



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gwynfryn  
Heol y Meinciau  
Pontyates  
Llanelli  
Carmarthenshire  
SA15 5SN**

**Date of inspection: March 2018**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Gwynfryn

Ysgol Gwynfryn is situated in the village of Pontyates, in the Gwendraeth valley, Carmarthenshire. There are 64 pupils between 4 and 11 years old on roll. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.

Over a three-year period, around 29% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals, which is a figure that is higher than the average for Wales of 21%. Thirty-nine per cent of pupils from the Welsh-speaking homes. Welsh is the main medium of teaching and learning, and the aim is to ensure that all pupils are fluent in Welsh and English by the end of key stage 2. Nearly all pupils are from white British backgrounds.

Around 24% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is higher than the national average of 19%. Very few have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in January 2011 and the school was last inspected in March 2015. Since 2012, the school has been part of a formal federation with Ysgol Gynradd Carwe and Ysgol Gynradd Ponthenri under one executive headteacher and one governing body.

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

There is a broad and interesting curriculum at Ysgol Gwynfryn, which builds sensibly on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school. Pupils have good speaking, listening, writing and ICT skills and, on the whole, they have suitable reading and numeracy skills.

Teaching is good, and the staff's care, support and guidance develop pupils' wellbeing effectively. Most pupils show positive and enthusiastic attitudes towards their work and their behaviour is particularly good. They concentrate well in lessons and work diligently for extended periods.

Leaders have created a very successful ethos of co-operation across the three schools in the federation. They have shared and developed clear aims and a purposeful strategic vision. Self-evaluation processes are effective and are based firmly on broad evidence. With a few exceptions, processes to ensure improvement have a positive effect on the school's priorities for 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 Improve pupils' reading skills
- R2 Challenge more able pupils in order to ensure that they achieve as well as they could
- R3 Ensure that quality improvement processes are more effective in improving pupils' outcomes and strengthening provision

## **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 are below what is expected for their age. During their time at the school, most make sound progress and acquire fluent and coherent Welsh communication skills in a short time. Pupils with additional learning needs achieve soundly against their personal targets.

Most pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well. In a discussion, most listen respectfully to the contributions of others and respond by asking questions and offering relevant comments. As they move through the foundation phase, most develop fluency in speaking, use expression and intonation, and adapt language to specific situations, for example when talking about their work on castles and dragons. Many pupils recall and use rich vocabulary, for example words such as 'boneddiges', in their theme work on a castle when recalling the class story. By the end of key stage 2, most present oral information coherently, respond in detail and show a good awareness of the study topics, for example when presenting their views on using fair trade products.

By Year 2, a majority of pupils are able to read appropriately for their age and ability. Many discuss the content of their books maturely and refer to specific events or their favourite character. In key stage 2, many pupils read suitably, change their tone of voice appropriately and show a good awareness of punctuation. On the whole, they show an understanding of the main ideas and significant details in different texts. However, a few pupils have difficulty understanding the meaning of what they have read. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils are able to gather, recall and set out information well, for example when researching different facts about Llanelli, or when creating a fact sheet about a famous artist.

Most pupils present their written work neatly and intelligibly. They write appropriately for different purposes in a range of interesting contexts. In the foundation phase, most write engaging pieces with increasing accuracy in Welsh, for example when persuading people to go to Gwynfryn castle. As they transfer to key stage 2, many pupils develop neat handwriting. They write a series of sentences in Welsh and English that convey the meaning clearly, and punctuate correctly. Most pupils write at length in both languages for a wide range of purposes. For example, in their theme work, they explain the reasons why elephants are under threat of becoming extinct, and create a blog about the Hurricane Irma tragedy.

Pupils' numeracy skills are developing well across the foundation phase. By the end of the phase, many use number skills effectively and confidently in a variety of contexts across the curriculum. They use their data and measuring skills well, for example when measuring and recording the travel distance of an object that has been shot towards a castle. In key stage 2, most pupils have sound numeracy skills. They apply their skills successfully when solving problems relating to their science work, for example about temperature and time when considering the best place for animals in the Antarctic to stand. When analysing questionnaire responses in a database about Llanelli, most pupils collect information and results systematically and present their findings correctly in graphs. However, in key stage 2, more able pupils do not apply their numeracy skills to the same standard across the curriculum consistently enough.

Most pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively. They use ICT packages to make attractive presentations of their work. Foundation phase pupils use their ICT skills confidently to reinforce their literacy skills when recording poems by using tablet computers. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils produce and interrogate databases purposefully and create attractive multimedia presentations. Most use the internet safely and effectively when searching for information. They understand the importance of saving and retrieving their work, and appreciate the need to use a password in order to protect their work.

