



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

**A report on**

**Llangatwg Community School  
Main Road  
Cadoxton  
Neath  
SA10 8DB**

**Date of inspection: April 2018**

**by**

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

## About Llangatwg Community School

Llangatwg Community school is an English-medium, 11 to 16 mixed comprehensive school located in the Cadoxton area of Neath. The school is maintained by Neath Port Talbot local authority. Currently there are 702 pupils on roll. This is slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection when there were 760 pupils.

Around 21.5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average of 17%. Around 2% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales. Nearly all pupils are white, British and 2% of pupils speak English as an additional language. Currently, around 28% of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is higher than the national average of 21.5%. One per cent of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is lower than the national average of 2.4%.

The headteacher has been in post since January 2013. The senior leadership team consists of a deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers. Two other members of staff make up the extended leadership team. The school was last inspected in February, 2012.

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

Llangatwg Community School provides a caring and nurturing learning experience for all pupils. Most teachers are committed to ensuring that pupils fulfil their potential and support them well. Many pupils behave well around the school and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning.

Over the past four years, leaders have worked effectively to secure good outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 4, particularly in English and mathematics. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on professional learning. Leaders place a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, promoting wellbeing and ensuring positive teacher-pupil relationships. However, arrangements to develop pupils' skills in numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum are underdeveloped.

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

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Raise standards for all groups of learners
- R2 Ensure that curriculum arrangements, including the grouping of pupils, allow for the progressive development of skills, in particular numeracy and ICT skills
- R3 Improve the quality of teaching, including ensuring a suitable level of challenge to pupils of all abilities
- R4 Strengthen arrangements for self-evaluation so that leaders at all levels make full use of a wide range of first-hand evidence

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

During their time at Llangatwg Community School, the majority of pupils make strong progress and achieve well. Over the past four years, performance at key stage 4 in those indicators that include English and mathematics compares well with that of similar schools.

Many pupils have sound recall of previous learning and acquire a solid understanding of new topics and concepts. For example, in history, many pupils gain an extensive and secure understanding of a range of aspects associated with the Industrial Revolution and its impact on people's lives. The majority of pupils apply their knowledge well in new contexts and make strong progress. However, in a few instances, pupils do not develop their understanding well enough or apply their prior learning confidently in new situations. As a result, these pupils make limited progress.

In a few lessons, many pupils speak confidently and maturely. For example, in English lessons, pupils discuss whether the play *Romeo and Juliet* is about love or hate. The majority of pupils make beneficial verbal contributions to class discussions and work well together in pairs or in small groups. These pupils communicate their ideas well, using a suitable range of subject-specific vocabulary. For example, in geography, pupils discuss confidently and thoughtfully the growth of shanty towns in Mumbai. However, in a few lessons, pupils are reluctant to offer their opinions and lack confidence to elaborate on their answers.

In the majority of lessons, many pupils listen attentively to their teacher and to the views of their peers and respond suitably in discussions. However, in a few lessons, pupils do not listen well enough, talk with peers during tasks and miss important information.

Many pupils develop their reading skills well across the curriculum. Many show a strong understanding of meaning in texts, locate facts accurately and select relevant information from texts to inform their judgment. For example, pupils use information effectively to understand the causes, symptoms and impact of *The Black Death*. The majority of pupils compare texts competently, decipher successfully and explain inferred meaning well. For example, in English, pupils show an assured understanding of extracts from *Romeo and Juliet* when analysing the characters of Tybalt and Benvolio. In a few cases, pupils do not give due attention to the style of writing when analysing texts. When there are opportunities, a few pupils read aloud confidently and with expression.

Many pupils write coherently and express their ideas fluently. They have neat handwriting and take pride in the presentation of their work. The majority of pupils have a sound grasp of subject-specific vocabulary. They use appropriate writing styles for a variety of purposes and audiences. For example, they have a secure grasp of purpose and audience when producing persuasive pieces about attitudes towards boxing or tattoos. However, a few pupils write short, underdeveloped pieces in a narrow range of forms.

A minority of pupils of all abilities make frequent spelling and grammar errors. They often misspell common words and basic subject-specific terminology, and misuse capital letters.

