



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gymunedol Bancffosfelen  
Heol Bancffosfelen  
Pontyberem  
Llanelli  
Carmarthen  
SA15 5DR**

**Date of inspection: June 2018**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Gymunedol Bancffosfelen

Ysgol Gymunedol Bancffosfelen is situated in the Gwendraeth Valley, around six miles from the town of Carmarthen. The school serves the village itself and the surrounding rural area.

There are 47 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll. Pupils are taught in two classes, one for the foundation phase and the other for key stage 2.

Over a three-year-period, around 23% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is higher than the national percentage of 19%. Thirty eight per cent of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes, and all pupils are from white British backgrounds. Welsh is the main medium of teaching and learning in the foundation phase, and the aim is to ensure that all pupils are bilingual by the end of key stage 2. The school has identified 19% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is slightly lower than the national average of 21%.

The school was last inspected in November 2011. The school has been without a headteacher since October 2017. The current headteacher, since March 2018, is on secondment from Ysgol Llannon two days a week.

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, who divides her time between Ysgol Bancffosfelen and a nearby school, provides a clear strategic direction for the school's work. She has a robust vision to challenge and develop the school, which focuses effectively on the school's ethos, providing effective teaching and raising pupils' standards. The vision is also based on ensuring success for all pupils and promoting their Welshness. The school has been through a period of instability in terms of staffing for several years. In a short period of time, the headteacher has provided strong leadership and works successfully with staff, governors, pupils and parents to achieve this vision. The whole school community works closely as a team for the benefit of all pupils, and ensures that pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of the school community. However, the school's long-term leadership currently remains unstable.

On the whole, teachers' presentations engage many pupils' interest appropriately, and they provide interesting tasks that meet the needs of a majority of pupils. Staff have worked hard to develop a stimulating outdoor area for pupils. However, the principles of the foundation phase have not been implemented robustly.

Nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make adequate progress or better in their learning during their time at the school. Overall, over the last term, pupils' achievement and attainment have started to improve. However, pupils do not achieve to the best of their ability in their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</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>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Ensure a stable leader for the school
- R2 Increase the level of challenge in teaching
- R3 Implement the principles of the foundation phase in full
- R4 Improve pupils' oral and written Welsh skills
- R5 Improve pupils' numeracy and ICT skills

## **What happens next**

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. Estyn will review the school's progress.

## Main findings

### **Standards: Adequate and needs improvement**

On entry to the school, a majority of pupils' basic skills are lower than expected for their age. However, nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make adequate progress or better in their learning during their time at the school. Overall, over the last term, pupils' achievement and attainment have started to improve. However, pupils do not achieve to the best of their ability in their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Many pupils listen well and are beginning to contribute appropriately to class discussions. Many pupils' thinking skills develop suitably during their time at the school.

Across the school, many pupils develop oral skills confidently when communicating with their peers and adults. Soon after starting in the foundation phase, they respond appropriately to familiar instructions and questions in Welsh by using simple language patterns correctly. By Year 2, a minority are able to hold a conversation and express their ideas clearly when undertaking different activities and discussing their books. In key stage 2, most pupils speak clearly and respond suitably and sensibly in discussions about what they are doing. They use suitable vocabulary in a range of situations when discussing theme work in groups. By the end of key stage 2, many reach a good standard of bilingualism. However, a majority of pupils do not use the Welsh language voluntarily in informal situations around the school.

Most pupils' reading skills are developing well in the foundation phase, in line with their age and ability. The youngest pupils are beginning to recognise letter sounds and are beginning to build words with increasing confidence. By the end of the foundation phase, many use a variety of suitable strategies to read relatively fluently and correctly, and give good attention to punctuation. In key stage 2, many pupils develop reading skills in Welsh and English successfully, and show a good understanding of the text. They express an opinion about stories in their books and give due attention to punctuation and quotation marks. However, pupils' higher order reading skills, such as gathering information to use in theme work, are weak.

