



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gymunedol Cae'r Felin
Pencader
Carmarthen
Carmarthenshire
SA39 9AA**

Date of inspection: June 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Gymunedol Cae'r Felin

The school is situated in the village of Pencader in Carmarthenshire. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 91 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll. Pupils are divided into four classes.

Around 19% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is similar to the national percentage. Almost half of pupils speak Welsh at home and there are none from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 25% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is slightly higher than the national percentage. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Since the last inspection in May 2011, the staffing structure has changed significantly. The headteacher was appointed to the post in November 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

In a short period, the headteacher's vision of raising standards and developing pupils' confidence, independence and wellbeing has been established firmly. All staff reinforce and promote these values effectively and work well together to realise the vision by developing the school's provision and raising standards. One of the school's strengths is the way in which staff foster and maintain a very good working relationship with pupils, which has a positive effect on their standards and wellbeing. The effective and successful co-operation between teachers and support staff is a strength and provides purposeful support to pupils, in line with their needs. As a result, by the end of their time at the school, nearly all pupils make beneficial progress and achieve well from their starting points. Provision for the foundation phase and information and communication technology (ICT) has a positive effect on pupils' experiences. The influence of the pupil's voice is one of the school's obvious strengths, and most pupils undertake responsibilities enthusiastically. The work of members of the different committees and pupil groups has a positive effect on school life and the wellbeing of their peers.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Increase the use of Welsh by pupils in informal situations and within the classrooms
- R2 Ensure more opportunities for pupils to use the full range of numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R3 Provide opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' comments and feedback on their work

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, many pupils' skills are lower than the expected level for their age. By the end of their time at the school, nearly all pupils, including those with additional needs, make beneficial progress and achieve well from their starting points.

Across the school, many pupils have good communication skills. They listen attentively and discuss their work enthusiastically. They use syntax and vocabulary that is appropriate for their age and ability, for example when discussing the story of Noah. In key stage 2, most pupils speak maturely and express their opinions confidently, for example when discussing the best footballers in the world. However, a few pupils do not use the Welsh language voluntarily in the classroom or in informal situations.

Across the range of age and ability, many pupils read confidently. Many pupils in the foundation phase show a good phonic awareness from an early age. They read with good fluency and expression. In key stage 2, most read confidently and correctly, and show a sound awareness of the purpose of punctuation. They gather information by researching from books or on the internet when writing a report about the national rugby stadium.

From an early age, most pupils develop sound writing skills. They have good knowledge of letters, phrases and simple words. By the end of the foundation phase, many vary their sentences, punctuate correctly and use an interesting range of adjectives and similes to enrich their work. An example of this is the way in which they adapt the sequence of the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. In key stage 2, many pupils present their ideas and knowledge effectively in both languages. They show a firm grasp of spelling patterns, paragraphs and punctuation. Many write interesting, good quality extended pieces for a variety of purposes and audiences, for example when writing a factual report about one of the wonders of the world in their English work in Years 5 and 6. Their presentation of work and handwriting are good across the school.

Across the school, many pupils use their number skills successfully. For example, in the foundation phase, many develop their understanding of the value of coins and calculate totals successfully when buying healthy food from the class shop during break time. Many are able to solve written problems, for example when solving the distance between different villages correctly, based on a map. In key stage 2, many use a range of calculation strategies to solve increasingly difficult number problems. By Year 6, they work systematically to find the number of football matches that a specific number of teams will need to play in a competition when solving mathematical problems. The most able pupils are able to apply their knowledge of algebra to calculate this more easily and to find answers for a large number of teams. Many pupils in the foundation phase interpret information purposefully from lists, tables, diagrams and graphs. Pupils in key stage 2 build on this successfully, and produce and handle information from graphs effectively in scientific investigations. However, key stage 2 pupils do not use their numeracy skills frequently enough across the curriculum.

Pupils' ICT skills are one of the school's strengths, and most pupils use the full range of skills regularly and purposefully across the curriculum to a very high standard. Across the school, most pupils understand how to stay safe online and develop as very confident and independent learners. In the foundation phase, most develop their ICT skills very successfully in communication, data handling and modelling activities. From a very early age, pupils use purposeful apps confidently and create information booklets of a high standard. A notable example of this is the way in which pupils in the nursery and reception class worked together to design and create a booklet to re-tell the story of Easter by combining their thinking, creativity, literacy and ICT skills very effectively.

