



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

A report on

**Ysgol Pennant
Penybontfawr
Oswestry
Salop
SY10 0NT**

Date of inspection: March 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Pennant

Ysgol Pennant is situated in the village of Penybontfawr near the town of Llanfyllin in Powys local authority. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work, and English is introduced to pupils in key stage 2.

There are 70 pupils between 4 and 11 years old on roll. Around 41% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes, and very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has identified around 22% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is very similar to the national average.

The school is currently a pioneer school and is working with the Welsh Government and other schools to proceed with developments relating to the curriculum.

The acting headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2017 and the school was last inspected in September 2011.

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

During their time at the school, most pupils show effective attitudes towards their work and concentrate well in lessons. As a result, many make good progress. One of the school's strengths is the courtesy and respect with which pupils treat their peers and adults. The respect and ethos of close co-operation are also evident between all members of staff. This, in addition to the interesting learning activities that teachers provide, promotes pupils' positive attitudes towards learning. The Welsh language is at the heart of all of the school's work, and there is a prominent emphasis on promoting pupils' awareness of the history and culture of the local area and Wales. The acting headteacher has a clear vision for the school and, in a short period of time, she has introduced suitable strategies to ensure that provision is effective and that pupils' standards and wellbeing are good.

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 Improve pupils' higher order reading skills in key stage 2
- R2 Provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the subjects in key stage 2
- R3 Develop pupils' independent skills, particularly in key stage 2

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, the basic skills of a majority of pupils in language and mathematical development correspond with what is expected for their age. During their time there, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs and more able pupils, make good progress.

Across the school, many pupils make good progress in their ability to communicate orally in Welsh. They use a suitable range of vocabulary when talking to each other and adults. Many use the Welsh language very confidently in their activities and at other times during the day. In key stage 2, many pupils listen attentively and contribute purposefully in both languages in class discussions. The oral skills of pupils who come from non-Welsh-speaking homes develop at a very early stage.

Many pupils develop as confident readers in the foundation phase. The school's youngest pupils recognise sounds and letters correctly and, by the end of the phase, many read effectively and build unfamiliar words well. In key stage 2, many read meaningfully and with good expression in both languages. They gather information from different sources successfully, for example when researching the history of the Victorian era. However, they do not always develop higher order reading skills successfully, for example to enable them to predict what may happen next in a particular book, or to select relevant information by screening and scanning.

In the foundation phase, many pupils show good progress in terms of their writing skills. By the end of the phase, many write a range of sentences skilfully, for example when recording their work on space. They use capital letters and a full stop purposefully. In key stage 2, many write effective extended pieces in Welsh and English. For example, in Year 4, they present good work on the history of the population of the village of Llangynog. In Year 6, many write purposeful pieces on the history of the local workhouse and produce creative responses to the poem, 'Aberfan'.

Many pupils develop sound knowledge of mathematical concepts as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, many discuss shape work well, and the best use terms such as isosceles triangle skilfully. Many are able to order negative numbers confidently when completing tasks relating to temperature, and use Venn and Carroll diagrams to distribute objects effectively. Pupils use their numeracy skills soundly and naturally across the foundation phase's thematic activities. In key stage 2, many pupils discuss mathematical problems well and identify suitable courses of action. Most analyse data in the form of tables, pie charts and graphs successfully. A good example of this is the work on the data of famous historical disasters. However, pupils do not always apply their numeracy skills effectively enough across other aspects of the curriculum in key stage 2.

Most pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, they apply their skills confidently across the areas of learning. For example, they complete a game to place numbers in order and use a word processing program confidently to write a story. They play a role on film enthusiastically when conducting an interview

with characters from the story of Gelert. Most control a moving toy skilfully to follow a specific path. In key stage 2, most pupils use their ICT skills appropriately across the curriculum. For example, they gather information from the internet and present facts about historical characters, such as Nansi Richards. They read a spreadsheet and a database confidently when studying the history of Llanfyllin workhouse, for example. By the end of the stage, most pupils create good quality electronic presentations. For example, following a visit to Llangrannog, they produce simple films and use a coding programme to produce pieces of music skilfully.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and are confident that staff respond promptly to any concerns they may have. Many make beneficial use of the concerns box as a way of sharing their worries with staff. As a result of the work of the e-safety council, most pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe online. They also provide guidance to another local school in the catchment area on the dangers of the internet.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are very caring towards each other, and treat adults and visitors with respect and courtesy. Most pupils have good attitudes towards learning. They show enjoyment in their learning and willingness to discuss their work and successes with visitors. A good example of this is their pride when talking about their work relating to enterprise and their recent trip to Cardiff to a ceremony to celebrate their success.

Most pupils work effectively with their peers in groups and pairs, and respect other people's opinions. Many have a good understanding of what they need to do in order to improve their work. In the foundation phase, they are beginning to have more opportunities to work independently and to influence what they would like to learn within the term's theme. However, the pupils' contribution to this is not as evident in key stage 2.

Most pupils across the school have a sound understanding of how to live healthily and they make sensible choices in relation to food and physical activities. Many take advantage of the 'keep going' club, which gives them a beneficial opportunity to stay healthy during break times. Pupils take pride in the variety of physical activities that the school provides, such as the sports club in the summer and the dancing club in the winter. Sports ambassadors plan a number of beneficial activities for the rest of the pupils during break time.

Pupils are very glad of the opportunities to develop their leadership skills and play a prominent part in school life. For example, the 'cyfeillion caredig' (kind friends) help on the school playground when a pupil feels lonely or sad. The school council is very active in supporting a number of charities. For example, the council recently organised a coffee morning at the school to raise money for the Macmillan charity. All of this has a positive effect on pupils' awareness of the needs of others in the community and the wider world.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching is good. There is a robust working relationship between staff and pupils, which creates a successful learning environment. There is a strong Welsh ethos at the school, and provision encourages pupils to make full use of the

Welsh language daily. Staff take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' language and, as a result, by the end of key stage 2, many are confident bilingual learners with sound translanguaging skills.

