



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Glanrafon  
Bryn Coch Lane  
Mold  
Flintshire  
CH7 1PS**

**Date of inspection: December 2017**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Glanrafon

Ysgol Glanrafon is situated on the outskirts of the town of Mold. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 331 pupils between three and eleven years old on roll, including 36 part-time nursery age pupils. Pupils are divided into 12 mixed-age classes. Nine full-time key stage 2 pupils from the local authority's Welsh-medium schools attend the additional learning needs resource class.

Approximately 6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national percentage (19%). A minority of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 16% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is lower than the national percentage (21%). Very few have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in 1997 and the school was last inspected in January 2011.

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

Most pupils at Ysgol Glanrafon achieve well, particularly in their communication skills. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are sound and they are very willing to support each other's learning. The school is a caring and inclusive community, and pupils treat others with a high level of respect and tolerance. The quality of teaching across the school is mostly good and derives from a successful working relationship between pupils, teachers and learning assistants. There is a clear focus on developing personal and social education across the school in order to support pupils' wellbeing effectively. Leaders share a purposeful vision for the school. They use the information from self-evaluation processes effectively in order to identify sensible priorities for improvement and ensure improvement.

<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>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Provide regular opportunities to challenge more able pupils effectively
- R2 Improve pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- R3 Ensure that teachers' feedback enables pupils to know exactly what they need to do in order to improve their skills

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

On entry to the school, the basic skills of a majority of pupils correspond with what is expected for their age. During their time at the school, many pupils make effective progress and succeed well by Year 6. Most pupils with additional learning needs make sound progress towards their targets.

Most pupils who attend the resource class make good progress over time, in line with their needs and abilities. They make sound progress in terms of achieving their literacy and numeracy targets.

Across the school, most pupils listen well to adults and other pupils, and follow instructions carefully. Many pupils in the foundation phase talk purposefully to each other, for example when role-playing as the character of the Stick Man and his family. Many pupils in key stage 2 speak fluently in English and Welsh. For example, older pupils share their ideas and express their opinions confidently when discussing children's facilities and working conditions during the Victorian era. Most pupils across the school take pride in the Welsh language and use it naturally when talking to each other.

Many children enjoy reading and make good progress each year. Most pupils in the foundation phase use an appropriate range of phonic strategies confidently to build unfamiliar words, when necessary. Many more able pupils discuss the content of their books maturely and refer to specific events or their favourite character. They show a preference for their favourite authors and series. Many pupils in key stage 2 make sound progress in their reading in Welsh and English. They scan for information skilfully to gather information from different texts, including the internet, for example when producing a report on the solar system.

At a very early stage, many pupils begin to form letters correctly and write an increasing range of sentences competently, for example when writing a list of small creatures that are in the bug hotel. By Year 2, many write confidently and vary their sentences sensibly to create effect in their work. They use their imagination creatively when describing what they see on a bear hunt, and create an accurate factsheet about Mother Teresa. Across key stage 2, most pupils develop their work interestingly across a wide range of writing forms. They use rhetorical questions to persuade, for example when writing an argument for and against building a famous fast food restaurant at the top of Snowdon. A few more able pupils create atmosphere and describe an imaginary location creatively. A majority of pupils present their work in a polished manner.

Most pupils' numeracy skills in mathematics lessons are developing effectively across the school. In the foundation phase, most handle money correctly and recognise the properties of shapes confidently. They develop a good understanding of time and weighing.

In key stage 2, most pupils' standards in mathematics lessons are sound. Many have a strong understanding of multiplication and place value, and they are able to

use data with increasing accuracy when comparing the mountainous climate of Capel Curig with the Himalayan mountains. When conducting scientific experiments, they measure the effect of the insulation properties of different materials correctly and show the effect of friction on the distance that a car travels in the form of a block graph. However, pupils across the school do not apply their numeracy skills regularly enough in other areas of the curriculum.

Most pupils make satisfactory progress in their ICT skills. In the foundation phase, most pupils handle ICT equipment effectively, for example when recording a performance in the outdoor area on an electronic tablet or camera. They use art packages skilfully when drawing pictures of objects from nature. In key stage 2, most use the internet successfully to research and create purposeful multimedia presentations. They are able to give instructions to create a moving picture. However, by Year 6, pupils' skills in creating a spreadsheet and interrogating a database are limited.

