



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

A report on

**Ysgol Ty Ffynnon
King George Street
Shotton
Deeside
CH5 1HX**

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by

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

About Ysgol Ty Ffynnon

Ysgol Tŷ Ffynnon is in Shotton, in the Flintshire local authority. It formed in September 2014 when Shotton Infants School merged with Taliesin Junior School in a new building. Currently, there are 266 pupils on roll, in 11 classes, which include three of mixed age in key stage 2, a part-time nursery and two specialist resource classes.

Many pupils speak English at home, with a minority speaking English as an additional language. Around 25% of the school's pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average of 19%. The school identifies 26% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is higher than the national average of 21%.

The headteacher took up her post in 2015. This is the combined school's first inspection.

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 school provides an inclusive and nurturing learning environment for pupils, with a strong focus on meeting their individual needs. Across the school, including in the resource classes, pupils enjoy their lessons and make good progress. They develop their literacy and numeracy skills well, and acquire positive attitudes to learning.

Teachers and support staff work together successfully. They manage pupils' behaviour sensitively and effectively and create a purposeful working environment. The school provides many rich learning experiences that support pupils' all-round development, helping them develop into confident and capable learners.

The headteacher has a clear and powerful vision for moving the school forward. The school's senior leaders provide effective support. Together, they create a dedicated and constructive ethos in the school, which supports continuous improvement well.

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 Use pupil performance information more strategically
- R2 Develop pupils' independent learning skills in the foundation phase
- R3 Improve standards in Welsh in key stage 2 and pupils' knowledge of Welsh culture and heritage across the school

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Across the school, many pupils make good progress over time and most progress well in their learning. In particular, they develop their literacy and numeracy skills effectively. Groups of pupils, including those with additional learning needs, more able pupils and pupils learning English as an additional language, develop well from their starting points. Nearly all pupils in the school's learning resource classes make particularly strong progress with their social and communication skills.

During their time in the school, most pupils develop strong speaking and listening skills. For example, most pupils in the reception class listen carefully for the initial letter of their name before going to stand in line. In key stage 2, pupils listen to one another respectfully during classroom discussion. Across the school, most pupils talk to each other and adults readily and make themselves understood well. By Year 6, most are highly articulate. For example, they give reasoned arguments to consider who should be paid more, doctors or footballers. Most pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress with their communication skills, helping them to access the curriculum appropriately.

In the foundation phase, most pupils begin to develop their early writing skills effectively. In the reception class, a few more able pupils form letters correctly and use phonetically plausible spelling to write a letter. Many pupils in Year 2 write effectively for different purposes. They present their work well and more able pupils use adjectives and connecting words successfully to colour and extend their work. In key stage 2, most pupils develop a strong understanding of writing in different styles. For example, they study different poetic forms and apply these successfully to write a poem about 'The Beast', using similes, metaphors and alliteration effectively.

Most pupils' reading skills are developing well. In the nursery, pupils generally make good progress with learning letters and sounds. By Year 2, most pupils read simple texts confidently and use their phonic skills successfully to decode unfamiliar words. Most pupils in key stage 2 enjoy reading and talk with interest about different texts, describing characters and story lines well. Many older pupils use higher order reading skills effectively to access information quickly for topic work. They know how to use dictionaries to support their writing and access information in books and online to research topics successfully.

Most pupils develop their number skills well in the foundation phase. For example, in Year 2, more able pupils double three digit numbers independently and accurately. They roll a dice to find their starting point, and are excited to see who will make the biggest number. Most pupils apply their reasoning and problem solving skills well in practical ways, such as throwing three bean bags into numbered buckets and working out which combination will give them the highest score. In key stage 2, many pupils solve problems using multiplication and division word problems efficiently. They understand fractions, how to make estimations, and how to convert lengths from centimetres to millimetres accurately including using decimal places. Most pupils use and apply skills they have learned in the mathematics lessons effectively. For example, in Year 6, pupils use their reasoning skills well to work out

which block of ice will melt first in a science investigation. They plot their findings accurately on a line graph and interpret their results successfully.

Across the school, most pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively. Foundation phase pupils access applications on tablet computers confidently and use these purposefully to take photographs and record videos, adding their own captions. They use mathematical games and a programmable toy confidently, developing simple coding skills effectively. Most pupils in key stage 2 use search engines skilfully to research information and prepare presentations confidently to share with their peers. They handle data well and use a variety of applications to produce videos and sound clips, including radio news items. Most pupils develop an effective understanding of the processes involved in coding through practical outdoor activities.