In mathematics lessons, many pupils develop their number skills particularly well. They show a solid understanding of formulae and apply these accurately in their calculations. The majority of pupils perform complex calculations confidently both with and without calculators. Overall, pupils do not make enough use of their numeracy skills, nor do they develop these skills well enough in lessons other than mathematics.

Most pupils do not use or develop their ICT skills well enough across the curriculum.

In the majority of lessons, many pupils develop their problem-solving and thinking skills well. For example, in science, pupils select the most appropriate chemicals based on their properties to solve an industrial problem in cleaning swimming pools. However, in a minority of lessons, pupils do not develop their thinking and independent learning skills sufficiently.

In a few subjects, pupils develop worthwhile creative skills. For example, many pupils produce well-crafted models of places of worship and castles to represent the heritage and culture of Wales for school eisteddfod competitions.

Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has been consistently strong over the past four years and above that in similar schools. Performance in the capped points score has declined each year since 2014 and does not compare well with levels in similar schools in each of the last two years.

In each of the past four years, the performance of girls and boys in most of the indicators at key stage 4 has generally been below that of girls and boys respectively in similar schools.

The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\*/A has fluctuated over the past four years, and has remained lower than that in similar schools.

The performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals has been variable over the past four years. The performance of this group of pupils is generally strong in the indicators that include English and mathematics. Their performance in other indicators has declined over time.

At the end of Year 11, nearly all pupils remain in education, employment or training.

At key stage 4, in 2017, many pupils who were entered for the GCSE Welsh second language achieved a level 2 qualification. The number of pupils entered for this qualification has increased steadily since 2015. Many pupils' command of basic vocabulary in Welsh is sound. Overall, these pupils have a firm grasp of basic sentence structures and communicate effectively verbally and in writing.

## **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Most pupils arrive promptly to lessons and settle to work quickly. Although pupils raised concerns about behaviour in their pre-inspection questionnaires, during the inspection many pupils behaved well around the school and in lessons. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and engage constructively in class activities. In the majority of lessons, pupils are well-motivated and resourceful when faced with suitable challenges, although a few pupils lack resilience and do not persevere when experiencing difficulty. A few especially able pupils ask thoughtful questions that reflect their interest in learning and their inquisitive nature. For example, in English lessons, pupils consider the Elizabethans' perspectives on the concept of hell.

Many pupils work well in pairs or small groups. For example, in religious education, pupils engage maturely in discussions about Jewish religious rites of passage. In a few lessons, pupils are slow to settle, are too talkative and do not focus well enough on their learning.

The rate of persistent absence has reduced well over time. Most pupils feel safe in school and many feel that the school's arrangements for dealing with any bullying and harassment are effective. Generally, pupil participation in the extra-curricular activities on offer is high. Many pupils enjoy weekly sports activities, such as 'table tennis Tuesday'. The school choir regularly takes part in concerts and celebrations, such as the annual carol service in church.

Many pupils participate in beneficial events that strengthen the link with the local community. For example, pupils organise an annual Christmas party and concert for the elderly. In addition, many pupils benefit from participating in fundraising activities to support local and national charities.

Many pupils play an active role in the life of the school. For example, pupils regularly share their opinions on important aspects of school life, such as teaching and learning through subject questionnaires. Enthusiastic language ambassadors deliver useful French taster lessons for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils in partner primary schools. Older pupils also organise a highly successful peer mentoring scheme for younger pupils. They provide worthwhile guidance and support to pupils who may lack confidence. These mentors deliver successful presentations during personal and social education sessions on important issues such as mental health. These activities enable pupils to develop as confident, mature citizens.

## **Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement**

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Positive working relationships between teachers and pupils characterise most lessons and make an important contribution to the supportive learning environment.

Many teachers have secure subject knowledge, which they communicate effectively to pupils. They have clear aims for their lessons and provide helpful explanations and instructions. Where there are classes with large numbers of pupils, many teachers manage the classroom environment well and offer valuable support to pupils.

Many teachers plan lessons that build deftly on pupils' prior learning and address gaps in their knowledge and understanding skilfully. They provide purposeful resources and activities, which help to strengthen pupils' understanding and enable them to make good progress. In the majority of lessons, teachers sequence activities carefully in order to ensure strong pupil progress.

