



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenffrwd
Whitford Street
Holywell
Flintshire
CH8 7NJ**

Date of inspection: April 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenffrwd

Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenffrwd is situated in Holywell in Flintshire, and serves the town and a number of nearby villages. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work, and English is introduced in key stage 2. There are 187 pupils between three and eleven years old on roll, including 17 part-time nursery age children. They are divided into nine classes.

The average percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 10%, which is lower than the national percentage. Around 6% of pupils speak Welsh at home. The school has identified 47% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is significantly higher than the national percentage. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 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

The headteacher's innovative and robust leadership sets a clear strategic direction for the development of the school. She has very high expectations, and a vision that is based on providing education of the highest quality possible in order to ensure that all pupils are happy and achieve to the best of their ability.

Staff work together highly effectively as a team, and are supported very well by the governors. As a result, nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make very sound progress and achieve well. By the end of key stage 2, around half of pupils make progress that is better than expected in all subjects.

The pupil's voice is a very strong element of the school's work, and members of the cabinet take full advantage of the numerous opportunities to express their views on important aspects. The behaviour and self-discipline of almost all pupils are excellent. Pupils are extremely polite and considerate, and they relate to each other highly effectively. These are excellent features of the school's work.

The effect of the high standard of teaching is clearly evident in the pupils' excellent achievements and wellbeing. Very interesting learning activities address the needs of pupils of all abilities, and are an excellent feature. This engages their interest well, develops their skills and curiosity towards learning skilfully, and strengthens their commitment to their work successfully.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Excellent
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Excellent

Recommendations

R1 Develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills further at the higher level

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the child's voice, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

On entry to the school, most children's skills are lower than expected for their age. During their time at the school, nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make very sound progress, achieve well and work independently successfully. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils' achievement at least corresponds with what is expected, and around half of pupils exceed this.

One of the school's notable strengths is the way in which most pupils write to a very high standard for different purposes in a wide range of subjects and contexts. In the foundation phase, they write interesting pieces with increasing accuracy, for example about aliens from space. In key stage 2, nearly all pupils write connected sentences, develop their ideas sensibly and show a firm grasp of form and sequence, when writing for a variety of purposes. Many express an opinion effectively, for example when discussing whether more money should be invested in the national parks. Most pupils across the school present their work very neatly.

Nearly all pupils have very good speaking and listening skills. They listen attentively to adults and each other, and respond confidently to instructions and questions by using interesting sentences. In the foundation phase, most use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary in various situations. They explain their tasks clearly, for example when explaining what they have learnt about dinosaurs. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 communicate extremely maturely in Welsh and English, and express their ideas, views and feelings confidently and effectively in extended sentences.

Nearly all pupils' reading skills are developing very successfully. By the end of the foundation phase, most read fluently and correctly, and cope well with unfamiliar words. Many read with appropriate expression and meaning. Most pupils in key stage 2 read intelligently and maturely in both languages. They make highly effective use of their reading skills to gather relevant information from various books and texts, and from websites, to enrich their work across the curriculum, for example when learning about a girl from Pakistan who was campaigning for the right for girls to receive an education.

In the foundation phase, nearly all pupils use their numeracy skills successfully. They gather information and record their results skilfully in lists, tables, diagrams and simple block graphs, for example when noting the pupils' favourite dinosaur. They develop a good understanding of weight and use units of measurement, such as a gram and kilogram, correctly when placing items in order from the lightest to the heaviest.

In key stage 2, nearly all pupils have very sound numeracy skills, and more able pupils achieve highly. Most use their measurement skills highly effectively when comparing the area of the acreage of the farms that were flooded to create Llyn Tryweryn. They solve numerical problems very effectively when calculating how long a ship's journey takes from Mostyn Dock to Dublin and identifying the difference in journey times on different days.

Most pupils' ICT skills are developing effectively across the school. In the foundation phase, most pupils record the weight of different objects correctly on an electronic tablet and save their work in appropriate files. They create simple sentences confidently to describe the work of people in the community, and adapt the presentation by using pictures and colours.

