



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gynradd Brynsiencyn  
Brynsiencyn  
Llanfairpwll  
Anglesey  
LL61 6HZ**

**Date of inspection: December 2017**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Gynradd Brynsiencyn

Ysgol Gynradd Brynsiencyn is situated about three miles from Llanfairpwllgwyngyll on the Isle of Anglesey. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 53 pupils between four and eleven years old on roll, including nine in the nursery class. They are divided into two mixed-age classes.

Approximately 25% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is higher than the national percentage. Approximately 54% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 42% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is higher than the national percentage. Very few have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2010 following three years as acting headteacher. The school is currently in the care of the key stage 2 teacher, who was appointed deputy headteacher in September. She is supported two days a week by an experienced headteacher.

The school was last inspected in June 2012.

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

On the whole, leaders have been too slow to respond to ensure that provision has a positive enough effect on pupils' standards. Following significant support over the last year, the school's management and leadership are beginning to improve. However, due to the lack of strategic leadership over time, the school has not addressed the priorities in school development plans or the recommendations from previous inspections.

A majority of pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make appropriate progress from their starting point at the school. However, over the range of ability, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The deputy headteacher, supporting headteacher and staff work together purposefully to create a homely and inclusive ethos for pupils. Most pupils are friendly, polite and courteous towards each other and adults. They behave well both inside and outside the classroom.

The school's curriculum has been restructured recently and, on the whole, plans ensure that the school responds appropriately to statutory requirements. Teachers provide interesting learning activities, which motivate pupils to enjoy learning. However, learning experiences have not yet become established firmly enough to ensure progress and continuity in the development of pupils' skills as they move through the school.

| <b>Inspection area</b>                     | <b>Judgement</b>                                   |
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| <b>Standards</b>                           | <b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>              |
| <b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b> | <b>Adequate and needs improvement</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>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b> |

## Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen leaders' strategic role, including ensuring that the governing body operates more effectively in setting a direction and challenging the school's performance
- R2 Improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum and their presentation of work
- R3 Improve pupils' skills in making decisions and taking responsibility for their own learning in order to develop as independent learners
- R4 Ensure that planning and teaching provide suitable and challenging targets that respond to the needs of all pupils
- R5 Ensure that pupils have a better understanding of what they need to do in order to improve
- R6 Ensure more effective use of the outdoor area in the foundation phase

## What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will produce an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress around 12 months after the publication of this report.

## Main findings

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

On entry to the school, many pupils have basic skills that are lower than expected. On the whole, a majority of pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make appropriate progress from their starting point at the school. In general, over the last two terms, pupils' achievement and attainment have improved. However, across the range of ability, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Shortcomings in planning, in terms of providing continuity in learning, have an effect on pupils' achievement.

Many pupils in the foundation phase listen attentively and, with support and encouragement, discuss their work knowledgeably. More able pupils give extended answers, for example when discussing the main events in the story about the gingerbread boy. They respond intelligently to instructions and questions from staff. However, the answers of a minority of pupils are brief. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils communicate confidently in both languages and join in with discussions enthusiastically. They discuss their creative work about the 'Magic Bottle' and explain the reason for their choice meaningfully. At the top of the school, many achieve a good standard of bilingualism and change freely from one language to the other when discussing their work. However, a majority of pupils do not use the Welsh language voluntarily outside the classroom.

Many pupils' reading skills are developing appropriately and in line with their ability. By the end of the foundation phase, more able pupils read with increasing fluency and re-tell stories confidently. In key stage 2, most pupils' Welsh and English reading skills are developing appropriately. They respond to the texts that they read by referring to significant details in the text and develop as confident independent learners. More able pupils read with good expression and understanding. They give due attention to punctuation and quotation marks, and express an intelligent opinion on the story in their books.

By the end of the foundation phase, a majority of pupils write an increasing range of simple sentences correctly. They have an increasing understanding of vocabulary and are beginning to use basic punctuation in their work regularly. By the end of the phase, a majority of pupils make appropriate progress in their proficiency in using varied vocabulary and language to write pieces, for example in a self-portrayal. More able pupils are beginning to re-draft their work appropriately.

Many pupils' writing skills in key stage 2 are developing appropriately. They write for different purposes in Welsh and English, and show a sound awareness of different forms of writing, such as stories and letters. A good example is the letters that were sent to the community council and the Assembly Member about the litter problem in the area. Many older pupils use a capital letter, question mark and full-stop with consistent accuracy, and more able pupils use apostrophes and quotation marks, when necessary.

