



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

A report on

**Ysgol Tremeirchion
Tremeirchion
St Asaph
Denbighshire
LL17 0UN**

Date of inspection: January 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Tremeirchion

Ysgol Tremeirchion is situated in the village of Tremeirchion near St Asaph, Denbighshire. It is a voluntary controlled Church in Wales school. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 73 pupils between three and eleven years old on roll, including 12 part-time nursery age children. The school's numbers have increased significantly over recent years.

Slightly over 3% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is significantly lower than the national percentage of 19%. Sixty-six per cent (66%) of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 26% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is higher than the national percentage of 21%. Very few have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in January 2011 and the school was last inspected in November 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

Ysgol Tremeirchion is a happy and caring community where pupils and adults work together effectively. During their time at the school, nearly all pupils make good progress. The caring relationship between older and younger pupils is a particular feature of the school's life. The school plays a central part in the life of the local community.

The vision for an industrious, inclusive and caring school is promoted effectively by the headteacher, staff, governors and parents.

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 Ensure that teaching provides an effective level of challenge for pupils
- R2 Ensure regular opportunities for pupils of higher ability to develop their extended writing skills in different contexts across the curriculum
- R3 Ensure that comments in the teaching and learning monitoring reports are more specific in order for leaders to respond to them more effectively

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' Welsh language skills are below what is expected for their age, and a few are above what is expected. Overall, most pupils' number skills correspond with what is expected for their age. As they move through the school, most make strong progress and achieve well by the end of key stage 2.

Most pupils develop oral Welsh skills quickly and speak confidently in a wide range of contexts. A strong feature is the way in which pupils use the language naturally and spontaneously around the school with their peers.

Reading skills are sound across the range of age and ability. Most pupils in the foundation phase develop early reading skills confidently and gain confidence while enjoying rich activities that encourage them to read, for example when concentrating on the story of the three little pigs. By the end of the foundation phase, most develop as confident learners and show sound phonic skills while interpreting unfamiliar words. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are confident readers in Welsh and English. They are able to express an opinion about structure and form with increasing confidence, and gather information to enrich their work from different sources, for example when finding information to develop their understanding of food rationing during the Second World War.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop sound reading skills. From the outset, they enjoy creative activities that provide them with rich opportunities to develop their writing in a range of contexts. They develop as confident writers and enjoy fun and challenging activities, for example when writing a letter to a zookeeper at Colwyn Bay zoo to ask whether they had lost an elephant.

In key stage 2, most pupils create an effective range of written work. Most structure their work correctly in Welsh and English, and punctuate and paragraph with increasing accuracy in line with their age and ability. The most able pupils create imaginative pieces and make use of adjectives and similes to enrich their work, for example when writing a letter to Liverpool City Council to protest about the flooding of the Tryweryn valley. However, a few more able pupils do not write to the same standard in contexts across the curriculum. Most pupils' translinguaging skills are developing soundly.

In the foundation phase, most pupils have a firm grasp of number facts and are able to use these skills confidently when solving activities and problems. Most deal confidently with measuring work and use non-standard and standard units, for example when using scales to measure the mass of objects. Most are able to create tally charts confidently and use data to create simple and accurate graphs about their favourite aspects of the age of the Celts.

In key stage 2, most pupils' numeracy skills are developing well. At the top of the school, most pupils have a sound grasp of number work, and they simplify fractions and use percentages confidently. They have a sound grasp of interpreting data and a good understanding of shape and space, for example when finding the area and

perimeter of standard and non-standard shapes. Most pupils succeed in applying their numeracy skills effectively across aspects of the curriculum, for example when gathering information and analysing the results of an experiment on the heart rate as part of their science work.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing well. They are able to use a range of hardware and software confidently, for example as pupils from Years 2 and 3 use control equipment to reinforce their awareness of cardinal directions. Most pupils in key stage 2 research into different aspects confidently and use their findings to enrich their work, for example when creating a presentation of different Arctic animals. Most pupils use tablet computers to record their comments in order to evaluate their practical activities at a later stage.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Provision to develop pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of the school's vision. Older pupils take care of younger ones naturally and maturely. Nearly all pupils are polite and thoughtful, behave very well and treat their peers and visitors with respect and care. They show pride when talking about their school and the wider community. This is a strong element of the school's work.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and keeping fit. They understand the effect this has on their body and wellbeing in seeking to live healthily. This is reinforced by physical activities both within the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. Nearly all pupils use the outdoor area and the school grounds to their full potential during their activities and at break time. Members of the eco committee promote positive attitudes towards recycling successfully, for example by creating a list of responsibilities and a programme for fulfilling duties. The school council is active and gathers the views of its peers successfully, for example by prioritising funding in order to buy furniture to keep their coats and bags tidy. They develop a sound awareness of leadership roles and the importance of democracy.

