



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

A report on

Ysgol Yr Eifl

**Trefor
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL54 5LU**

Date of inspection: May 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Yr Eifl

Name of provider	Ysgol Yr Eifl
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	58
Pupils of statutory school age	53
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	5
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 23.0%)</i>	15.7%
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 16.1%)</i>	13.6%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	88.6%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/12/2014
Start date of inspection	09/05/2023
*	

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

The warm and family ethos of Ysgol yr Eifl is situated a short distance from Trefor beach and in the shadow of the mountains. The headteacher and all staff contribute successfully to creating a caring and inclusive ethos. Nearly all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and, during their time at the school, most, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress.

One of the school's main features is its caring, respectful and homely feel. All members of staff feel a core part of the community and are always willing to listen to the concerns of pupils and respond to them appropriately.

The school has a strong Welsh ethos and nearly all pupils demonstrate pride in their school, in addition to a clear appreciation of the culture and history of the local area. The school takes advantage of beneficial opportunities to encourage pupils to celebrate their Welshness through a range of purposeful activities, which foster their understanding, knowledge and pride effectively and meaningfully. This supports pupils to show a level of motivation and interest in their work and reflects the nature and context of the school successfully.

Most pupils are willing to discuss their views maturely with their peers and contribute their ideas. They treat each other and staff with respect and are willing to support others. Nearly all pupils' skills are progressing strongly. However, pupils are not always given opportunities to play a prominent part in contributing to the wider life and work of the school. As a result, pupils are not always completely sure how to improve their work.

The headteacher provides caring and purposeful leadership. He is supported skilfully by a dedicated governing body, which has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. On the whole, the school's priorities have derived from the leaders' knowledge of their school. However, strategic planning is not always specific or incisive enough.

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen opportunities for pupils to influence the school's life and work, including how to improve their own work
- R2 Ensure that self-evaluation processes lead to incisive priorities
- R3 Develop regular opportunities for staff to lead the curriculum's areas of learning and experience

What happens next

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

Main findings

Learning

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals, make strong progress in their learning. They develop knowledge, understanding and skills that are appropriate for their stage and starting points. They recall previous learning, acquire knowledge, deepen their understanding, and develop their skills successfully.

Across the school, most pupils listen attentively to each other and adults. Most pupils' speaking skills develop strongly. By Year 2, most speak Welsh confidently. As pupils move through the school, most use their oral skills effectively in both Welsh and English. At the top end of the school, most discuss their work intelligently and maturely and use rich vocabulary, for example when voicing different opinions about local and global disasters.

The reading skills of many of the youngest pupils are developing well. They discuss characters from stories sensibly and respond enthusiastically, for example when discussing and answering questions about events in the story 'Nansi a'r Goeden Ffa'. The reading skills of many pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop effectively and, by the end of their time at the school, most of the older children read fluently in both languages. They read aloud with expression, pay attention to punctuation and vary their tone of voice successfully. At the top end of the school, many pupils research the class themes appropriately and use a variety of reading sources successfully to present information. A good example of this is pupils gathering and presenting information successfully when expressing an opinion about the drowning of Capel Celyn.

Many pupils improve their writing skills effectively as they move through the school. The youngest pupils make large marks in a good range of experiences and, gradually, they begin to write words and simple sentences skilfully, for example when describing a bat. By Year 2, many use adjectives and similes with increasing accuracy, for example when describing Eli's appearance in their written work on Eli the Elephant. The oldest pupils use rich vocabulary and imaginative phrases when composing a range of poetry. At the top end of the school, most pupils' writing skills are sound and they present factual and creative information in an interesting range of learning contexts. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 choose their vocabulary carefully when writing a script about Cilmyrn Coesddu. Teachers' high expectations support pupils to achieve work of a high standard and present their work elegantly and neatly.

From an early age, most pupils' mathematics skills build effectively across the school. The youngest pupils recognise numbers up to ten and use this knowledge

well to add and subtract these numbers, for example when playing simple games. Year 1 pupils identify different shapes knowledgeably and use their understanding effectively in stimulating activities in the outdoor area. As pupils move through the school, most continue to make strong progress. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 develop their measuring skills by comparing the length and weight of garden birds. At the top end of the school, most pupils use a wide range of methods competently to solve real-life problems. For example, they describe their thinking and reasoning methods well when explaining how they have come to conclusions.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop soundly across the school. The youngest pupils use programmable toys confidently when solving simple problems as part of their numeracy work. Many pupils in the middle of the school create presentations skilfully, for example by adding an animation and voiceover to their scripts. Most pupils in Years 5 and 6 use databases and spreadsheets appropriately in a stimulating range of learning topics. For example, they refine their skills to select data when recording which cups are most effective for keeping water cool.

