



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gymraeg Brynsierfel
Dwyfor
Llwynhendy
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA14 9HD**

Date of inspection: May 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Gymraeg Brynsierfel

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Brynsierfel is situated in the village of Llwynhendy, which is a few miles from the town of Llanelli in Carmarthenshire local authority. There are 206 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 12 part-time nursery age pupils.

Over a period of three years, slightly below 21% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is slightly higher than the national percentage of 19%. Approximately 12% of pupils speak Welsh at home and very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified around 34% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is higher than the national percentage of 21%. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The school was last inspected in September 2010 and the current headteacher was appointed to the post in January 2016.

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 school is extremely homely and the classrooms and corridors are colourful and stimulating and interesting spaces, where all pupils can learn productively. Leaders have very high expectations in terms of pupils' wellbeing and academic progress, in order to enable each of them to make sound progress and achieve to the best of their ability. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have created a conscientious team of staff at all levels, who provide highly interesting and varied learning experiences for pupils, and treat them with continuous respect and care. As a result, nearly all pupils enjoy the school's life and work and feel safe there. They apply themselves fully to their tasks and show an energetic enthusiasm towards their work. One of the school's significant features is the kind way in which teachers provide very effective opportunities for pupils to relax their bodies and minds at the beginning of sessions during the day. This helps them to forget about any worries they may have and enables them to concentrate clearly on their learning.

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 Ensure that all teachers correct errors in pupils' spoken Welsh language continuously

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 the kind way in which teachers provide very effective opportunities for pupils to relax their bodies and minds at the beginning of sessions so that they are ready to learn, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

Very few pupils have the communication or numeracy skills that are expected for their age on entry to the school. Most are at levels that are much lower than expected. However, during their time at the school, nearly all pupils make very strong progress. Pupils with additional learning needs make excellent progress against their targets, and most of those who are eligible for free school meals make very good progress.

Pupils' listening skills are developing highly effectively across the school. They listen attentively to presentations in assemblies, and also to each other and their teachers in their classes. Many pupils in the nursery class start to speak Welsh at a very early stage. By Year 2, a majority express themselves very confidently by using a variety of words that relate to the theme. They develop clarity when speaking, vary their tone of voice and inflexion skilfully, and adapt their language successfully for different situations. In key stage 2, most talk confidently in both languages in a variety of contexts. They present information, respond clearly in discussions and use increasingly complex vocabulary. At the top of the school, most talk very coherently and use an increasing variety of phrases and patterns with a good measure of accuracy. However, a minority of pupils' syntax and expression are inaccurate, and they mutate incorrectly and use a few English words when talking Welsh.

In the foundation phase, most pupils' reading skills are developing very well. They select reading materials independently and offer valid reasons for their choice. Most enjoy reading aloud and do so with increasing confidence. Most pupils in key stage 2 make very good progress in reading in both languages. They express an opinion about characters and aspects of style with increasing eloquence. By Year 6, a majority are independent readers who gather, recall and organise information from various sources wholly independently.

In the foundation phase, most pupils' writing skills are developing very soundly. In the reception class, they write an effective range of simple sentences about insects and punctuate correctly. By the end of the phase, most use interesting adjectives confidently to enrich their work. Many write extended imaginative stories independently, such as the story of Matilda or a newspaper report about the Big Hungry Wolf. In key stage 2, most write increasingly reflectively and imaginatively in both languages, and show a sound grasp of form. They write for different purposes, such as a description of life in the coalmines in a history lesson. They often show originality when selecting words and phrases to create effect, such as "*...then he ran as fast as his legs would take him...he was terrified, he was defenceless*" in an imaginative story in English in Year 6.