Pupils take pride in the excellent opportunities they are given to express their opinion and play an important part in their community, for example when taking part in services and contributing to the arrangements to celebrate the school's 150th anniversary. All pupils are included fully in the school's life and work, for example as the digital ambassador gives peers guidance on the latest ICT equipment.

Nearly all pupils feel safe at the school and know whom to approach if they are worried. They have sound knowledge about online safety.

Most pupils show positive attitudes towards their work. They respond enthusiastically and maturely to teachers' expectations, and understand what they need to do to develop their work further. Many are able to make decisions about their written work, for example when choosing a topic for which to prepare instructions. They take pride in the fact that they are able to write about subjects that are of interest to them.

Most pupils persevere well and concentrate for extended periods. They discuss and explain their work confidently. They work well with their peers and offer support to

each other voluntarily. Most pupils develop as enthusiastic and confident learners, and respond successfully to the caring and supportive environment that is an integral part of the school. However, a very few pupils do not take enough care over the presentation of their work.

Older pupils are keen to shoulder responsibilities and respond well to additional duties. They help to take care of the order and safety of pupils as they go to the church for assemblies, and keep watch so that everyone has friends and feels happy during break time.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The standard of teaching across the school is good. There is a very close and supporting working relationship between all adults and pupils across the school. This relationship is one of the school's strengths. Teachers know pupils well and provide them with effective support while they work and interact with their peers. Staff treat pupils fairly and equally and, as a result, pupils feel happy in their classes. All teachers encourage pupils to use their Welsh language regularly.

In most lessons, teachers use effective questioning techniques in order to encourage pupils to think. They ensure that learning activities are engaging and entertaining, and that activities maintain the liveliness and flow of lessons. In the youngest class in the foundation phase, a range of stimulating and challenging activities is used to encourage learning, which nurtures pupils' independence effectively. Teachers provide stimulating experiences that hold pupils' interest very effectively. At the top of the foundation phase and in key stage 2, most lessons provide interesting and challenging opportunities for pupils to develop their work. In the very few examples where teaching is not as consistent, planning does not always provide suitable activities to challenge more able pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.

Feedback that is provided to pupils is valuable and guides the next steps in their learning effectively. Across the school, teachers agree on purposeful targets with pupils in order for them to identify the next steps in their learning. Most pupils have a good understanding of the role of these targets in their development. The school has effective internal systems that provide an opportunity for pupils to identify their own personal strengths and weaknesses, for example by understanding the way in which they learn best.

Teachers plan an effective and rich range of activities and learning experiences for pupils across the school. Planning for the foundation phase and its areas of learning, and for the national curriculum, is sound. Teachers provide pupils with effective support while they work, for example by providing support and intervention for specific pupils in order to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. This has a positive effect; for example, good progress can be seen in the reading of most pupils who receive specific support. Teachers make effective use of resources both indoors and outdoors in order to promote pupils' learning. The school's outdoor areas and grounds are used skilfully in order to enrich pupils' outdoor learning experiences. Staff make consistent and effective use of educational visits and the local area in order to ensure that pupils' experiences have a good foundation in their local area.

The school has appropriate plans for developing pupils' skills. It provides rich experiences for them to develop their oral skills, for example when taking part in school assemblies at the local church. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to read a range of different materials as part of their thematic work, and to write effectively in a range of forms. There are robust opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in different contexts, for example when creating graphs as part of their science work. However, provision does not always allow a few more able pupils to apply their writing skills in full and to the same level in different contexts across the curriculum.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring and familial community that promotes diversity, anti-racism, fairness and equal opportunities successfully. Regular visits to the nearby church for assemblies and singing sessions make a beneficial contribution towards pupils' moral and spiritual development. All staff model tolerance and fairness effectively. As a result, nearly all pupils show pride in their school, which is demonstrated as they sing 'Cân Ysgol Tremeirchion'.

