



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

A report on
Ysgol Rhos Helyg
(Llangeithio Campus and Rhos y Wlad Campus)

Rhos y Wlad Campus
Bronant
Aberystwyth
SY23 4TQ

Date of inspection: February 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Rhos Helyg

Name of provider	Ysgol Rhos Helyg
Local authority	Ceredigion County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	54
Pupils of statutory school age	51
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	0
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 23.7%)</i>	25.8%
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 13.2%)</i>	15.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	39.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	November 2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	December 2015
Start date of inspection	05/02/2024

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

Ysgol Rhos Helyg is a caring, happy and familial community. All staff work together effectively to provide an inclusive and friendly environment where pupils behave respectfully and politely. Pupils show a positive attitude to learning and make sound progress from their starting points.

By the end of their time at the school, many pupils develop their literacy and digital skills well. However, teachers do not provide purposeful opportunities for older pupils to develop and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum regularly enough. Most pupils develop their creative skills effectively and their work is displayed attractively and celebrated around the school.

Teachers provide a broad and interesting curriculum for pupils and consider their opinions sensibly about what they would like to learn in relation to their learning themes. However, teachers over-direct learning at times and the level of challenge is not always suitable to meet the needs of all pupils. At times, learning experiences encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. However, this has not been embedded and developed consistently and opportunities for pupils to be independent learners are limited.

The acting headteacher has a clear vision for the school which has been shared purposefully with staff, parents and pupils. The vision is based on giving all pupils an opportunity to flourish within a caring environment. Staff support them with commitment and passion. In a short period of time, this has enabled the acting headteacher to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement accurately. Governors are very supportive of the school and show a good awareness of their roles and responsibilities. They support leaders and staff appropriately.

Recommendations

- R1 Expand opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills
- R2 Ensure that teaching challenges pupils to achieve to the best of their ability
- R3 Ensure purposeful opportunities for older pupils to develop and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum

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, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals, make consistent progress from their starting points. They develop their knowledge, understanding and skills appropriately in learning contexts that encourage them to enjoy their learning.

On the whole, pupils' literacy skills develop robustly. Most pupils listen attentively to teachers and assistants. They respect the views and contributions of their peers when discussing their work and respond to them appropriately. Many of the youngest pupils acquire the Welsh language beneficially and develop as confident speakers while enjoying their learning, for example when discussing the climate in Wales when dinosaurs reigned. Older pupils make sound progress in developing their speaking skills in both Welsh and English and discuss intelligently in a variety of contexts, by using correct and purposeful vocabulary. On the whole, pupils speak Welsh spontaneously when holding discussions in the classroom and when socialising during break times. Latecomers learn the Welsh language very quickly, which enables them to be full contributors to the classes in a short period.

Most pupils' reading skills develop effectively. The youngest pupils develop their knowledge of letter sounds skilfully and, by Year 2, they use a good range of strategies effectively to read less familiar words. They enjoy listening to stories and discuss the content of class stories enthusiastically. Many of the older pupils extend their reading skills appropriately and discuss the content of text sensibly and maturely. Most pupils apply their reading skills successfully in their work across the curriculum.

Many pupils develop their writing skills appropriately as they move through the school. Most of the youngest pupils develop their early writing skills successfully by experimenting and making marks with a variety of resources. By Year 2, they write simple sentences by using capital letters and full stops correctly, on the whole. They include adjectives to enrich their work, for example when describing the local church. When older pupils are given opportunities to write at length, they produce work of a high standard. They use paragraphs effectively and consider the reader when choosing purposeful vocabulary to engage interest and create effects with words. For example, they use rhetorical questions and imperative verbs successfully to write a persuasive speech.

Most pupils make good progress in their mathematics skills. The youngest pupils begin to recognise numbers and use their numeracy skills in different contexts, for example when matching numbers and objects as they keep a note of the birds in the school garden. By Year 2, they develop a good range of mathematics skills and make sound progress, for example when playing a card game that uses mathematical facts about different animals. As pupils move through the school, they build on their mathematical skills beneficially. By Year 6, most pupils have a sound understanding of the four rules and use them effectively to solve mathematical problems. Most pupils' digital skills develop soundly. The youngest pupils use an electronic tablet confidently to create animations. As they move through the school,

most pupils use a range of software successfully. For example, pupils in the older classes use control software to create attractive Christmas decorations.

Most pupils develop their creative skills robustly. In the school's lower years, most enjoy using a range of equipment and materials to create pictures and models. For example, as part of their theme, pupils create different patterns with leaves. In the older years, most pupils concentrate for an extended period when designing, creating and decorating original pieces of pottery.

Nearly all pupils develop their physical skills well. They take part in a variety of activities that promote their health and well-being effectively. For example, the bronze ambassadors organise and manage physical sessions on the school playground and encourage pupils to keep fit. The youngest pupils develop their fine and gross motor skills in various activities. The oldest pupils take part in team games and develop robust skills in a variety of physical education lessons.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Ysgol Rhos Helyg is a friendly and homely community. Nearly all pupils are polite and treat each other and adults with a high level of respect. Their behaviour is good in lessons, as they move around the school and during break time. They feel that they are supported well, know where to turn if they need support and are confident that staff will listen to them. Pupils state that they feel safe at school.

Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning and apply themselves to new experiences confidently. Nearly all pupils work effectively with their friends and adults, and support each other voluntarily. They listen well to teachers' instructions and concentrate diligently on their work during lessons. Many pupils across the school show resilience and perseverance when undertaking tasks. For example, older pupils use purposeful strategies to help them overcome any difficulties they face. Pupils who are members of committees or councils are given beneficial opportunities to develop their leadership skills, for example as the school council organises a coffee morning for the residents of the village.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and discuss the benefits confidently. For example, older pupils discuss and choose the most sensible ingredients when creating a healthy smoothie. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a variety of physical activities both inside and outside the school, such as competing in the Cylch Tregaron Sports Day. This has a positive effect on their well-being and fitness. As a result, most pupils have a sound knowledge of the importance of physical and mental well-being, including how to stay safe online.

Most pupils develop well as enterprising and creative contributors. For example, older pupils work successfully with the younger pupils to perform plays on stage during break time. Many pupils show an interest and perseverance when participating in new aspects of their learning. As part of their '*Llwybrau Llewyrchus*' theme, for example, pupils develop their understanding of the world of work by organising a visit to Aberystwyth University.

Through their awareness of fairness and equality, most pupils develop as ethical and informed citizens. They respect the needs and rights of others as part of a diverse society. A good example of this is the way in which older pupils learn about the meaning of apartheid to gain a better understanding of injustice in the world.

Pupils make purposeful contributions to what they learn. They take advantage of the opportunity to share their interests and ideas by contributing to thinking grids at the beginning of a theme. As a result, pupils' enthusiasm and participation in their learning are good.

Teaching and learning experiences

All staff have an exceptionally good working relationship with pupils. This fosters a caring and inclusive ethos across the school. They treat all pupils equally and promote diversity well. This contributes to the sense of family that flows throughout the school community and provides them with a supportive learning environment.

In the best practice, teachers' presentations are lively and stimulating. They set clear learning objectives and use a range of interesting resources, and engage the interest of nearly all pupils.

Most teachers ask probing questions and use a variety of questions to deepen pupils' understanding and knowledge. They manage discussions between class members skilfully and patiently and elicit mature answers and comments from pupils. Staff are positive language role models and this helps pupils to develop their fluency appropriately. This has a positive effect on many pupils' oral standards and develops them as confident bilingual learners.

Teachers know their pupils well. They assess pupils' progress and development regularly and use this information sensibly to plan the next steps in their learning. Most teachers' oral feedback helps pupils to know how well they are doing and how to improve. Teachers' written feedback refers to the accuracy of pupils' work and, occasionally, the quality of the content. This supports pupils to reflect and improve their work.

On the whole, teachers plan lessons well and ensure that learning activities are interesting and respond appropriately to the range of ability within the classes. They work together effectively to plan and tailor experiences that build on pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills as they move through the school. However, at times, teachers over-direct learning and the level of challenge is not always suitable to meet the needs of all pupils. This means that pupils do not develop their independent learning skills sufficiently.

All staff have a clear vision to provide a broad, rich and balanced curriculum which reflects the local context of the school and a strong sense of belonging to the area, the nation and the wider world. Teachers respond positively to pupils' ideas about their themes, which often lead to exciting activities to engage their interest. A range of diverse visits are provided to places of interest within the area and further afield, for example a visit to Cors Caron to learn about wildlife. Visitors to the school are also used purposefully to support and develop pupils' understanding of different areas of learning and opportunities. For example, pupils benefitted greatly from visits

by the parents of some pupils to talk about different careers at a work fair. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about the future and the possibilities for prosperous paths in life.

Staff plan purposefully to develop pupils' skills. They provide learning experiences that enable many pupils to acquire the necessary skills in specific activities. For example, comprehensive provision to develop pupils' digital skills means that they develop proficiency with digital equipment from an early age. However, teachers do not provide purposeful opportunities for older pupils to develop and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum regularly enough. This hinders pupils' ability to use their strong mathematical skills in different contexts.

Staff plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn in the stimulating areas outside the classrooms. The youngest pupils use the various outdoor areas regularly to enrich their skills successfully. Provision for developing the Welsh element is promoted successfully and a prominent place is given for pupils to learn about Welsh history, culture and heritage. The curriculum includes purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about and celebrate inclusion and global citizenship, for example by learning about the life and influence of Betty Campbell. Over time, the school provides a number of activities to develop pupils' personal and social education skills well.

Care, support and guidance

The supportive relationships between staff and pupils contribute robustly to creating a caring community with a calm and homely ethos. The strong culture of safeguarding children, along with the friendly and warm ethos, supports the sense of belonging. As a result, everyone commits fully to caring for and respecting others. Teachers and assistants know the pupils well and respond appropriately to their needs, including their emotional and well-being needs.