By the end of key stage 2, many create and interrogate data effectively to create multimedia presentations to reinforce their work, for example to show the dangers of smoking. Most produce very detailed databases by using spreadsheets to support their research when presenting information about how many people from different countries were killed during the Second World War. However, modelling skills have not been developed in full at the higher levels, for example by creating multidirectional programs to control various equipment.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils take responsibility for their own learning very maturely and work diligently for extended periods. They show a high level of confidence and maturity while working. This is an excellent feature of the school's life and contributes significantly to the very effective learning environment that exists there.

Pupils of all abilities evaluate their efforts and improve their work with increasing independence as a result of moderate, effective and timely feedback from adults or their peers. By the end of key stage 2, most have a sound understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

The pupil's voice is a very strong element of the school's work, and members of the cabinet take full advantage of the numerous opportunities to express their views on important aspects. They do so through a wide variety of very effective committees, such as the school council, eco committee, e-cadets, 'chwaraewyr da' (good players), 'mêts grêt' (great mates), digital wizards, the 'heartstart' group and 'ffrindiau'r ffreutur' (canteen friends). Staff transfer further responsibility to pupils to lead important aspects by expressing an opinion on the content of policies that are relevant to them. They do this very conscientiously. All of the school's pupils support the cabinet's activities enthusiastically by raising money for a number of charities, such as a school in Nepal. This has a very positive effect on their awareness of the needs of others in the community and the wider world. Nearly all pupils show obvious pride in their school. High attendance rates reflect the fact that pupils enjoy being there. They behave very responsibly and respectfully, and show excellent levels of self-discipline in lessons and at other times around the school.

Most pupils communicate particularly well with visitors and adults. They are extremely polite, considerate and relate well to each other. Nearly all pupils give careful consideration to their friends' needs, for example by helping them during lunchtime and other times, such as playtime.

Pupils feel safe at school and know who to approach when they need support. They are aware of the dangers of searching on the internet and the need to make healthy choices when eating and drinking. They are energetic and always keen to take part in physical activities to promote their fitness.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

The quality of teaching is excellent. This contributes significantly towards pupils' high achievement. An excellent feature is the agreed system of planning learning activities that stretch pupils of all abilities very effectively. Work is based on interesting and imaginative themes and experiences. Another excellent feature is the way in which parents, with their children, offer suggestions and ideas about what they would like to study at the beginning of each theme. This engages their interest and curiosity towards learning skilfully and strengthens their commitment to their work.

Teachers and assistants work highly effectively as a team and take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' language, which contributes successfully towards their rich oral skills. They have very high expectations of each child, and the quality of their presentations and questions is challenging and very purposeful. This ensures that nearly all pupils apply themselves fully to their tasks, concentrate for extended periods and show a high level of motivation. There is an enthusiastic learning environment in all classes and an active relationship in each lesson.

Assessment for learning strategies have been established firmly throughout the school. Pupils are given constructive oral and written feedback in order for them to understand what they need to do in order to improve their work. There are regular opportunities for pupils to plan jointly with teachers, reflect on their own learning and that of their peers, and to contribute effectively to the process of setting targets for their work. This element contributes successfully to pupils' progress and achievement.

In the foundation phase, staff nurture pupils' independence and develop their skills effectively by providing them with stimulating and interesting experiences. Staff have a sound understanding of the principles of the foundation phase and they encourage pupils to discover and learn independently from the outset. Key stage 2 pupils build well on this firm foundation by encouraging pupils to apply their skills in challenging tasks. Valuable opportunities are provided to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. The principles of the new 'Successful Futures' curriculum have already been implemented in key stage 2, and tasks and challenges of a very high standard are provided for pupils. This contributes particularly effectively towards developing their independent learning skills. A notable example that conveys this effective provision is the task that was given to older pupils to express their opinion about the right for everyone across the world to receive an education.