There are robust links with the local playgroup in order to facilitate the transition process as pupils settle in the nursery class. There are valuable links with parents, and regular progress meetings are held in order to share information and reinforce what parents can do to support their children with their work. Useful packs are shared that focus on the most effective ways of promoting literacy at home. Many parents support and co-operate with the school to improve provision, for example by developing areas of the school grounds as a stimulating place for pupils.

The school has effective strategies to support pupils' emotional and social needs. Teachers work purposefully with a number of external services and agencies. These procedures have a positive effect on pupils' standards of attainment and wellbeing, and contribute successfully towards the school's caring and inclusive ethos.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy eating and drinking habits, and ensure suitable opportunities for them to take part in physical exercise sessions.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which staff identify pupils' additional and personal learning needs from an early age. Support staff and teachers provide high quality support for pupils. The valuable range of intervention programmes and strategies enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. Individual education plans for pupils with additional learning needs are of a good standard and include specific and measurable targets. They are evaluated regularly, and pupils and parents play a full part in the review process. Early intervention ensures that pupils receive the necessary support in order for them to succeed in their work.

The school has robust systems for tracking progress. Teachers use a range of information and test results successfully to plan and provide additional support for specific groups. Staff know the pupils and their families well, and they have positive relationships with them that, in turn, promote pupils' positive attitudes towards their work.

A range of valuable procedures allows pupils to gain confidence by considering their personal strengths. As a result, the few pupils who experience emotional and behavioural challenges are able to cope more maturely and confidently with those challenges.

Provision to develop pupils' creative skills is sound. Most pupils are given valuable opportunities to develop their creativity through musical and artistic activities, which include performing in the church and the community, in eisteddfodau and local performances.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are appropriate and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has a robust vision that is based on developing pupils' wellbeing, and maintaining and raising standards. The school's leaders place a strong emphasis on developing the school as an effective learning community of 'one family together', in which all individuals are valued. Successful co-operation with the church and the wider community ensures all stakeholders' commitment to the vision.

Under the headteacher's robust leadership, staff have a good awareness of the school's standards and performance. They are responsible for specific aspects of the school's work and contribute purposefully towards maintaining standards. Leaders make very effective use of the school's performance data, and analyse the results of internal and national tests successfully. This, for example, has led to raising many pupils' standards of Welsh reading and oracy.

Governors have rigorous knowledge of the school's performance and play an increasing role in self-evaluation processes. By working effectively with the school's leaders, talking to pupils and scrutinising their workbooks, they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use this information very effectively to make decisions and when setting a strategic direction for the school's work. As a result, they succeed in supporting and challenging the school about its performance. This, for example, has had a positive effect on standards of mathematics across the school.

The school's self-evaluation report is a very clear and honest document. Staff and leaders have rigorous knowledge of their school, and robust processes for evaluating the school's work lead to continuous improvement. Overall, monitoring reports on teaching and learning are evaluative and identify aspects to be developed further. However, comments are not always incisive enough to enable leaders to address shortcomings at an early stage.

Priorities in the school development plan derive directly from the aspects for development that are identified in the self-evaluation report. It includes detailed priorities for improvement, in addition to steps and a timetable for action, staff responsibilities and financial requirements. The school's leaders present a purposeful review of progress in relation to the previous plan's priorities, and staff and members of the governing body monitor progress regularly.

The headteacher works very effectively with schools in the catchment area and further afield to develop aspects of provision, with a view to raising standards. A notable example of this is the way in which the school has started to adapt its schemes of work to correspond with the Curriculum for Wales, and to develop digital ambassadors. The school responds well to local and national priorities. The literacy and numeracy framework and digital competence framework have been implemented within the school's plans. The effect of this can be seen on pupils' achievement.

Although the building is small, the school makes the best use of it and the surrounding land. The school has an appropriate number of staff to ensure that a broad curriculum is delivered. Staff expertise is used successfully to enrich specific aspects of the curriculum, for example to develop music and physical education. Very good use is made of resources and grants that are available to enrich the curriculum and raise standards. Decisions on expenditure link very closely with priorities for improvement. All of the school's funding is monitored carefully by leaders in order to develop provision and improve pupils' standards of achievement.

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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