Across the foundation phase, many pupils develop their writing skills appropriately in a suitable range of different forms. By the end of Year 2, they write a sequence of sentences with accuracy, and use punctuation and spelling at a level that is suitable for their age and ability. They use interesting adjectives and vocabulary in their written work, for example when writing a newspaper report based on the story 'Y Feipen Fawr' (The Giant Turnip). A few more able pupils are beginning to select more complex words in order to create effect and hold the reader's attention. In key stage 2, a majority of pupils write appropriately for their age and ability in Welsh, for example when writing a persuasive letter to encourage the local council to reduce the speed of traffic outside the school, due to the dangers of fast-moving cars. However, the syntax of a minority of pupils' sentences is weak, and there are elementary errors in the standard of punctuation. Many pupils' standards of writing in English are sound. A notable example is the way in which pupils write a review of their favourite book and a newspaper report based on the effect of pollution on the local area. By

the end of Year 6, a majority use punctuation and paragraphs in order to structure and organise their written pieces. However, over-reliance on worksheets hinders pupils' ability to write independently, freely and at length, although this has started to improve recently. A majority of pupils' handwriting and presentation are not always neat.

In the foundation phase, most pupils use and apply their numeracy skills consistently in a variety of situations. By the end of Year 2, in a limited range of situations, they solve simple number problems suitably, use money in a real-life situation and use units of measurement correctly. Recently, many apply their number skills well to solve problems in the context of theme work. A good example of this is the way in which pupils follow instructions to measure in litres when making different types of medicine for pirates to 'cure a nasty cough and a tummy ache'.

By the end of key stage 2, a majority of pupils use a range of suitable strategies to solve problems appropriately and apply their numeracy skills confidently. Many pupils use their numeracy skills suitably when recording the results of scientific investigations. However, pupils across the school do not use their numeracy skills consistently enough in other areas across the curriculum.

A majority of pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing appropriately. Many have a sound understanding of how to stay safe online. In the foundation phase, many pupils use a suitable range of software and equipment appropriately in different areas of learning. Many of the school's youngest pupils control a toy confidently in order to follow a path across a pirate island. For example, pupils at the end of the phase have created a graph on how to travel to school and then write a paragraph giving reasons for the results. In key stage 2, pupils use suitable programs to convey information, for example when creating a PowerPoint on countries in the World Cup by combining pictures and written work effectively. However, a majority of pupils' range of skills across the school has not developed effectively enough to support their work across the curriculum.

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

The working relationship between pupils and staff is sound in the school and is an effective basis for maintaining a caring and supportive ethos. Nearly all pupils talk about their school with pride.

Pupils have a high level of trust in the staff and know that they will do their best for them. As a result, nearly all pupils enjoy school, understand what to do if anything is worrying them and feel completely safe there.

Many pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe online. Many pupils behave well and are very caring towards each other. An example of this is the mature way in which Year 6 pupils support latecomers to the school in lessons. Many of the oldest pupils understand the importance of sustainability by keeping the school grounds tidy.

Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and how to keep fit. This is reinforced successfully through physical activities within the curriculum and when leading and taking part in physical education activities regularly, such as lunchtime clubs and running a mile a day.

Many pupils in key stage 2 take advantage of opportunities to develop life skills, for example when preparing food to compete in the CogUrdd competition, performing publicly and raising money for charities. This contributes well towards developing their personal and social skills.

Many pupils show positive attitudes towards learning. By the end of key stage 2, many discuss their work confidently and talk about how they have improved it. Many pupils discuss effectively in pairs and groups. They work well with their peers and provide support to each other when necessary. As a result, many pupils develop as more confident learners. However, pupils have only very recently started to work independently and make decisions about how and what they learn.

Pupils who are part of the school's various committees develop their responsibilities well. For example, Year 6 pupils play games on the playground with foundation phase pupils at lunchtime to develop their oracy and number skills. The school council and eco committee contribute purposefully towards the school's improvements. A good example is how they raise money for different charities and collect fruit peel to make compost for the flowers. Overall, pupils' behaviour across the school is good.

Many pupils' understanding of values and equality is developing well. The school provides beneficial opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of being active citizens, for example through the support and work of pupil leadership groups, such as the sports council and the eco committee and school council. Another example is the pupils' fair trade work.

In a very short time, the headteacher has implemented robust procedures that have had a significant effect on the school's attendance percentage.