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

Nearly all pupils enjoy the school's life and work. Most understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and make healthy choices. Activities to run a mile a day have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes towards physical exercise and living a healthy life. Nearly all pupils feel completely safe at school and are happy to discuss concerns with members of staff, and are confident that they listen to them. The use of an electronic program, where pupils can share their feelings safely with teachers, helps to support pupils' emotional wellbeing effectively.

Many pupils have a beneficial understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet. These pupils are able to discuss the importance of not revealing their identity online and keeping their contact details confidential.

Most pupils behave exceptionally well and are polite and caring towards their peers and adults. Pupils are very supportive of each other and take their responsibilities as officers and playground game leaders seriously. Most older pupils are kind and thoughtful when dealing with younger pupils. They care for them constantly by supporting and comforting them.

Most pupils show positive and enthusiastic attitudes towards their work. They concentrate well in lessons and work diligently for extended periods. They discuss their work intelligently and confidently, show enjoyment in their learning and are very willing to discuss their successes with visitors. Most pupils have a sound understanding of classroom organisation from a very early age. This enables them to apply themselves to their tasks immediately and work purposefully and independently successfully.

The pupil's voice is important at the school and most pupils are very glad of opportunities to express their ideas and opinions. Many pupils appreciate the opportunity to have input into the classes' termly plans. Groups of pupils represent the views of all pupils effectively and make mature decisions about aspects of school life. For example, the school council succeeds in improving fitness resources on the playground and working together as a federation to review and create various policies, such as an anti-bullying and equal opportunities policy.

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

The quality of teaching is good. There is an active and supportive relationship between staff and pupils, which creates a productive learning environment. All teachers manage their classrooms effectively, by promoting good behaviour and encouraging pupils to learn. Nearly all members of staff are robust language models

and promote the pupils' use of the Welsh language successfully. As a result, many pupils develop as competent and confident bilingual learners who use a good range of vocabulary and phrases. Most teachers ensure that their lessons have an appropriate pace, which leads to high levels of commitment among pupils. They question skilfully to extend pupils' understanding and develop their thinking skills effectively. On the whole, teachers tailor class activities to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities successfully. However, a few activities do not challenge more able pupils, particularly to extend their reading and numeracy skills to the best of their ability across the curriculum.

In all classes, the consistent method of setting clear lesson aims, and associated criteria, helps pupils to understand what they need to do in order to produce work of a high standard. Teachers provide pupils with timely and useful feedback during the lesson and reinforce this with meaningful written comments in their books. There are beneficial and frequent opportunities for pupils to give each other feedback and reflect on the quality of their own work. As a result, most pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work further.

The broad and interesting curriculum builds sensibly on pupils' current knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school. Teachers and assistants work together across the schools in the federation in order to plan effectively to deliver the curriculum and the principles of the foundation phase, and develop pupils' skills through interesting themes. These themes reflect the school's nature and local context successfully. They promote the Welsh language and Welshness effectively in all aspects of their work. They organise visits to the local area in Llanelli to research into people's use of local facilities, and encourage pupils to study the work of authors and artists from their local area.

The principles of the foundation phase have been embedded very successfully. There is a clear emphasis on nurturing pupils' independence and developing their skills effectively by providing practical and stimulating experiences, for example as they make St David's Day 'cawl'. Teachers make sensible use of the indoor and outdoor areas to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills effectively. A good example of this is the work of foundation phase pupils on searching for 2D shapes outdoors and making castles from 3D materials.

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

The school has robust systems to provide early support for pupils with specific needs and to track pupils' progress from their starting points effectively. Teachers use this information purposefully in order to identify pupils who need additional support in terms of literacy, numeracy and wellbeing very purposefully. They use the information sensibly in order to identify each pupil's progress and standard of work. As a result, they provide beneficial intervention in order to ensure that pupils make sound progress in their learning. Individual education plans and pupil profiles include achievable targets, the pupil's voice and parents' input successfully.

The school has strong and supportive links with a number of specialist agencies, which ensure supportive help and guidance for pupils and parents. As a result, individuals and families receive effective care and guidance.

Learning assistants are used effectively across the school to support individual pupils and to implement a range of programmes successfully. Support helps pupils to engage well with their learning and contributes effectively towards improving standards and outcomes. The school places a strong emphasis on developing all pupils' emotional and social needs, and an electronic program supports this aspect effectively.