Teachers and learning assistants work well together to ensure that pupils are given valuable experiences. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare effective lessons that motivate pupils to learn. They link lessons well with previous learning and use a range of methods skilfully. They explain new concepts clearly and ask probing questions. However, teachers do not always provide enough effective opportunities for pupils to develop their independent skills.

The school uses various assessment strategies, which ensure that there are opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers against the success criteria. Nearly all teachers provide appropriate oral feedback in order to move learning forward, and their written comments, where appropriate, provide pupils with beneficial feedback on how to improve their work.

Teachers plan successfully to develop the Welsh dimension, and this reinforces pupils' sense of pride in their language, the local area and Welsh culture. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to compete in local and national eisteddfodau. They study authors, such as T. Llew Jones, research into important events, such as the Aberfan disaster, and learn about the history of Mary Jones from Bala and Bishop William Morgan. All of this promotes pupils' awareness of their heritage very successfully.

Teachers plan in detail to ensure continuity and progression in subject skills across the curriculum. In the foundation phase, they plan thematically and are beginning to include pupils' ideas in plans. In key stage 2, teachers plan a number of exciting projects that develop pupils' skills successfully. For example, work on the Victorian era and disasters provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of literacy and ICT skills. However, planning does not always respond sufficiently to pupils' ideas and interests, or extend their numeracy skills consistently enough across all aspects of the curriculum in key stage 2.

The principles of the foundation phase have been established appropriately. The school plans valuable opportunities to use the outdoor areas, which extend learning successfully. Teachers provide interesting focus and continuous tasks that include suitable opportunities for pupils to role-play and practise their creative and physical skills.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school creates an inclusive and homely ethos for pupils and provides them with robust care, support and guidance. Staff know the pupils and their families very well, and the close relationship between the school and home is a strength. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. There are thorough arrangements for managing the site. Effective use is made of external partnerships, for example the police, to ensure that pupils understand how to stay safe online and the importance of not misusing substances.

The school's arrangements for tracking pupils' progress and wellbeing are effective. This ensures that staff have up-to-date knowledge of pupils' standards and, as a result, on the whole, they plan relevant learning programmes for them. Pupils with additional learning needs have detailed individual learning plans, and provision ensures that they make good progress from their starting points. Learning assistants are used successfully across the school to support individual pupils in their learning and implement a range of intervention programmes. Successful co-operation with a number of external services and agencies has a positive effect on the attainment and wellbeing of specific pupils.

The school promotes pupils' health and wellbeing effectively, and has appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. For example, the school has a fruit shop, and sports ambassadors encourage pupils to keep fit by organising ball, skipping and running activities during break times. As a result, most pupils understand the importance of keeping healthy regularly.

Provision to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural attitudes is good. Collective worship periods develop pupils' spiritual values successfully. The school prepares pupils to be active citizens by establishing groups such as 'cyfeillion caredig' (kind friends). The school council is active in encouraging pupils to develop moral values, for example by organising fundraising activities for various charities. Provision to develop pupils' social and emotional skills prepares them well to understand issues relating to equality and diversity. As a result, most pupils treat others with respect and care.

Arrangements for developing pupils' understanding of their culture are a strength at the school. Most are members of the Urdd and many compete regularly in eisteddfodau. They sing the Plygain around the local area at Christmas time and learn traditional folk dances regularly. Pupils are given a range of effective opportunities to learn about Welsh legends, for example the story of the Maid of Sker and Melangell. They know about the history of Nansi Richards and Hedd Wyn, and listen to contemporary folk music.

Leadership and management: Good

The acting headteacher has a clear vision that is based on raising standards and ensuring pupils' wellbeing. Since being appointed, and in a short time, she has introduced robust strategies to realise that vision. These include arrangements to strengthen the pupils' voice, new curriculum planning methods, and ensuring consistency in the way in which staff set targets to raise pupils' standards.

Teachers and assistants work together closely to provide valuable learning experiences for pupils. The headteacher has high expectations and, under her guidance, members of staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure continuous improvement.

Self-evaluation arrangements have been embedded suitably in the school's life and work, and have a positive effect on provision and standards. The analysis of pupil performance data and the acting headteacher's monitoring reports are analytical, on the whole. However, not all findings from the self-evaluation procedure are always based firmly enough on a range of first-hand evidence. As a result, the

self-evaluation document does not identify all strengths or areas for improvement in enough detail across all aspects of the school's life and work. The school improvement plan is a useful document that identifies staff responsibilities for implementing and monitoring priorities appropriately. Actions are clear and criteria are measurable.

Governors are very supportive of the school's work. They are regular visitors and contribute appropriately to the self-evaluation arrangements by conducting learning walks, listening to learners and scrutinising books. Their understanding of how the school is performing in comparison with similar schools is developing appropriately.

Performance management arrangements are effective. Staff improvement objectives link clearly with their professional requirements and the school's improvement targets. The acting headteacher supports the staff's professional development effectively by arranging internal training for them, and providing opportunities for them to attend external courses and visit other schools to share good practice. This has a positive effect on their teaching practices and pupils' outcomes.

The school is staffed appropriately and good use is made of staff expertise to enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, staff expertise is used skilfully to teach subjects such as physical education and music. Learning assistants support groups of learners and individuals effectively, and make a valuable contribution to their wellbeing and attainment.

Leaders allocate funding that enables them to implement their improvement programmes and activities appropriately. No pupils have been eligible to receive the pupil development grant recently.

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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).

© Crown Copyright 2018: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 17/05/2018