Nearly all pupils' numeracy skills are developing very soundly across the school. Nearly all have an increasing understanding of place value, and they recall mathematical facts without any problems and apply them confidently in different contexts. In the nursery class, a majority of pupils form numbers correctly up to five, while the best in the reception class order numbers up to 20. They recognise two-dimensional shapes and use them creatively to create pictures of characters to

correspond with their theme. By Year 2, the best measure their friends' feet relatively accurately, record the results on a table and place them in order to identify who has the longest and shortest feet. By Year 4, many solve money problems from the Middle Ages confidently to calculate workers' pay and the cost of paying for a builder. They measure a dinosaur's feet correctly and use a simple formula to calculate its height. Many pupils at the top of the school use their numeracy skills confidently to calculate, for example, how many hockey games will need to be played in a league. They have also succeeded in marketing and money-handling challenges, when making, pricing and selling decorations to make a profit at the Christmas fair.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing very soundly. They are developing skilful control of computers and electronic tablets, and use them very purposefully. By Year 2, nearly all develop a range of skills very successfully and respond positively to the challenge of presenting information in various forms and to create simple animations. In key stage 2, nearly all pupils build effectively on their previous learning, and use their technology skills completely naturally and increasingly independently and confidently to support their work in other subjects. They recorded a bee's movements highly effectively when studying the theme of 'Honey', and used spreadsheets and formulae correctly to organise data based on the success of ice hockey teams.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils enjoy the school's life and work and feel very safe there. They are enthusiastic about attending school and many look forward eagerly to Monday morning each week. Nearly all pupils apply themselves fully to their tasks and show an energetic enthusiasm. They work together highly successfully and show a sound maturity when staying on task for extended periods to solve problems. Pupils' standards of behaviour and self-discipline in lessons and around the school are excellent. They take turns, listen to each other's opinions and respect their peers' contributions very politely. This reinforces the school's homely and supportive ethos, which promotes effective learning in a highly caring environment.

The very mature way in which pupils make choices about what and how they learn is very effective. For example, they discuss the content of their themes and create mind maps at the beginning of each term in order to have a direct influence on the activities that they will undertake.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and keeping fit. They have been central to the process of promoting healthy lunchboxes by writing to parents to encourage them to include water rather than drinks that contain a lot of sugar. Nearly all pupils are fully aware of the importance of keeping themselves safe online, and discuss the dangers that can arise extremely intelligently.

The school's councils are very active and successful. Members seek their fellow pupils' views regularly, discuss their opinions very maturely and sensibly in their meetings, and provide them with beneficial feedback subsequently. They plan activities to raise money for charities regularly, which increases pupils' awareness of the needs of those who are less fortunate than themselves. They sell goods that they have produced at school on a stall at Llanelli market. This informs the public

about the work that they do and raises the school's profile in the community successfully. Pupils across the school speak highly of the ideas box, which allows them to suggest improvements in relation to school issues that are important to them, in addition to any concerns they may have. This gives them direct ownership of what happens at the school to support their personal, social and emotional wellbeing.

Most pupils develop as moral and knowledgeable citizens. They have an increasing awareness of the various values that are promoted regularly by the school. They explain the importance of good behaviour and encourage their fellow pupils to be kind and persevere with their learning. Through their class work and mature understanding of fairness and inclusivity across society, most pupils show a sound awareness of injustice in the wider world. Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of the rights of children around the world, and are proud that they have produced five specific rights that are at the heart of Ysgol Gymraeg Brynsierfel's work. This is central to all of the school's actions.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

Teachers and staff have a very effective method of mapping the curriculum over time, which ensures achievement and reflects the school's nature and context successfully. Teachers plan stimulating themes that provide excellent opportunities to develop pupils' subject skills and key skills systematically and methodically every two years. The experiences that are provided are broad and balanced, and meet nearly all pupils' needs very well. This enables them to acquire the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that they need to support their work across the curriculum, and make strong and developing progress as they move through the school.

Termly plans identify clearly the skills to be developed during that term. Teachers use these very effectively to plan their lessons and to guide teaching on the classroom floor. From an early age, pupils are given beneficial and increasing opportunities to contribute to specific threads that are of interest to them at the beginning of each theme. Teachers develop termly plans by tailoring tasks and activities skilfully each week in order to address the specific needs of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. They make very effective use of assistants and specialist teachers to support individuals and groups, where necessary. As a result, nearly all pupils participate effectively in lessons, show a keen interest in their work, and develop very positive attitudes towards learning.