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

The quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. Teachers and assistants ensure that there is an active relationship between themselves and pupils. One of the school's strengths is the caring ethos that exists across the school, whereby pupils and staff respect each other. Teachers have thorough subject knowledge and work effectively with assistants. Across the school, staff model language of a high standard successfully, which helps pupils to develop their oral Welsh skills. However, staff do not always encourage pupils to use the Welsh language in informal situations regularly enough.

Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and small groups. However, there is a tendency at times for teachers to over-direct pupils. This limits the opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

On the whole, teachers' presentations engage many pupils' interest appropriately and they provide interesting tasks that meet a majority of pupils' needs. However, teachers do not challenge all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. At times, teachers have low expectations. Overall, teachers share clear instructions and question appropriately to develop pupils' understanding.

Teachers create relevant success criteria in order to evaluate to what extent pupils have succeeded in making progress during lessons. Teachers provide pupils with useful oral feedback on their efforts in lessons. There are suitable procedures in place for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of their peers. Teachers have recently begun to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to evaluate their written work.

Following the headteacher's guidance, the school has recently produced new curricular plans, which ensure that the school responds robustly to statutory requirements and the new curriculum for Wales. In a short time, plans across the school have improved and continue to develop. Good attention is given to the experiences that are provided in focus tasks in the foundation phase and suitable activities in key stage 2. However, planning does not ensure robust activities for the range of ability in order to respond to all pupils' needs. Staff have worked hard to develop a stimulating outdoor area for pupils. However, the principles of the foundation phase have not been implemented soundly as they have not addressed the inconsistencies in terms of provision, challenge and pupils' independence.

Teachers use the literacy, numeracy and ICT frameworks appropriately in their planning in order to ensure continuity and progression in the development of pupils' skills. However, it is too early to measure the effect of planning on pupils' outcomes. The school has started to implement the digital competence framework and is beginning to develop pupils' ICT skills. Pupils have recently been given opportunities to use their ICT skills more successfully across the curriculum.

The school enriches classroom experiences well through visits and opportunities to go on residential trips, such as to Llangrannog, which make a positive contribution towards developing pupils' Welsh language skills. Very recently, a majority of pupils have started to respond positively to the Welsh Language Charter. The headteacher encourages them to use more Welsh outside on the playground during lunchtime as they teach simple language games to foundation phase pupils. Provision for the Welsh dimension is good. Pupils are given opportunities to study the work of a number of Welsh artists and authors, including the work of Aneirin Karadog and Kyffin Williams. They learn about the history of famous Welsh people, such as St David, and visit local areas regularly.

### **Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement**

The school has effective arrangements for monitoring pupils' attendance and behaviour and, recently, this has had a positive effect on raising standards of attendance at the school.

Although the school has a pupil progress-tracking system, where teachers gather assessment information about their pupils, it is not used appropriately to challenge the most able pupils. The school has recently begun to use the information to track the progress of different groups of learners and set targets for each pupil. The headteacher has started to track progress in more detail to ensure that many pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Until recently, there was very little evidence to show pupils' progress in line with the targets in their individual plans.



Pupils with additional learning needs receive effective support in the classroom, and a majority make good progress. The data that is collected is now used effectively to identify areas for improvement, so that they can make the best possible progress. The school works effectively with other agencies in order to ensure effective advice and support for pupils. Very recently, pupils with emotional and social needs have been supported successfully in the classroom. These procedures, although recent, are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' attainment and wellbeing, and contribute well to the school's caring and inclusive ethos. Intervention programmes are provided for pupils regularly and progress is recorded appropriately. Many pupils make good progress in line with their age and ability.

Within a short period of time, the headteacher has established a very successful working relationship with parents. They value the effective communication systems that have been established recently through social media, the website and newsletters. As a result, an effective relationship between the school and parents ensures that parents are involved in their children's education. The school provides parents with appropriate information about their children's progress and identifies the next steps in their learning.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully through the curriculum, assemblies and the creative arts. A good example of this is the visit to the Assembly in Cardiff and the county council chamber in order to learn about their responsibilities.