Most pupils' artistic, musical and physical skills are developing skilfully. The youngest pupils are given appropriate opportunities to experiment with a variety of media and emulate the techniques of artists in developing their art skills. By Years 5 and 6, they design and sew the names of smallholdings in the village of Trefor and compose and perform an anthem for the school. Most of the youngest pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to warm-up activities in physical education lessons, while older pupils develop their physical skills skilfully by taking part in a variety of sports activities.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are very well behaved and enjoy and benefit from the varied range of activities and rich experiences at the school. They feel safe within a supportive and inclusive learning community. The sense of respect and courtesy that pupils have towards their peers and adults is a strong feature. They are caring towards each other and give careful consideration to the needs of others. For example, the "*Ffrindiau Ffyddlon*" ("Faithful Friends") group look after and support pupils during break times and ensure that everyone is playing happily together.

Members of the Welsh Language Charter contribute enthusiastically to a range of beneficial activities. They promote the Welsh language intelligently and encourage their fellow pupils to use the Welsh language and celebrate their Welshness in all aspects of school life. A notable example of this is the relationship with the Trefor Band, which contributes to the sense of Welsh community and develops pupils' pride towards their culture and heritage.

Most pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning and develop as enthusiastic and dedicated learners. Most work together in harmony and stay on task for extended periods. They listen consistently well to instructions and presentations.

Most pupils make meaningful connections in their learning and recall previous facts they have learned successfully. While working, they show confidence and resilience and persevere with their work. They are willing to contribute and do so adventurously

and creatively. For example, the youngest pupils work together appropriately to create a piece of artwork that emulates the style of a local artist.

Most pupils show willingness and work productively individually, in pairs and in groups. Nearly all respect the contributions of others and accept different points of view in a mature and balanced manner. Nearly all pupils are willing to shoulder responsibilities and play a part in the school's life and work. However, pupils do not undertake leadership roles regularly enough to contribute to influence the school's wider life and work.

Many pupils develop as ethical and responsible citizens by developing their awareness of sustainability. For example, at the top end of the school, they learn about the importance of re-using and recycling plastic.

Most pupils across the school develop their physical skills and understand the importance of making healthy choices to promote their physical, mental and emotional well-being. They show enthusiasm towards a range of physical activities, including taking part in daily fitness lessons such as walking a mile a day.

Teaching and learning experiences

All members of staff work very effectively to forge a caring and inclusive working relationship with pupils. Teachers and assistants know the pupils and their families very well and ensure that pupils feel safe and happy in their classes. This contributes to a purposeful working environment where pupils feel that pupils listen to them and they can ask questions if they need support. Teachers and assistants have high expectations of all pupils. They provide stimulating opportunities and experiences to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in an appropriate range of authentic learning contexts. For example, older pupils have developed their numeracy skills effectively by selling cakes at a coffee morning to raise money for Ukraine.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and ensure that most engage and work diligently during lessons. All teachers have good and up-to-date subject knowledge and use a variety of effective teaching methods to motivate and encourage pupils to learn. Assistants work skilfully alongside teachers and contribute effectively to pupils' learning. Across the school, teachers build appropriately on pupils' previous learning. They ensure that there is almost always a suitable pace to learning. The classrooms and public areas are interesting, engaging and colourful places where pupils of all ages and abilities can learn productively. Teachers question well to move pupils' learning forward and support their understanding in line with pupils' needs. This ensures that most pupils are challenged appropriately.

Teachers plan and deliver the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales appropriately. Staff work together effectively to ensure progression in lessons, which motivates pupils to achieve well. The interesting balance in the curriculum provides learning experiences that develop pupils' skills consistently well across the range of ages and abilities. For example, stimulating themes such as *'Awstralia'* and *'Uwch ein Pen'* promote pupils' enthusiasm and encourage them to engage with their learning effectively between the local community, Wales and the world.

Teachers share learning objectives and success criteria with pupils appropriately. This provides suitable opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning during activities. During learning sessions, most teachers and other practitioners respond proactively to pupils' learning. In the best examples, they give them valuable feedback on the standard of their achievements. However, the school's procedures do not always ensure that pupils are central to their learning in improving their work. As a result, pupils are not fully aware of what they need to do to move to the next stage in their learning.

Across the school, teachers work together to plan a range of learning methods, activities and resources to engage pupils' interest appropriately. Teachers use questioning techniques appropriately in lessons. For example, they question pupils about the effect of Covid on the local community and the wider world and encourage them to extend their answers.

Staff model language very effectively and take advantage of opportunities to feed new Welsh and English vocabulary skilfully. They encourage pupils to take pride in the culture and heritage of the local area and Wales. For example, when planning rich learning opportunities on Trefor beach, teachers develop pupils' sound awareness and understanding of their neighbourhood by providing them with live and meaningful experiences.

The school plans a range of beneficial trips and visits to enrich the curriculum. Pupils also visit the local area, which engages and maintains their interest in learning successfully. For example, when they visited the Maritime Museum and learned about nature on Ynys Fawr Trefor, pupils created feeding boxes and were able to identify local native birds.