Pupils across the school do not apply their language skills consistently and effectively enough to support their work in subjects across the curriculum. Over-reliance on

worksheets hinders pupils' ability to write independently, freely and at length, although this has improved recently. A majority of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is not always neat.

In the foundation phase, a majority of pupils develop their numeracy skills appropriately. By the end of the phase, most add and subtract correctly by using tens and units. They recall previous learning well when remembering their 2, 5 and 10 multiplication tables to complete a pancake-sharing activity with their friends. Many show a good awareness of the value of different coins up to a pound when buying goods from the toyshop in the classroom. Many of the most able pupils arrange numbers to 1000 confidently. Many record and present data correctly, for example when producing a graph to record the classroom's most popular sports day race. Many use co-ordinates well to locate different features on an island.

In key stage 2, many pupils' number skills build purposefully on previous learning, for example when moving on from using co-ordinates to using a grid reference. A majority of pupils have a good understanding of mental calculation strategies and use them to solve number problems when using the four rules. An example of this is the work on solving word problems on aeroplanes that travel to different countries, and the reasoning work on buying tickets for a Beatles concert. Many have an appropriate understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Many pupils use their time skills effectively when using a timetable to organise a day of activities at the zoo.

In the foundation phase, pupils develop a limited range of ICT skills satisfactorily. A majority are able to use their modelling skills relevantly when controlling a simple robot to collect toys for Father Christmas. Older pupils use their communication skills appropriately to write poems about autumn leaves on a word processing program. Pupils in key stage 2 use ICT effectively to conduct research on the internet and present their work by using text and pictures to create posters about Judaism. They develop their ability to use a spreadsheet effectively to create different graphs of their friends' favourite football teams.

Pupils across the school do not develop a wide enough range of numeracy and ICT skills and use them independently to support their learning in the different subjects.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement**

Most pupils are friendly, polite and courteous towards each other and adults. Many co-operate with each other successfully and most are well-behaved during lessons and playtime. They feel happy and safe at school and know whom to approach if they have any problems. However, a minority of pupils do not show a sound enough understanding of e-safety issues. Many pupils enjoy and take pride in their work, and persevere with their tasks for extended periods. However, pupils' skills in working independently and being responsible for their own learning have not developed sufficiently. Only a minority have a sound understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.

Nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and understand the importance of keeping fit. There are plenty of opportunities for them to do so. A good example is the activities that are organised by the sports ambassadors. They play an active part in school life and offer practical ideas that

have a good influence on the number of pupils that take part in physical activities. The school council is enthusiastic and has supported the process of gaining the Welsh Language Charter silver award; however, it does not have much influence on the school's life and work.

Pupils' knowledge of issues relating to sustainability and children's rights is only just beginning to be developed.

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

Following support from the regional consortium, the school curriculum has been restructured recently and, on the whole, plans ensure that the school responds appropriately to statutory requirements.

Foundation phase plans have improved and continue to be developed. Good attention is given to the experiences that are provided in focus tasks, in which there are suitable opportunities for pupils to work independently and creatively. Planning in key stage 2 provides interesting learning activities, which motivate pupils to enjoy learning. However, planning across the school does not ensure suitable activities for the range of ability in order to respond to all pupils' needs. Provision in the foundation phase's outdoor area has not been developed in full.

Planning to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is now suitable. However, learning experiences are not established soundly enough to ensure continuity and progression in the development of pupils' skills as they move through the school. Planning to develop pupils' ICT skills is not effective enough, particularly in the foundation phase.

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 T Llew Jones, Kyffin Williams and Wilf Roberts. They learn about the history of famous Welsh people, such as St David, and visit the local area occasionally.

The school has procedures to ensure that pupils have an appropriate overall understanding of issues relating to sustainable development, for example through work on the theme 'Our Green World' and when encouraging daily recycling at the school. Raising money for charities such as Children in Need and taking part in Red Nose Day activities raise pupils' awareness of living conditions in other parts of the world effectively.

The quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. Staff manage pupils' behaviour successfully and ensure that there is an industrious relationship. One of the school's strengths is the caring ethos that exists in all classes, which fosters an environment in which pupils and staff treat each other with respect. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and work effectively with the assistants on the classroom floor. All members of staff are sound language models who help pupils to develop their oral Welsh skills. However, staff do not encourage pupils to use the Welsh language in informal circumstances frequently enough. Teachers remind pupils of their previous learning and provide purposeful opportunities for them to work in pairs and small groups. However, there is a tendency, at times, for teachers to over-direct pupils, and this limits the opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

Teachers and support staff provide pupils with useful oral feedback and question them effectively to examine their understanding. This provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning. Teachers make comments on pupils' work, which enable them to know how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve. However, pupils do not use written feedback routinely to improve their work effectively. On the whole, teachers do not include pupils adequately in order for them to be able to assess their own progress or that of other pupils.