In the foundation phase, most pupils are enthusiastic about learning Welsh and make good progress. By Year 2, they ask and respond to simple questions, follow instructions and write simple phrases appropriately, such as to create a simple script. Many read their own work back effectively. Most pupils in the learning resource classes show a good understanding of simple words and phrases and follow basic instructions given in Welsh successfully. During structured sessions, many pupils in key stage 2 build on their Welsh skills suitably. For example, they begin to use the past tense. However, in general, older pupils do not develop their Welsh skills sufficiently and they do not have a firm enough understanding of the advantages of learning the language.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop effectively as confident and capable learners, with strong social skills. They show respect and consideration towards others and interact positively with each other and with adults. Most pupils respond effectively to the school's high expectations and behave well in lessons and around the school, including at lunch time. They understand how they should behave towards one another, for example when they draw up their own set of behaviour rules in Year 2.

Most pupils across the school engage particularly well in their lessons. They concentrate and persevere for suitable lengths of time. Most pupils work well individually, in pairs and in groups. For instance, younger key stage 2 pupils work successfully in groups to carry out science investigations, explaining confidently how they should work as a team. In key stage 2, most pupils work independently, such as when working on their presentations. In the foundation phase pupils begin to develop their independent working skills suitably in adult directed activities such as constructing habitats in the craft area. However, overall, they do not develop their ability to make choices and direct their own learning well enough.

Nearly all pupils participate well in activities and express enjoyment in their learning. Reception pupils talk excitedly about story making in the outdoors with small world animals, and this inspires them to record their story in the classroom. By the end of stage 2, pupils talk about relishing their tasks, especially if they find work difficult. In the learning resource classes, nearly all pupils respond very positively to staff. They build their confidence appropriately and enjoy the tasks and activities. For example, they join in singing 'bore da' enthusiastically and competently at the start of the day.

Nearly all pupils develop an appropriate understanding of which foods are healthy to eat. Most pupils recognise the importance of exercise and take advantage of the opportunity to run, dance and be active outside at lunchtimes. They appreciate opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities such as football and netball.

Pupils are proud of their responsibilities around school and demonstrate confidence and commitment to improving aspects of school life. In particular, the eco committee understand their roles well and lead successful events that promote pupils' understanding of sustainability efficiently. For example, they plan and organise activities for the whole school leading to greater awareness of the benefits and possibilities of recycling. Across the school, pupils develop their confidence and resilience effectively. Many are curious and eager to talk to visitors.

Most pupils feel safe in school and talk confidently about how teachers and friends help them if they are upset or worried. When using the internet, most pupils have a comprehensive understanding of how to stay safe online.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching is good overall. Nearly all teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They manage behaviour calmly and consistently and treat pupils with respect. Together with support staff, they build strong working relationships with pupils. This creates a positive and purposeful atmosphere in the school. In the learning resource classes, staff use rewards and incentives very effectively to encourage pupils' good behaviour and involve them in their work. Most teachers succeed in engaging pupils' interest well so that they focus successfully on their tasks. For example, they find out what pupils want to learn about specific topics, involving them directly in their learning. They make good use of resources, including ICT resources, to support pupils' learning successfully. In the learning resource classes, staff plan an effective variety of interesting activities and pace sessions well to meet individual pupils' learning needs. They create an attractive and stimulating atmosphere, which maintains pupils' interest effectively.

Nearly all teachers organise and manage their lessons well. This allows pupils to settle quickly to their work. There is a strong focus throughout the school on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills systematically and teachers plan their lessons well to build pupils' skills progressively. They take very good account of the needs of different groups of learners to challenge them effectively.

During lessons, most teachers provide useful feedback to help pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They use praise well to motivate pupils and support their progress. Nearly all teachers question pupils skilfully to build on prior learning, check their understanding and encourage them to think for themselves. Teachers develop pupils' ability to reflect on and assess their own work and that of other pupils increasingly effectively as they move through the school. This develops pupils' resilience and confidence to learn from their mistakes. Purposeful use of assessments enables teachers to plan effectively and consistently for pupils' next steps in learning.