Staff also encourage pupils to take part in a range of activities to promote their physical health and fitness regularly. For example, swimming lessons, football sessions and daily fitness sessions are held. All of these contribute effectively to realising the principles of the Curriculum for Wales to develop ambitious, healthy and confident individuals.

Care, support and guidance

Teachers and assistants promote pupils' courtesy, behaviour and respect highly successfully. They know the pupils well and respond appropriately to their emotional and social needs. Staff work together effectively to create a caring and inclusive community that supports pupils to settle quickly and develop their creative and independent skills beneficially. This encourages pupils to foster positive attitudes to learning. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding and the familial feel and ethos towards all pupils is a notable feature of the school. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

When planning high quality support, staff meet pupils' emotional, health and social needs. As a result, most pupils treat staff and their peers with respect and empathy and everyone treats each other with tender care. A prominent feature of provision is the consideration that is given to pupils' well-being. For example, staff provide regular pastoral opportunities for pupils to discuss their emotions during sessions in informal periods and at break times.

The school has effective provision for pupils with additional learning needs and provides a range of tailored interventions and support that respond to their personal needs and targets. The close links and communication with parents, including support for families, contribute very effectively to reaching this aim. Leaders track pupils' progress in relation to the targets in their individual plans and their progress from their starting points. The school makes good use of external agencies to take proactive advantage of services and partnerships to provide purposeful support for learners. They support staff to cater effectively for pupils with additional learning needs and promote regular attendance. Assistants work very skilfully to support a number of pupils in the classrooms. As a result of provision and monitoring, most pupils with additional learning needs and vulnerable pupils make sound progress against their targets.

Older pupils are given appropriate opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities, for example in the Urdd sports club, to develop their physical skills. Weekly fitness sessions and football training by external agencies enrich pupils' experiences successfully.

The school's ethos and collective worship assemblies promote pupils' spiritual and moral development successfully. Studies of global disasters, such as the need to raise money following the earthquake in Turkey, also promote pupils' understanding of the importance of values such as tolerance and empathy.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is conscientious and passionate about the well-being, standards and progress of all pupils. He also takes obvious care for the well-being and development of all of the school's staff. He is supported by dedicated staff and, together, they work diligently to provide rich educational experiences for pupils. A strong feature of the school is the natural Welsh ethos and the positive feeling towards the Welsh language. The welcoming and inclusive attitude, together with the culture, that is shown to pupils from other linguistic backgrounds and cultures, is a clear strength. In partnership with the governing body, the school has a clear vision that is based on the basic principle of developing creative, ambitious and enthusiastic learners. Pupils' pride in the school and the local community is notable and impressive.

Leaders have appropriate strategic aims and objectives, which help to ensure that all pupils are given an opportunity to succeed and grow as valuable members of society. Promoting a Welsh and Welsh-speaking identity is a natural and central aspect of the school. The local area and its wealth of resources and industrial and cultural traditions are used highly effectively to enrich the learning experiences of all pupils.

All staff model and promote values through their high expectations, which contribute very positively to the element of respect and inclusivity across the school. This aspect is evident in the polite and mature way in which pupils interact with each other and adults and the pride they show towards their learning.

Leaders have good knowledge of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved and developed. They gather and analyse first-hand evidence of standards and provision by monitoring plans, scrutinising pupils' books, learning walks and

formal observations with a view to ensuring the progress and well-being of all pupils. However, evaluation processes are not always coherent enough and do not always lead to identifying priorities for improvement incisively or specifically enough.

Members of the governing body fulfil their role conscientiously with an effective understanding of their responsibilities. They have an obvious pride towards the school and its integral role in the local community. They take appropriate advantage of the wide range of expertise and experiences to develop a consistent understanding of the school's daily arrangements. Leaders make sensible use of funding, including the pupil development grant, which has a positive effect on improving pupils' skills. For example, they have allocated funding for assistants to run support programmes and support pupils in the classroom.

Governors, alongside the headteacher and the teaching team, undertake their roles in terms of promoting pupils' health and well-being, which includes encouraging pupils to eat fruit at break time and drink water regularly during the day.

Arrangements for monitoring staff performance are appropriate and ensure that staff develop their practice and link this purposefully with the school's priorities for improvement. All staff are supported to take advantage of training opportunities. For example, when focusing on raising standards of reading, staff are given opportunities to share their good practice at cluster and catchment area level and with local networks, which contributes effectively to their professional development. However, leaders have not created a positive culture to provide regular professional learning opportunities for all staff. As a result, there are not enough opportunities for staff to develop their skills in leading the curriculum's areas of learning and experience.

The school places a clear focus on addressing national and local priorities. The school has adapted its plans and incorporated changes in provision for pupils with additional learning needs to reflect the new code of practice. The headteacher, staff and members of the governing body demonstrate a sound awareness of the principle of developing sustainability and show sensitivity towards the cost of living. This is evident through a number of measures, such as using recycling bins and recycling clothes and school uniforms. This contributes productively towards the strong sense of maintaining a supportive and inclusive community ethos.

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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