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

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and know who to approach if they have any concerns. They are confident that the school responds promptly to any concerns they may have. Pupils across the school have a sound understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and make healthy choices in relation to food and physical activity. Most pupils take pride in the wide variety of physical activities that the school offers, and they apply themselves enthusiastically to activities such as yoga, judo and rugby. Activities to run a mile a day and undertake five-minute fitness sessions have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes towards living a healthy lifestyle. Most pupils have a beneficial awareness of how to stay safe online. These pupils are able to discuss the importance of not revealing their identity online and keeping their contact details confidential.

Most pupils take great pride in opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, the enthusiasm and pride of the Welsh language ambassadors have a very successful effect on all of the school's pupils to use the Welsh language during the day. Other groups of pupils represent pupils' views effectively and make purposeful decisions about aspects of school life. The school council has changed the lunchtime menu to offer healthy options. It is also active in supporting a variety of charities, including the local food bank and a refugee campaign. This has a positive effect on their awareness of the needs of others in their community and the wider world.

Most pupils behave consistently well in lessons and around the school. They are kind and caring towards each other. This is evident during lunchtimes, when buddies from Year 6 take care of foundation phase pupils by helping them with their food and playing games with them. Nearly all pupils treat adults and visitors with respect and courtesy. They show enjoyment towards their learning and are very willing to discuss their work and successes with visitors.

Most pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and work diligently for extended periods when completing their activities. They work effectively with their peers in groups and pairs, and respect others' opinions. Most pupils have a sound understanding of classroom organisation from a very early age, and they move confidently between the various

areas. This enables them to apply themselves to their work immediately and to work purposefully. Many pupils in the foundation phase have a good understanding of what they need to do in order to improve their work. They have an obvious influence on what they would like to learn within the term's theme when planning the role-play corner and weekly challenges. Pupils' participation is not as evident in key stage 2.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

The quality of teaching across the school is mostly good and derives from a successful working relationship between pupils, teachers and learning assistants. This leads to effective co-operation and develops pupils' enthusiasm towards their learning.

Nearly all members of staff are robust language models and encourage pupils to use the Welsh language during formal and informal activities. As a result, many older pupils have sound translinguaging skills and develop as competent and confident bilingual learners. Teachers plan numerous opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of their heritage and Welsh culture. The school enriches the curriculum successfully with residential visits, for example to Cardiff and Glan Llyn, and also by inviting visitors to the school.

The school has effective schemes of work that ensure consistency and purposeful experiences across the school. In general, teachers use effective teaching styles that engage the interest of all pupils. They present clear learning objectives to pupils, and these are shared regularly to ensure that learning has a purpose. Teachers and learning assistants know their pupils well. There are strong examples of tailoring class activities to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities in mathematics and science lessons. However, teachers do not challenge the most able pupils regularly enough.

The principles of the foundation phase have been established firmly. The school plans valuable opportunities to use the outdoor areas, which extend learning successfully; for example, to reinforce language skills, pupils use natural resources that are available outdoors to create a story. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to learn through play and through live experiences as they discover objects that sink and float. All teachers provide interesting focus and continuous tasks that include beneficial opportunities for pupils to investigate, role-play, build and practice their physical skills. This nurtures pupils who have positive attitudes towards learning and who develop effectively as independent learners. In key stage 2, many teachers provide valuable opportunities to enable pupils to solve problems and develop their thinking skills. They are beginning to respond purposefully to pupils' ideas and interests.

The school plans effectively to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in language and mathematics sessions. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills through themes such as A Post Card and Space. Recently, there are appropriate examples of pupils applying their number skills when sorting wealthy and poor children's toys on a Venn diagram. However, opportunities to develop pupils' ICT skills have not been developed regularly enough to enable them to use them confidently in other areas of the curriculum.

The school has robust procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress and wellbeing. Teachers create success criteria effectively in order to evaluate the extent to which pupils have succeeded in making progress during lessons. A majority provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work in language and mathematics, and have recently encouraged pupils in key stage 2 to set suitable targets for improvement. There are regular opportunities in the foundation phase for pupils to set their own targets, and they have a good awareness of what they need to do to improve their work. Following effective oral feedback, pupils are given frequent opportunities to improve their work. However, written feedback does not always provide specific enough comments on what they need to do to improve the content and presentation of their work.

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

The school has robust systems for tracking pupils' progress from their starting points. Teachers use this information purposefully in order to identify pupils who need additional support in terms of literacy, numeracy and wellbeing in particular. As a result, they provide beneficial intervention programmes in order to ensure that these pupils make sound progress in their learning. Individual learning plans for pupils with additional learning needs are appropriate. In a few examples, targets are not always specific enough to guide teachers to differentiate activities in enough detail to meet pupils' needs across the subjects. Learning assistants are used successfully across the school to support individual pupils in their learning and to implement a range of intervention programmes. Provision for pupils who attend the resource class creates a happy, caring and inclusive environment that places a firm emphasis on pupils' wellbeing. The support helps pupils to engage well with their learning and contributes effectively to improving these pupils' standards and outcomes. The school places a purposeful emphasis on developing all pupils' emotional and social needs.