However, whilst many teachers plan useful activities, they do not always plan carefully enough to meet the needs of the most and least able. In a few lessons, teachers over-scaffold activities and do not allow pupils enough freedom to develop their independent learning skills through attempting tasks without extensive support.

Many teachers' questioning develops pupils' understanding well and helps them to extend and improve their responses. These teachers offer helpful and specific feedback. They identify clearly strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' work and skills. However, there is inconsistency in terms of teachers' expectations of pupils' responses to this useful feedback.

Overall, the school provides a balanced and relevant curriculum that builds appropriately on pupils' experiences in previous key stages. However, the school's curriculum arrangements do not ensure pupils' progressive development in a few subject areas such as ICT and modern foreign languages. At key stage 4, the school considers pupils' aspirations suitably when planning the curriculum and offers an appropriate range of academic and vocational courses. This means that most pupils are able to follow their desired courses. The school works well with a range of partners to provide additional opportunities for all learners. For example, tutors from a local college deliver a popular hairdressing course on the school site.

Overall, the school's arrangements to develop pupils' literacy are effective. However, arrangements to develop pupils' numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics are less developed. There are valuable and carefully-planned tasks to develop literacy across the curriculum. Although activities to develop pupils' numeracy skills in lessons other than mathematics are suitable in a few relevant subject areas, they are generally too basic or lack purpose. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators work suitably with local primary schools to ensure a consistent approach to planning the development of skills of pupils who transfer to the school. The school identifies pupils with weak literacy and numeracy skills and provides a suitable range of intervention strategies to support them.

The school's planning to develop pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to extend their learning outside the classroom. For example, there are enriching visits to the Urdd centre in Llangrannog and the Margam Discovery Centre.

Overall, the school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills and understanding of Welsh culture. For example, bilingual Mondays provide a valuable opportunity for pupils to develop their spoken Welsh outside of Welsh lessons.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is an inclusive community. It is successful in fostering a caring and supportive ethos and creating a warm and welcoming environment for pupils and visitors.

The school has comprehensive systems for tracking pupil progress in terms of attainment, attendance, behaviour and wellbeing. Leaders' tracking of pupil attainment is detailed and identifies well pupils who are making good progress and those who are underachieving. Interventions put in place to address underachievement have had a positive impact on pupils' performance in subjects such as English and mathematics. However, they have had little impact in a minority of indicators, such as the capped points score, the level 1 threshold and the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\*/A.

The school deals effectively with the few instances of bullying and manages behaviour well by promoting shared values of fairness and tolerance. The school has successful strategies for sustaining attendance and reducing persistent absence. There is a clear system of rewards and sanctions. Good attendance and progress are promoted well through rewards such as letters to parents, early lunchtimes and prize draws.

The support provided for vulnerable pupils is a notable strength. The school works successfully with a range of outside agencies, such as mental health services, wellbeing teams, social services, police community liaison officers and youth workers, to support these learners. Peer mentors support other pupils effectively across a wide range of aspects of academic, personal and social development in weekly support sessions.

The Pupil Support Centre provides a safe and calm environment for vulnerable pupils. It co-ordinates successfully a menu of helpful interventions and support services to aid the progress and engage the interest of those pupils. Each pupil who attends the centre has a personalised programme of support for a range of needs, including social, emotional, academic and medical. For instance, pupils are involved in activities such as designing, building and managing a garden project, completing qualifications in first aid, manual handling and construction, taking part in a mountain biking and bike maintenance programme and a rugby teambuilding 'tackle initiative'.

The school supports pupils with additional learning needs well. These pupils benefit from a wide range of valuable support programmes, including literacy and numeracy interventions, anger management and self-esteem projects. The school also provides valuable opportunities for parents to visit the school to meet staff and support their children. For example, there are regular coffee mornings for the parents of pupils with autism. The school's arrangements to support the smooth transition of pupils with additional needs from primary to secondary school are particularly strong. Individual education plans provide helpful basic information, but many of the targets are not sufficiently precise.