In key stage 2, most pupils produce information leaflets and search for information on the internet for their thematic work purposefully. Many interrogate, use and create databases well and for a purpose. The modelling skills of most of the school's older pupils are very good and they use spreadsheets very confidently to identify and check how much electricity the school has used over a specific period. They are able to present and handle this data successfully. Many develop their thinking and problem-solving skills purposefully by developing a series of instructions to program movements and text on a screen to promote awareness of bullying. All of these activities prepare pupils well for the next stage in their learning.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

The work of members of the different committees and pupil groups gives pupils a prominent voice and enables them to have a positive effect on school life and the wellbeing of their peers. This is one of the school's obvious strengths, and most pupils undertake their responsibilities enthusiastically. Members of the school council work together confidently and independently, represent the views of their peers and give them feedback in the morning assemblies. They have worked together very effectively and successfully to create a video as part of their application to a local company for a grant to develop the outdoor area. The purpose of the application is to try to secure eco-friendly furniture, re-surface the playground and paint games on it to develop pupils' numeracy. As a result, a grant of £14,000 was received, and the work of making improvements has begun. The school council also chooses a specific charity each year, and local and national charities have benefited from this over the years.

Members of the active eco committee raise their peers' awareness of the importance of sustainable living very effectively. They monitor each class each week without notice to check whether the lights and water taps have been switched off, and to check the contents of the rubbish bin. They also grow and sell vegetables and, by doing so, develop their peers' awareness of the importance of eating healthily. This term, they are focusing on beginning to pick up litter around the village and sort the rubbish for recycling.

Most pupils are very polite towards each other, staff and visitors. They are caring of, and sensitive to, each other's needs. The digital crew remind their fellow pupils of the rules of the internet well, and nearly all pupils have a sound awareness of the importance of staying safe online. The 'bydis buarth' (playground buddies) promote playing together on the playground and try to ensure that no child feels lonely. Older pupils have received specific training in order to ensure positive behaviour on the

playground, and this has a beneficial effect on behaviour in general. A highly interesting project is the way in which older pupils work with the kitchen staff every week to serve food to the elderly in the area. This promotes understanding across the generations very effectively.

Many pupils across the school have positive attitudes towards learning. Most pupils concentrate well in lessons and stay on task. Many persevere for extended periods when trying to solve practical numeracy tasks in the foundation phase, or when conducting scientific investigations in key stage 2. Overall, pupils complete their work successfully. They are not afraid to make mistakes and are willing to suggest different ways of solving problems in numeracy tasks.

Most pupils feel safe at school and know who to approach for advice or support when they are worried about something. However, the behaviour of a very few pupils is challenging and distracts them and their peers from their learning.

Pupils' awareness of a healthy lifestyle is developing well. Many take part in the daily walking activity around the school field or in after-school clubs. Most pupils have good knowledge of the problems that are caused by the misuse of substances, alcohol and tobacco, and anti-social behaviour.

Most parents and pupils respond positively to the frequent efforts of the school and the welfare officer to increase attendance rates. However, pupils' attendance does not compare well with that in similar schools, and a very few pupils are absent frequently, which hinders their learning.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching is good.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which teachers foster and maintain a very good working relationship with pupils, which has a positive effect on their standards and wellbeing. They create a stimulating and supportive learning environment in lessons, particularly in the foundation phase. Teachers present skilfully and provide a variety of activities that engage pupils' interest well. They model language effectively, which strengthens pupils' oral skills successfully. This has a positive effect on pupils' linguistic development, particularly those from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds and those to whom the Welsh language is completely new. However, in mathematics and science lessons at the top of the school, there is not an appropriate balance between providing teaching through the medium of Welsh and English. The school's staff work together effectively, and this is best seen in the joint planning by the foundation phase staff. The effective and successful co-operation between teachers and support staff is a strength and provides support to pupils in line with their needs. This enables pupils to complete their tasks successfully.

Teachers share the lesson aim with pupils regularly and provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to review and evaluate their work. They explain tasks clearly and ask questions purposefully in order to ensure that all pupils have a sound understanding. They provide pupils with beneficial feedback on how to improve their work further, but they do not provide regular enough opportunities for them to respond to comments in writing.

The school provides a varied range of valuable learning experiences that meet most pupils' needs successfully. In the best examples, teachers provide valuable opportunities at the beginning of each theme for pupils to suggest ideas and make a decision about what they would like to learn. Learning experiences are enriched by inviting visitors to the school, for example to promote online safety. Visits to different places, included the local community and a heritage project, enrich pupils' learning experiences further by creating interest in local history successfully.

The principles of the foundation phase have been established very successfully and are one of the school's strengths. They have been embedded successfully and are also used in the class at the bottom of key stage 2. Teachers provide a productive learning environment and plan learning experiences creatively to meet pupils' needs and interests. Staff motivate pupils to discover and learn independently from the outset, and develop pupils' skills effectively by providing them with stimulating and interesting experiences, for example based on characters from a story.

Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their skills effectively across the areas of learning. However, they do not provide regular enough opportunities for them to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum in key stage 2. The school provides well for specific groups of pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those to whom Welsh is a new language.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a friendly and familial community that promotes the importance of good behaviour, courtesy and commitment by pupils effectively. There is a strong emphasis on providing an equal opportunity for all pupils and promoting diversity, anti-racism and fairness. The school has established an effective system for caring for the pupils during playtime by giving the older pupils responsibility for looking after and playing with the younger ones. The school has good arrangements for healthy living. An example of this is walking a mile each morning around the school playground and healthy eating activities, with the school council encouraging healthy snacks during the morning break.

The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs and those for whom Welsh is a new language is good. The school provides regular support for individuals and groups of pupils, in line with their needs. As a result, most make sound progress in their learning and social skills. The school has successful partnerships with external agencies, which provide staff with specialist support and guidance.

The school holds effective collective worship sessions regularly, and promotes pupils' understanding of equality and diversity, and nurtures their spiritual and moral development successfully.

Provision for personal and social education is strong and, as a result, most pupils develop a sound understanding of personal health and safety and mental wellbeing. Provision ensures that most pupils treat each other with respect and understand the importance of considering each other's views.

Fairly recently, the school has adopted a new electronic method of tracking pupils' progress and monitoring the achievement of specific groups of pupils. Teachers use the system with increasing confidence in order to ensure that individual pupils are targeted. However, the school does not yet track the progress of specific groups of pupils incisively enough.

The relationship between the school and parents is sound. By sharing newsletters and updating the school website, the school provides parents with regular and useful information about day-to-day issues and what their children are learning. The school also provides appropriate opportunities for parents to develop their ability to support their children. An example of this is providing opportunities to attend reading sessions and to learn Welsh at the school. There is a beneficial relationship with the community, and this contributes successfully towards developing pupils' awareness of their area, their heritage and their Welshness. As a result, pupils have good knowledge, for example of the history of Glantalog woollen mill, Alltwalis toll gate and Abergwen woollen mill.

The school celebrates pupils' successes effectively by displaying their best work throughout the school and providing opportunities for them to share and celebrate their successes in assemblies. This engenders pupils' pride in their work. Pupils' creative skills are developed well by emulating and studying the work of local artists. Pupils are given regular opportunities to compete in eisteddfodau and perform in concerts during the year. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

In a relatively short period since being appointed, the headteacher's vision has been established firmly. It is based on raising standards and developing pupils' confidence, independence and wellbeing across the range of age and ability. All staff reinforce and promote these values effectively and work well together to realise the vision by developing the school's provision and raising standards. The school responds very positively to most national priorities. For example, the school has started to incorporate the requirements of the digital competence framework effectively.

Although the membership and leadership of the governing body have changed recently, they work together effectively to set a clear strategic direction for developing the school. Members of the governing body have up-to-date and detailed knowledge of the school's performance, the effectiveness of provision and pupils' progress. Meetings of the full body and purposeful sub-committees focus on pupils' achievement in addition to fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. They receive up-to-date and detailed information from the headteacher through comprehensive reports. Members of the governing body visit the school regularly in order to take part in a programme of quality assurance activities. Through learning walks to the different classes, they gather detailed evidence of pupils' learning experiences. As a result, they have a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are continuing to develop their role as a critical friend in order to hold the school to account for its performance.

The school's self-evaluation document is comprehensive, clear and honest. The headteacher and teachers have detailed knowledge of the school and use an effective range of evidence in order to establish and maintain a sound culture of continuous quality improvement. Monitoring reports are honest and identify strengths and areas that need to be developed further. By scrutinising plans and pupils' work, they have rigorous knowledge of standards across the school. As a result, self-evaluation processes have a positive effect on teachers' confidence and on developing provision.

The priorities for improvement that are included in the school development plan are identified directly from the findings of the self-evaluation process. They focus clearly on developing provision and raising standards. An example of this is the way in which the school has ensured consistency in its strategies to encourage positive behaviour and respond to challenging behaviour. As a result, all staff implement these strategies consistently across the school. The document includes actions and an appropriate timetable for action, in addition to responsibilities for the staff to undertake. Funding is allocated effectively for the different priorities. However, although there are targets for each aspect, quantitative targets are not used consistently enough to be able to measure progress in enough detail.

The school's staffing levels are commensurate with need, and staff expertise is used effectively to ensure stimulating learning experiences for pupils and support for the remainder of the staff. An example of this is the support that is provided in relation to the foundation phase and provision to develop pupils' ICT skills. Performance management arrangements are effective and suitable training is organised as required.

Grants are aimed appropriately at staffing and resources in order to enrich provision and expand resources. The headteacher and governing body monitor the use of the budget carefully.

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.

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