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

Individual teachers have suitable systems for tracking the progress of pupils in their classes. They are beginning to use this information and test results appropriately, for example in identifying pupils who need additional support in literacy or numeracy by organising intervention sessions, where necessary. The quality of interventions is effective and pupils make good progress towards their targets. All pupils with additional learning needs have an appropriate learning plan. However, the system for monitoring pupils' progress across the school is inconsistent, and there is no effective system in place. As a result, pupils do not make the most effective progress in their learning.

The school has obvious strategies that succeed in supporting pupils' personal, emotional and social needs effectively. These contribute well to the caring and familial ethos within the school. The school helps parents to support their children appropriately by sharing improvement targets during parents' evenings. By providing beneficial sessions, the school succeeds in ensuring that most pupils have a good understanding that their lifestyle has an influence on their health and fitness.

Respecting multiculturalism, promoting aspects of diversity, anti-racism and developing fairness and equal opportunities are sound elements of the school's culture. There is a prominent emphasis on caring for each other, and this has a positive influence on pupils' behaviour. Teachers plan an appropriate range of activities in order to develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of Welsh history, culture and traditions. A good example of this is the work on Hedd Wyn.

The few extra-curricular experiences, such as visiting Foel Farm Park and the local Sea Zoo, provide beneficial experiences for pupils to improve their awareness of their local area. However, opportunities for pupils to enrich their experiences through such visits are limited.

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

### **Leadership and management: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement**

On the whole, leaders have been too slow to respond to ensure that provision has a positive enough effect on pupils' standards. Following significant support and guidance over the last year, the school's management and leadership are beginning to improve. The deputy headteacher, supporting headteacher and staff work together purposefully to create a homely and inclusive ethos for pupils. They fulfil their roles and responsibilities conscientiously and support each other well.

Following a difficult period in the school's history, the deputy headteacher has gained parents' confidence and works effectively with the supporting headteacher. However, there is currently no certainty about the stability of the school's leadership in the long-term.

There are obvious shortcomings in provision to develop pupils' skills; similarly, the leadership has not ensured that provision challenges pupils of all abilities in full and that all pupils achieve as well as they could. A number of recent strategies are now in place, such as developing provision in the foundation phase, developing literacy, numeracy and ICT strategies, and assessment for learning. However, they have not yet had a full effect on important aspects of the school's work that are in need of improvement.

Under the leadership of the supporting headteacher and staff from the regional consortium, the school now has appropriate self-evaluation procedures that are based on reliable evidence from teaching, learning and provision. The school's staff have ensured that they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have based their findings on robust evidence, and they are aware of what needs to be done in order to raise standards. In a short period of time, they have succeeded in producing an accurate evaluation of the school's current situation, in addition to setting achievable targets for improvement. The current self-evaluation report is a detailed document that makes appropriate use of data analyses and evaluations of the standards of work. Areas for development now link clearly with the priorities in the school development plan. However, due to the lack of strategic leadership from the school's leaders, they have not addressed the priorities in school development plans or the recommendations from previous inspections well enough. Members of the governing body are supportive of the school and are beginning to develop their roles and understand their responsibilities. Very recently, they have begun to visit the school to scrutinise books and see the standards of pupils' work. However, they are over-reliant on the commitment of a very few members. They do not have a good enough understanding of the school's performance in order to operate effectively enough as critical friends. They have not played a part in the process of producing the self-evaluation report or setting priorities for improvement. Nor have they held the school to account for standards, provision and leadership.

Teaching staff have recently taken advantage of a comprehensive training programme that corresponds with the priorities in the school development plan. This has led to better consistency in the quality of learning and teaching. The school works appropriately with other schools; by doing so, there are valuable opportunities for members of staff to share experiences and good practice to improve provision. Recent work on planning for skills has given teachers better guidance on how to develop them in different areas of learning.

The headteacher and governors keep an appropriate overview of the financial situation, and expenditure links purposefully with the school's targets and plans. They make sensible use of the pupil development grant to target pupils who are in need.

## 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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Publication date: 08/02/2018