The school provides valuable guidance for pupils making important decisions about their futures. Pupils receive worthwhile advice from the Careers Service, local business people and a local college. For example, pupils interested in a career in law recently took part in a law webinar and a visit to a local law court.

The school makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and cultural development through eisteddfodau, school shows, events such as the Noswyl Gymreig, trips abroad and activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh award. The school supports the development of pupils' spiritual and moral development appropriately through assemblies, tutorial periods and visiting speakers.

The personal and social education programme provides valuable guidance on important aspects such as alcohol, drugs, smoking, keeping fit and online safety. The school makes appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking through initiatives such as the School Nutrition Action Group. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about diversity and the rights of others, for instance through the 'show racism the red card' project.

There are suitable arrangements for communicating with parents using a variety of methods, including social media. Interim and end of year reports to parents generally provide helpful information about pupils' strengths and areas for development, although a minority of the targets are too general.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher and leadership team have a clear vision for the development and sustained improvement of the school and to realise its aim to 'Inspire, Aspire, Succeed'. Senior leaders have high expectations for all areas of the school's work and for all members of the learning community. Leaders communicate these expectations effectively and they are understood clearly by staff and pupils.

Effective leadership has had a highly positive impact on standards achieved at the end of key stage 4 in those key performance indicators that include English and mathematics. It has also had a beneficial impact on aspects of teaching and pupils' wellbeing. However, leaders have been less successful in sustaining high levels of performance in a broader range of qualifications and for groups of pupils.

The school has recently strengthened aspects of senior leadership and line-management arrangements. Overall, these processes now enable senior leaders to support and challenge staff effectively. Meetings between senior leaders and curriculum leaders focus appropriately on pupils' progress and improving the quality of teaching.

Many middle leaders carry out their roles effectively. However, in a few curriculum areas, leaders have not had enough impact on improving pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching.

Performance management arrangements are robust and hold staff to account effectively. Objectives focus well on raising standards and improving teaching. They link well to the school's strategic improvement priorities and the developmental needs of staff.

Members of the governing body are supportive of the school and have a sound understanding of many of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are acquiring a better awareness of performance data, which is helping them to provide a greater degree of support and challenge.

The school has systematic arrangements to quality assure many areas of its work. This approach underpins the school's developing improvement culture. There is a well-designed programme of activities that includes exam performance analyses, constructive departmental and thematic reviews, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work to capture a rounded view of the school's work. The school also consults pupils and parents about aspects of its work and recently commissioned a peer review of leadership. However, the school has not placed enough focus on a few weak areas, such as standards in a few non-core subjects.

Quality assurance activities contribute well to providing a detailed evaluation of many areas of the school's work. As a result, leaders identify accurately a broad range of strengths as well as key aspects that require improvement. However, in a few cases, they do not analyse closely enough the reasons for underperformance, for example in considering the impact of curriculum arrangements on pupils' learning and progress. Similarly, leaders do not evaluate the impact of intervention programmes to support pupils' learning and wellbeing thoroughly enough.

The school improvement plan sets out clearly the school's broad ambitions and addresses well, within the plan's five strategic aims, both national priorities and those identified through self-evaluation activities. This plan supports school improvement appropriately.

Senior leaders support heads of department to evaluate the work of their departments. They focus primarily on outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning. Departmental improvement plans include relevant actions to address whole-school priorities, as well as those identified through departmental evaluations.

Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on professional learning. Senior leaders plan a broad and beneficial programme of in-service training that addresses school priorities especially well. There is a particular emphasis on building positive teacher-pupil relationships. This is done principally through providing opportunities for staff to work together or with colleagues in partner schools to promote best practice.

The headteacher, school accountant and the finance committee of the governing body manage the school's finances robustly. They monitor the budget closely to measure the impact of spending decisions. Funding is allocated suitably to curriculum areas and to meet agreed priorities, for example the recent purchase of a 3-D printer for the design and technology department.

The school has introduced valuable strategies to increase income, for example by ensuring greater use of school facilities by members of the community. Leaders make suitable use of grant funding. For example, the pupil development grant is used appropriately to fund initiatives that make a suitable contribution to the progress and wellbeing of vulnerable pupils.

## Copies of the report

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

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

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

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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