One of the school's significant features is the effective opportunities that teachers provide for pupils to relax their bodies and minds at the beginning of learning sessions. This ensures that they concentrate and are ready to learn. They also provide regular opportunities for them to express their feelings and share any concerns they may have. This has a very positive effect on their emotional wellbeing and attitudes towards learning. As a result, nearly all members of staff know the pupils very well and are aware of their academic and personal needs. This enables teachers to develop realistic but very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. By sharing learning objectives and expectations clearly with pupils at the beginning of sessions, teachers ensure that they understand exactly what is expected of them in tasks.

Teachers ask probing questions very skilfully, which succeed in extending pupils' responses excellently. A majority of teachers are good language models. However, this is not consistent across the school and a minority do not correct pupils' oral errors consistently enough. As a result, at times, a minority of pupils use incorrect mutations and a few English words when speaking Welsh.

The school has agreed and consistent arrangements to assess and record pupils' progress. Teachers summarise these on a one-page profile and use them effectively to plan follow-up tasks for pupils. Teachers provide pupils with useful feedback that enables them to improve their work. Regular periods are earmarked each week for older pupils to focus on the advice that they have been given and to improve their work. At appropriate times, pupils are given opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers. This means that they need to understand the exact purpose of the task and what they need to do in order to succeed. This encourages pupils to practice their independent learning skills successfully. As a result, the standard of teaching and assessment is excellent.

Staff strive to ensure that the classrooms and corridors are homely, extremely colourful and are stimulating and engaging spaces in which all groups of pupils are able to learn productively.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is an extremely homely and orderly community. All members of staff have very high expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour, effort and wellbeing, and there is a very clear focus on ensuring that all pupils achieve to the best of their ability.

The school has robust, clear and accessible procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress and wellbeing. Staff make highly effective use of these procedures to identify pupils' educational, emotional and social needs at an early stage, and to provide an interesting education that engages their interest and addresses all pupils' needs.

Classroom assistants work diligently with teachers and the additional learning needs co-ordinator to implement a specific range of intervention programmes for pupils, which are of a very high standard. This enables pupils with specific needs to make sound and consistent progress in various areas, including their wellbeing and their emotional and academic development. All pupils with additional learning needs have a clear and effective individual education plan, which includes sensible, measurable and challenging targets. Staff review these plans regularly with pupils and parents, and adapt them as necessary. This ensures that pupils and parents have as much ownership of them as the teachers.

During the last two years, the school has placed a very clear focus on developing a strong and open partnership with parents, which has fostered complete trust among most parents. This exceptional partnership has had a direct influence on most pupils' wellbeing, academic standards and attendance rates, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Social media are used sensibly to raise parents' awareness of the school's events and to remind them about important issues. Useful training evenings are held to help them to support their children in different areas, such as a Welsh class to encourage them to speak the language, and numeracy sessions to enable them to help them with their homework.

A strong feature of the school's work is the continuous focus that the staff places on ensuring that pupils settle and relax their bodies and minds at the beginning of learning sessions. This enables them to forget about any worries they may have in order for them to be ready to learn. The school has shared this practice successfully with other schools, and leaders are now part of a particular task to develop this practice nationally.

The kind way in which the school uses the expertise of external agencies regularly to support pupils and their families is very effective. For example, the strong links with the nurse, the welfare officer and the local police have a successful influence on the wellbeing of a number of pupils at school and in the community. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

The school provides effectively to develop pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural attitudes by organising rich experiences for them to reflect in collective worship sessions and circle time. Morning assemblies, which are often based on stories from the Bible or current themes, encourage pupils to be reflective and think about issues that affect them and others. The school welcomes groups from different local places of worship to lead these assemblies regularly. As a result, pupils have a sound understanding of spiritual, religious and moral issues. These experiences enable them to identify the difference between 'right and wrong', and to work together and respect each other's views in a caring and inclusive environment. This supports them valuably to become active and conscientious citizens who will have the skills to lead important initiatives in their community in due course. The ethos and will of co-operation enable most pupils to attain robust standards of wellbeing.