The school has successful procedures for promoting eating and drinking healthily. Many pupils are aware of the importance of staying healthy. For example, older pupils have received training on how to conduct activities for the youngest pupils in order to develop pupils' fitness and sports skills successfully. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The school has worked with a number of local societies in order to enrich pupils' understanding of the culture and history of their local area. An example of this is the co-operation with a local history society to meet and talk to evacuees from the area. Pupils are given valuable experiences by taking part in concerts, services and local eisteddfodau within the community. As a result, they perform confidently in front of an audience, for example when playing instruments in the morning assemblies.

### **Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement**

The headteacher, who divides her time between Ysgol Bancffosfelen and a nearby school, provides a clear strategic direction for the school's work. She has a robust vision to challenge and develop the school, which focuses effectively on the school's ethos, providing effective teaching and raising pupils' standards. The vision is also based on ensuring success for all pupils and promoting their Welshness. The school has been through a period of instability in terms of staffing for several years. In a very short period of time, the headteacher has provided strong leadership and works successfully with staff, governors, pupils and parents to fulfil this vision. Since recently, the whole school community has worked closely as a team for the benefit of all pupils, and ensures that pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of the school community. However, the school's long-term leadership currently remains unstable.

There is a clear focus on the school's strategic development, and the headteacher has succeeded, in a short period of time, in identifying the school's strengths and areas for improvement, for example by ensuring that the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes are purposeful and lead to improvements. The school has developed the self-evaluation procedures very recently, which provide an honest and accurate picture of the school. Although the school uses first-hand evidence, which includes data analysis, pupils' performance, scrutiny of books and lesson observations, the process of responding to the findings has not had time to become embedded.

There is a good link between the findings of the self-evaluation processes, which ensures that the action plan is useful and successful. The plan is costed appropriately and includes sensible timescales and suitable criteria to measure their effectiveness. The headteacher has started to monitor the plan, and recent actions to improve attendance have shown success in a short period of time. The school has identified priorities appropriately and placed a strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and wellbeing. However, it is too early to be able to measure the effect and progress on pupils' skills.

The school works effectively with local schools in order to co-operate and plan jointly. The headteacher listens to the voice and views of parents through relevant questionnaires.

In a short time, the headteacher has succeeded in developing positive provision, for example by raising the standard of the learning areas in order to reach an acceptable and safe standard. The headteacher has ensured effective co-operation between her two schools and, as a result, pupils have benefitted from successful experiences to ignite their curiosity. For example, after seeing the biggest 'Book Show' in the world, this sparked pupils' enthusiasm for reading. The school also has a successful network with other schools in the cluster. For example, the school has benefitted from a science project to improve the investigative skills and confidence of pupils and staff.

Since she began in post, the headteacher has set high expectations for pupils, staff and governors in order to develop an effective and sustainable team. The headteacher and staff use the Welsh Language Charter and, as a result, pupils are beginning to show increasing pride in their Welshness.

Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school's life and work, and undertake their duties conscientiously. The headteacher's thorough reports ensure that they have purposeful knowledge of the school's performance. Recently, through effective co-operation, visits to the school and talking to pupils and staff, they have a good grasp of the school's standards. They use this information successfully in order to develop their role as a critical friend well. As a result, in a short time, they are aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

The school is now staffed appropriately and has clear and up-to-date job descriptions. Regular staff meetings discuss pupils' standards and wellbeing, and focus well on responding to priorities for improvement. Performance management arrangements are in place to develop teachers' skills further, and which are based on the priorities in the development plan. As a result, staff have recently been given beneficial opportunities to develop professionally in line with their own needs and those of the school.

The school responds successfully to national and local priorities; for example, it has introduced appropriate strategies to develop the Digital Competence Framework and the Welsh Language Charter. This is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' standards.

Teachers make purposeful use of their planning, preparation and assessment time, and the arrangements are managed well. The headteacher and governors manage the budget very 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 pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

The school has a range of very good quality resources to promote pupils' learning experiences. Indoor and outdoor learning areas include a range of purposeful equipment to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy, social and physical skills. As a result, they benefit from an extensive learning area that stimulates their learning appropriately.

## 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:

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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