Provision to support pupils with ALN is sound. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) and assistants are enthusiastic about their responsibilities in supporting pupils. Under the skilful guidance of the ALNCo, staff make good use of external agencies to enrich provision for pupils, for example by working closely with a nurse and the educational psychologist. The school has successful procedures to track and monitor the progress of pupils with ALN from their starting points. Staff identify pupils who need additional support in a timely manner and support them to make effective progress. They provide specific support programmes to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and emotional well-being skills. As a result, most pupils who need additional support with their learning or well-being make good progress.

Staff promote the importance of healthy eating and encourage physical fitness through a range of physical education activities, which include suitable opportunities to take part in competitions. The outdoor play areas on the playground are effective and encourage pupils to undertake physical activity during lessons and break time successfully.

Through interesting themes, teachers develop pupils' understanding of their identity, heritage and Welsh culture skilfully. For example, as part of the 'Seven Wonders of the World' theme, pupils were given a virtual presentation by Caradog Jones, the first

Welshman to climb Everest. Staff promote pupils' Welshness effectively in all aspects of school life. For example, pupils compete in the school eisteddfod and the local Swyddffynnon Eisteddfod. The school's oldest pupils have also recorded a song, '*Dewch i ganu*', for a local audience when celebrating St David's Day.

Teachers provide activities that ensure purposeful opportunities for pupils to build a sound understanding of sustainability. For example, as part of their theme '*Y Byd Naturiol*' ('The Natural World'), pupils designed and created plastic-free bags to sell at the summer fair. Teachers raise pupils' awareness of the importance of being caring and conscientious citizens through activities that support local and national charities, for example collecting goods for a local food bank. As part of the 'Harmoni' project, pupils also cooked soup and distributed it to the elderly in the village.

Staff provide appropriate experiences for pupils to develop spiritually, morally and socially. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to learn about a range of beliefs and religions by finding out about traditions and celebrations. Through valuable links with pupils in a large urban school, pupils have also broadened their awareness and understanding of diversity.

Leadership and management

Since his recent appointment, the acting headteacher has set a firm and clear strategic direction for the school. His vision is based on creating a happy and familial learning environment. This caring environment enriches the school's vision to 'Root, Sprout and Grow' successfully. All staff work together skilfully to realise this vision and its effect can be seen on pupils' development, progress and well-being.

A strong sense of family has been established in the school. The enthusiastic team of teachers and assistants work together effectively to ensure rich provision in a local and Welsh context. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of all of the school's work and staff and pupils work together happily. The acting headteacher facilitates effective co-operation with all of the school's stakeholders by looking for interesting methods to stimulate and interact, for example by holding a '*Darllen Difyr*' project to promote reading at home for parents.

The school's self-evaluation and quality assurance arrangements are thorough. After establishing a timetable of a range of monitoring activities, the acting headteacher and teachers scrutinise pupils' books, conduct learning walks and seek the views of stakeholders. In a short period of time, this has enabled the acting headteacher to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement accurately.

Teachers undertake various responsibilities and share and co-operate with each other regularly and flexibly. They play a full role in the process of evaluating and developing the school's curriculum. This can be seen particularly in the way in which they provide rich opportunities for pupils to take part in outdoor activities and enjoy experiences that arise from work in the local area.

There are suitable performance management procedures in place for staff. They have purposeful improvement targets which are based on the school's priorities and are personal to their individual development needs. Staff are given regular opportunities to attend training that meets their professional development needs.

They work closely with staff from local schools to share expertise and ideas. For example, they have worked together effectively to share apps and computer programs to raise standards and develop pupils' ICT skills. Another example of the effective development of the school's workforce is the role of assistants in supporting pupils' emotional well-being needs.

Governors are supportive of the school and are useful critical friends. They fulfil their role in the school's self-evaluation processes effectively. The governing body receives appropriate reports from the headteacher each term, which focus on progress against the priorities in the improvement plan. Governors challenge the school's progress against the improvement priorities, by asking sensible questions in a timely manner. Through sub-panel meetings, members of the governing body are given beneficial opportunities to contribute to other issues, including the school budget. Members of the governing body visit the school regularly, conduct learning walks and attend events during the term. Following the visits, they report on pupils' skills and provision to the rest of the governors in full meetings. As a result, the governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Leaders ensure a culture of safeguarding pupils and all members of staff have a sound understanding of the procedures. The governing body ensures that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking, for example by encouraging pupils to eat fruit and drink water during the day.

The school has a sensible spending plan which ensures that it has enough resources to meet pupils' needs purposefully. Leaders monitor the budget carefully and ensure sensible expenditure to align with important needs. They make good use of different grants that have been allocated to the school, for example by using the pupil development grant to provide interventions for pupils who need further support with their learning.

The school has a strong relationship with parents and the wider community. Parents feel that they can talk to any member of staff to discuss their children's well-being and education. Relevant information about the school's activities is shared effectively with parents through a variety of communication methods.

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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