum builds systematically and cohesively on pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure progression as they move through the school. This provides a firm foundation as staff prepare to plan and introduce the Curriculum for Wales.

A particular strength across the school is the regular opportunities to develop a wide range of pupils’ skills through the very effective use of ICT. Teachers plan carefully to ensure continuity and progression in pupils’ experiences throughout the school. For example, Year 2 pupils create algorithms to make a digital device light up to help the turtles to travel the right way to the sea. The school’s older pupils create high quality digital games to raise the awareness of various audiences of plastic pollution in the sea.

Teachers succeed in ensuring that their classrooms are stimulating and engaging spaces. Colourful and interactive displays in the classrooms and corridors support teaching skilfully and celebrate the successes of various projects in an excellent way.

Teachers question effectively to encourage pupils to think for themselves and assume an element of responsibility for their learning. At the beginning of themes and units of work, pupils are given purposeful opportunities to share ideas about their learning to encourage the full participation of all pupils. This enables teachers to take creative risks to present exciting activities that inspire pupils and ignite their curiosity. For example, staff provide opportunities for younger pupils to apply their skills successfully in activities that they have suggested as part of the specific 'Over to you' sessions. Older pupils are given opportunities to take part in short, engaging projects that deepen their understanding and expand their knowledge effectively. For example, they write a letter to politicians expressing their concern about plastic pollution in our oceans. These opportunities provide beneficial activities for pupils to make purposeful and independent choices about their learning. However, teachers do not provide regular enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills independently across the curriculum.

There is effective co-operation between all of the school's staff and they have high expectations of all pupils. Assistants support learning successfully by leading activities with individuals and groups of pupils. On the whole, teachers' assessments are valid, accurate and reliable. Teachers' oral and written feedback helps pupils to know how well they are doing, in the main. However, feedback does not always support pupils usefully to identify the next steps in their learning, for example to enrich pieces of extended writing.

Care, support and guidance

Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant Primary School is a familial, caring and welcoming community that is an integral part of the village and the wider area. Support for pupils' emotional, health and social needs is embedded in all of the school's work. As a result, pupils respect others and show pride in their community.

The school has robust systems to identify pupils' educational needs and provides intervention sensitively and appropriately in the classroom and beyond. The acting headteacher is the additional learning needs co-ordinator and ensures that pupils' individual education plans are up to date. Plans are reviewed regularly with pupils, teachers and parents. As a result of provision and monitoring, pupils with additional learning needs make strong progress against their targets.

The school is inclusive and promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Although there is not a large variety of pupils from different backgrounds at the school, provision ensures that they have a strong awareness of equality and inclusion. Acts of collective worship and mindfulness periods make a valuable contribution towards developing empathy and compassion for others, such as refugees from Syria and Ukraine. Pupils benefit from purposeful opportunities to contribute to their local community and charities. For example, they have succeeded in raising a significant amount of money for children in need and a mental health awareness charity. Pupils also hold concerts and compete in local and national eisteddfodau.

The numerous opportunities for pupils to participate in making decisions that affect their school life are a strength. Many pupils contribute to groups and have a strong influence on the school's work. An excellent example of this is the work of the anti-bullying committee, which has ensured that there is a quiet and safe space for pupils to gather during lunchtimes and break times. The 'playground buddies' keep an eye on pupils who feel vulnerable during these times. The 'food and fitness' group has also succeeded in ensuring play equipment for their fellow pupils to be able to exercise outside lessons.

The school has robust systems and processes for safeguarding pupils. These contribute extensively towards creating a culture of safeguarding and ensuring the wellbeing of pupils within the school, in their community and online. The accommodation and grounds are in good condition and are secure. Provision to ensure that pupils behave safely on the internet is effectively. The digital leaders, the ICT co-ordinator and external agencies ensure that important messages about safety are passed on regularly to all pupils, staff and parents. Therefore, the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher works effectively with all members of staff to ensure a supportive and caring environment. She is supported very beneficially by a strategic headteacher two days a week. Staff have a strong understanding of the needs of pupils and the community and the school's work is based on a robust vision of ensuring that all pupils receive the best education and are a valued part of the school family. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe, are happy to be at school and show positive attitudes to learning.

All members of staff understand their responsibilities well and take part in valuable opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge successfully. Staff performance management arrangements are appropriate and targets link clearly with the school's priorities and allow staff to pursue areas that are of interest to them. The strategic headteacher has reviewed the targets recently and, although the pandemic has affected the previous performance management cycles, the current cycle is on track to be completed as expected. There is a clear link between performance management and professional learning needs.

Overall, the school is responding positively to national priorities and the recent challenges of the pandemic. Leaders ensure a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. All staff understand their responsibilities and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. They are planning carefully with pupils to establish the Curriculum for Wales so that it is relevant to the school, the community and the wider world.

There are suitable arrangements to monitor and evaluate the school's work. Information that is gathered directly from activities such as observations, scrutiny of books and questioning pupils enable leaders to evaluate progress beneficially against the priorities in the improvement plan. On the whole, the school's priorities derive from leaders' knowledge of their school. The improvement plan has been reviewed recently and, overall, includes suitable activities to lead to improving priority areas. However, strategic planning is not always specific or incisive enough, for

example to improve extended writing. As a result, it is not clear enough what exactly needs to be improved in pupils' written work.

Governors are supportive of the school and are useful critical friends. They undertake their role in the school's self-evaluation processes effectively. They scrutinise books and meet with pupils to gather useful information to enable them to challenge leaders appropriately. Governors work with staff and pupils to ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily.

Leaders manage the budget and resources carefully. Expenditure links appropriately with the priorities for improvement. The pupil deprivation grant is used purposefully to ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported and do not miss out on valuable experiences.

There is a strong link between the school and parents. Parents are given beneficial information about the operation of the school and about their children's education through a variety of methods, such as the app for parents, e-mail and social media.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body/members of the management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

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

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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