The school has a natural Welsh ethos, and all staff create a highly positive atmosphere that promotes this successfully and engages pupils' enthusiasm towards the language. Provision for the Welsh dimension is exciting and imaginative. Experiences are reinforced effectively by providing regular opportunities for pupils to compete in eisteddfodau and go on historic visits, for example to Conwy and Caernarfon castles. This raises pupils' awareness of their local area and increases their interest in Welsh traditions, culture and history successfully.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The quality of care, support and guidance is highly effective and has a very positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The school has a very effective procedure to track and monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing. The procedure enables the school's staff to plan and provide comprehensive support to address the needs of individuals and specific groups of pupils successfully. This enables pupils to make excellent progress from their starting points. Teachers identify pupils' educational, emotional and social needs at an early stage. Assistants work highly effectively under the guidance of teachers or the additional learning needs co-ordinator in order to implement a wide range of intervention programmes of a very high standard. This is a very strong element of the school's work. All pupils with additional learning needs have an education plan that includes measurable and challenging targets. In consultation with pupils and their parents, plans are reviewed regularly and adapted as required. A particular feature of the school's work is the successful commitment to ensuring that pupils make enough progress so that they do not need to continue to receive interventions for extended periods.

The practice of co-operating with specialist agencies, such as social services and speech therapists, in addition to listening to the voice of pupils and parents, ensures high quality support and guidance for pupils and parents. This contributes well to the exceptional progress that can be seen by pupils with additional learning needs. Through the headteacher's contributions in training courses, the school has already shared its experiences in this area as very successful practice with other schools within the local authority.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development very successfully by providing regular collective worship assemblies and through curricular activities. Provision for personal and social education is of a very high quality and means that pupils develop a sound understanding of values such as honesty, fairness and respect towards others. This is clearly evident in the kind way in which the school provides valuable guidance for pupils to nurture good behaviour practices. Pupils' friendly behaviour towards each other is testament to the success of this caring support. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The school has very robust arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily and to ensure that pupils understand how to stay safe. The school's commitment to promoting extra-curricular activities, such as participating in local football training sessions and folk dancing in the town, ensures valuable opportunities to develop all pupils' fitness.

The school has a prominent tradition of competing in eisteddfodau, and this, in addition to pupils' written contributions to the local Welsh community newspaper, contributes well to developing pupils' creative skills. These, and the links with the community, enrich pupils' experiences and have a positive influence on developing their social and cultural skills.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher's effective and robust leadership sets a clear strategic direction for the development of the school. She has very high expectations and a purposeful vision, which are shared successfully with the school community. The deputy headteacher, other members of the senior management team and subject leaders support her very well, and ensure that staff provide high quality education and are committed strongly to maintaining and raising pupils' standards and wellbeing. This, for example, has a very good influence on the number of pupils who achieve the higher levels at the end of key stage 2. The headteacher has a robust vision to promote Welshness, nurture respect and encourage pupils and staff to do their best.

The headteacher has allocated responsibilities effectively and plays a key role in developing staff and promoting co-operation, and shares good practice both within and outside the school. She has established a robust management and leadership structure that provides valuable opportunities for members of staff to lead initiatives that are based on specific aspects of the curriculum, for example in literacy, numeracy and ICT. These opportunities develop future leaders successfully.

All members of staff have a clear understanding of the school's strengths. They work together very closely and meet regularly to discuss and plan jointly. A culture of continuous self-evaluation, which focuses in detail on pupils' outcomes, is embedded deeply in the school's everyday life. There are very robust systems to review progress, identify areas for improvement and take effective steps to implement them. These include a careful analysis of the school's comparative performance data and its outcomes, internal assessment arrangements, scrutinising books and schemes of work, and regular lesson observations. As a result, leaders and staff know their school very well and address improvements quickly and successfully. All teachers and staff play an active part in the process of monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement. Progress in pupils' attainment from their starting points is robust evidence of this. Opportunities for parents and pupils to influence the school's life and work are an obvious strength.

Members of the governing body have rigorous knowledge of the school's performance by playing a prominent part in its monitoring, self-evaluation and strategic planning processes. By working effectively with the senior management team, observing lessons and scrutinising books, they have a sound awareness of the standards of learning and teaching. This enables them to hold the school to account and set a clear strategic direction to develop the school as an effective learning community. A particular feature of their work is the successful procedures that they use to monitor and promote attendance.

Leaders use resources efficiently to enrich the curriculum and raise pupils' standards in all areas. Expenditure is linked appropriately with improvement priorities, and funding is monitored carefully in order to ensure its best use and to provide high quality education. For example, the pupil development grant is used prudently to raise the standards of the very few pupils who are eligible to receive it. Clear progress can be seen in these pupils' reading and writing skills.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	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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Publication date: 13/06/2018