Pupils' social, cultural and creative development are promoted highly effectively through performances, competitions and creative projects. Pupils at the top of the school, for example, discuss the characteristics of artists from Wales and the wider world intelligently. They work with local artists regularly and emulate their work very effectively. Welsh history, geography and culture are promoted daily, and are core and effective elements of all of the school's work.

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

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher, with the full support of the deputy, leads the school highly effectively, in a calm, sincere but firm manner. In a short time, she has succeeded in creating an extremely close-knit and inclusive community, which has had an exceptional effect on standards, provision and the wellbeing of pupils and staff. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a robust vision to develop the school as a very successful unit, which is based on high expectations. They succeed in sharing this clearly with the rest of the staff, governors, parents and pupils. Other members of the senior management team support them highly effectively. They provide a clear and supportive direction for staff in all areas of learning, and ensure that all individuals commit themselves fully to maintaining and raising standards, and ensuring pupils' wellbeing.

All members of staff are very aware of their roles and responsibilities, and are developing very effectively as a team. The dedicated and enthusiastic teachers show a strong commitment to promoting continuous and sustainable improvements, for example by coming together to discuss appropriate issues regularly and plan themes jointly. This has a very positive effect on ensuring continuity and progression in skills, and creates broad and stimulating experiences for all pupils. It also helps successfully to reduce teachers' workloads.

The school has robust procedures to manage the performance of teachers and assistants, which are based on the priorities in the school development plan and individuals' professional needs. The headteacher promotes staff's professional development successfully, which has a positive effect on them and their teaching practices in the classroom. A particular example of this is the comprehensive arrangements to train all staff to develop their digital skills further, which enables them to use them more confidently with pupils. Learning assistants are trained effectively to support individual pupils and implement a range of intervention programmes successfully. This support helps pupils to engage well with their learning and contributes effectively towards improving their literacy and numeracy skills and wellbeing. The headteacher promotes staff's professional development further by encouraging them to take part in internal training activities that are led by members of staff, and to develop aspects of the curriculum by attending successful networks with nearby schools. Staff also visit a number of other schools in the local authority to share and observe examples of good practice. Numerous visits have been organised to other successful schools, for example before the foundation phase was reorganised two years ago.

The school has a strong culture of continuous self-evaluation, which focuses clearly on pupils' outcomes and wellbeing. Procedures are particularly rigorous and enable leaders to identify, monitor and evaluate the school's performance very effectively. Members of the senior management team use a wide range of suitable data effectively to evaluate pupils' achievements and progress. This ensures that there is a continuous climate of targeting and challenging pupils to achieve to the best of their ability and make achievable improvements. Leaders encourage pupils to give their views and input continuously, for example when choosing a new marking scheme. This has a very positive effect on pupils, who appreciate that the headteacher and staff take their views seriously. There is a clear link between the findings of the self-evaluation procedure and the priorities in the school development plan.

Governors have a very sound understanding of the school's performance. They take responsibility for various aspects of curricular areas and priorities for improvement. By working successfully with the senior management team, and by observing lessons, scrutinising books and conducting relevant learning walks, they play an active role in the school's self-evaluation and monitoring procedures. They use this information very effectively to make decisions that set a purposeful strategic direction for the school's work. A strong example of this is the way in which governors challenge positively and make suggestions about progress in standards and the over-use of worksheets. The governing body promotes the pupils' voice effectively by supporting their aspirations. They also support the school's plans and arrangements to ensure that all pupils are given an equal opportunity to undertake different activities.

The headteacher and governors manage the school's budget tightly, although they have faced a difficult financial situation recently. They make efficient funding decisions in order to respond to the school's needs. The budget for implementing the school's priorities for improvement has been earmarked clearly. The school uses a range of grants very successfully, including the pupil development grant, to raise standards of literacy and mathematics, and to develop pupils' wellbeing highly effectively.

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: 24/07/2018