The school has a sound working relationship with a range of other agencies in order to support pupils and offer support and guidance to staff. A good example is the beneficial relationship with specialist speech and language staff in order to provide support to pupils and staff. The school also works effectively with parents in order for them to support their children's learning appropriately. For example, they provide ideas for developing literacy and numeracy skills, and relevant information about the school's work through a social media app. The school also presents useful information to Year 2 parents during the summer term to facilitate the process of transitioning to a new stage.

There is a clear focus on developing personal and social education across the school. Through a number of extra-curricular clubs and the health and care week, pupils are given opportunities to learn about the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit, and how to stay safe online. The school promotes respect and tolerance effectively by providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual and moral aspects. This is reinforced successfully through the school's links with a number of schools around the world to share and receive Christmas decorations, and its charitable activities. Teachers also share current human or natural disasters in lessons, which strengthens pupils' understanding and nurtures their respect towards other cultures and beliefs. They encourage them to grow as effective citizens.

Provision to develop pupils' creative skills is effective. There is a strong tradition of providing numerous opportunities for pupils to perform in concerts, church services, and local and national Eisteddfodau. This contributes successfully towards increasing many pupils' self-confidence, in addition to their awareness of their Welsh heritage. Valuable use is made of visitors to broaden pupils' cultural experiences, for example as they learn about the hymns and music of the Plygain in the local area.

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

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

The headteacher has a robust vision that is based on pupils' good standards and wellbeing. Leaders convey this vision clearly in order to create a successful Welsh, caring and inclusive ethos. Members of the senior management team support the headteacher purposefully to realise the school's priorities. They also lead different departments within the school robustly, which fosters effective teamwork. All members of staff have responsibility for a specific aspect of the school's work, which contributes well towards maintaining purposeful standards in terms of pupils' wellbeing and achievement.

In general, leaders have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use information from extensive self-evaluation processes, such as scrutinising books, lesson observations and data analysis, in order to identify priorities for improvement. Teachers are given regular opportunities to share good practice, evaluate teaching strategies and identify priorities for improvement. As a result, leaders plan specific training in order to strengthen aspects of teaching. A good example of this is the whole-school training to improve the ICT skills of pupils and staff. However, it is too early to measure their effect on provision and pupils' outcomes.

The priorities in the development plan are based directly on the outcomes of the self-evaluation procedure and focus firmly on maintaining and raising standards. Leaders monitor progress purposefully and present a beneficial review of the previous plan's priorities appropriately. Overall, it is a purposeful tool for improving provision and raising standards. For example, work to improve extended writing has had a positive effect on pupils' ability to write purposefully in a wide range of writing forms. In addition, the opportunities that are provided for pupils to develop as independent learners are a strong element of the foundation phase.

Governors are very supportive, meet regularly and fulfil their duties conscientiously. They have recently been focussing in detail on data, standards, self-evaluation and the school's development, which has strengthened their understanding of the school's strengths and shortcomings successfully. They operate well as critical friends. The school has started to respond to the curriculum sub-committee's challenge in relation to all pupils' reading outcomes by tracking pupils' progress in reading in more detail and adapting provision for specific groups.

The school responds purposefully to local and national priorities, such as developing pupils' literacy skills successfully across all areas of learning, and establishing the Welsh Language Charter to raise pupils' standards of oracy. The school is beginning to prepare to implement the Digital Competence Framework.

Leaders ensure valuable opportunities for the professional development of teachers and assistants. Specific training, and close co-operation with nearby schools to raise pupils' standards and adapt provision for mathematics across the school, are effective. As a result, teachers develop regular opportunities for foundation phase pupils to plan the daily challenges.

The school is staffed appropriately and makes effective use of individuals' skills to enrich teaching and learning; for example, staff expertise is used skilfully to teach subjects such as religious education and music. They make valuable use of learning resources to enrich the curriculum. Over time, the school has improved the outdoor area, and teachers plan purposeful activities in order to improve pupils' skills while working outdoors. The headteacher uses the financial profit from the school's solar panels to add to the school's ICT resources.

Leaders manage the budget carefully and ensure that expenditure links well with plans for improvement. The school makes good use of the pupil development grant to improve the literacy and numeracy skills 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.

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Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court, Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

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