The school has a clear focus on promoting good behaviour that is based on respect, courtesy and tolerance. This is evident in the opportunities that are provided for pupils to reflect on spiritual and moral aspects in morning assemblies and relevant lessons. The school promotes pupils' awareness of the world of work very effectively through community projects on local businesses.

There is a robust relationship between the school and parents, and all members of staff promote an open and co-operative culture, which succeeds in ensuring commitment and comprehensive support. Successful arrangements include sending termly theme leaflets to share information about the class's work, holding useful training evenings and organising 'noson darllen ddifyr' (interesting reading evening).

Provision to develop pupils' creative skills is effective. The school has a strong tradition of ensuring opportunities for pupils to take part in concerts, local eisteddfodau and perform with a well-known drama company. This contributes successfully towards increasing pupils' self-confidence, in addition to providing stimulating and unforgettable experiences.

There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness and knowledge of other parts of the world and different cultures through special celebrations, such as Chinese day. This ensures that pupils are able to show empathy towards the lives of others, for example through extensive work on fair trade and supporting charities, such as the Red Cross refugee appeal, Children in Need and Show Racism the Red Card.

Provision to develop sustainable development is good. Following the work of the eco committee, teachers and pupils promote sustainability, such as recycling paper and working on the garden, to nurture understanding of planting and growing vegetables.

The school has a natural Welsh ethos, and all staff create a positive atmosphere that promotes this successfully and ignites pupils' enthusiasm towards the language. Provision for the Welsh dimension is exciting. Experiences are reinforced effectively by providing regular opportunities for pupils to work with local artists, organising historical visits and holding annual celebrations. This raises pupils' awareness and increases their interest in the traditions, legends, culture and history of the local area and Wales successfully.

Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

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

Leaders have created an ethos of co-operation across the three schools in the federation successfully. As a result, all staff are aware that they are the federation's staff, not the staff of a particular school. One of the innovative features of this system is that staff are able to teach at short notice at any of the schools in the federation without disrupting the pupils' education. This is an exceptional strength. The

federation's staffing structure enables teachers and assistants to develop a sound understanding of all work of the three schools. The federation's leaders and staff share and develop a strategic vision and clear aims purposefully with the federation's whole community.

The headteacher and assistant headteachers have strong leadership skills. They have high expectations, and support and guide others effectively to raise standards and promote pupils' wellbeing. Robust leadership across the federation has succeeded in creating an ethos of successful co-operation among staff at the three schools. This includes effective co-operation when planning, assessing and standardising jointly as one body of staff. The Hwb digital network is used purposefully in order to share documents across the federation. However, leaders do not have a clear enough overview of how effectively curricular plans are implemented in the three schools.

Governors have a sound understanding of the performance of the schools in the federation. They are responsible for specific aspects of the schools' priorities. By working with the schools' leaders, observing lessons and scrutinising books, they play an active part in the school's self-evaluation processes. They use information effectively to make decisions and to set a clear strategic direction for the school's work. An example of this is the way in which governors have challenged the school about provision and have made difficult decisions in order to maintain standards. However, they have not been challenging enough in ensuring that pupils attain the higher levels over a period of time. The governing body monitors the budget carefully. An example of this is the way in which it has challenged the school about the effect of the pupil development grant on pupils' attendance, punctuality and developing their life skills.

The school's self-evaluation processes are effective and are based firmly on broad evidence, such as scrutinising pupils' work, observing lessons and seeking the views of pupils and parents. On the whole, reports following monitoring and scrutinising books identify strengths clearly. However, they do not always identify consistently the next steps for improvement. Self-evaluation reports provide a comprehensive, honest and balanced picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There is a clear link between self-evaluation findings and the priorities in the school development plan. However, improvement activities do not always have enough of an effect on pupils' outcomes. An example of this is the fact that improving the performance of more able and talented pupils has appeared in the development plan for a number of years.

All of the federation's staff work together very effectively and there are valuable opportunities for them to share experiences and good practice within the school. This has helped to reduce teachers' workload and enriched experiences for pupils. A specific example of this is the rich and creative experiences that pupils are given in the foundation phase.

Leaders use resources creatively to enrich the curriculum and raise pupils' standards. They link expenditure appropriately with the priorities in the school development plan and monitor funding carefully to ensure value for money. The school uses a wide range of grants purposefully, including the pupil development grant, to raise pupils' standards and develop their wellbeing. As a result, nearly all pupils make appropriate progress.

## 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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