In the foundation phase, teachers provide many beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn through carefully planned adult directed activities, with a strong focus on

developing literacy and numeracy skills. In general, teachers provide a stimulating learning environment and they plan specific tasks to add to the enhanced provision so that pupils practise their skills appropriately. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to follow and develop their own interests through exploring and experimenting freely in the continuous provision. There are too few opportunities for pupils to choose where and how they learn, and to develop fully as independent learners.

The school has recently developed its outdoor provision, including an attractive forest school area. Teachers across the school use this provision increasingly well to help pupils develop specific skills and to stimulate and inspire them. For example, Year 1 pupils learn about estimation and non-standard measures effectively while moving between different stations in the outdoor area. Pupils in Year 3 use the forest area to investigate sounds and sights in a natural habitat. These sensory experiences deepen pupils' understanding of language and provide useful inspiration for their poems about animals.

The school's curriculum provides pupils with rich learning experiences across a range of subjects and areas of learning. These include good quality physical education sessions and opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills through working with visiting artists. Teachers are beginning to use trips and visits effectively as a stimulus for learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 used a range of calculation skills to plan a trip to Iron Bridge in Telford related to their study of the Victorians.

Staff have recently developed a strong Welsh ethos in the school. The Welsh language has a prominent place on displays and there are regular opportunities for pupils to hear and use simple Welsh phrases throughout the school day as part of their daily routines. However, the focus on developing pupils' Welsh language skills is at a relatively early stage of development and has not had time to impact on standards yet, particularly in key stage 2. Overall, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about their Welsh heritage.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a very caring and inclusive community. It gives a high priority to nurturing pupils' personal and social skills and supporting them to develop as healthy and confident individuals. There is a clear and consistent focus on teaching pupils to respect themselves and others, to keep safe and learn to enjoy and value rich learning experiences. As a result, most pupils are considerate of each other, courteous and happy at the school.

Staff track and monitor pupils' progress effectively. This enables teachers to identify and target pupils who would benefit from additional support effectively. All pupils with additional learning needs have useful individual education plans that include meaningful and specific targets. Pupils and parents contribute appropriately to these, and the school reviews them regularly. Staff provide a wide range of high quality and purposeful intervention programmes that enable groups of pupils, such as those with English as an additional language, to make good progress.

There is a particularly strong emphasis on supporting vulnerable pupils to build their self-esteem and confidence so that they can participate purposefully in lessons. The school's nurture group, 'Clwb Camau Bach', provides a safe place where pupils develop their social skills highly effectively. This includes provision for them to eat their lunch in a small group in a quiet environment. Teachers in the learning resource classes work very closely together and liaise weekly with mainstream staff to support integration effectively. The school works closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils receive specialist support when it is required.

The school's engagement with parents is a particular strength. Through useful weekly newsletters, text messaging and computer applications, the school communicates effectively with parents. It is successful in developing parents' capacity to support their children through well-attended family learning sessions where parents learn alongside their children. 'Caffi Ffynnon' gives parents a useful opportunity to visit the school informally. Reports to parents are informative and reflect the individual child well. They include detailed comments on pupils' standards across the curriculum and give useful advice.

Staff promote pupils' health and wellbeing effectively and there are appropriate arrangements to support pupils' healthy eating and drinking. The school provides a wide range of clubs and activities that develop pupils' understanding of how to live healthily. These include netball, hockey, dance and a nutrition workshop.

There are many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to take on meaningful responsibilities across the school. For example, e-cadets help other pupils to understand how to stay safe online and provide guidance with specific ICT skills. The school provides effective opportunities for pupils to develop and express their opinions, both in lessons and through the activities of the eco-committee and the school council. The eco-committee have been particularly active in organising successful events to promote recycling.

The school has valuable provision to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. There are useful opportunities for pupils to participate in and lead whole school assemblies and class activities that allow them to reflect and consider their values and beliefs. A valuable programme of personal and social education helps pupils to learn about important values such as respect, tolerance and equality effectively. For example, a recent focus on the meaning of 'Mothering Sunday' and addressing racism raised pupils' awareness suitably. The school makes the most of community links to provide many rich opportunities for pupils to develop their cultural and creative skills. These include working with visiting artists, and taking part in local eisteddfodau and drama productions in collaboration with other schools. Currently, all Year 4 pupils are developing their musical understanding and learning to play a string instrument as part of a beneficial partnership with the local authority music service.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides effective leadership and sets a clear strategic direction for developing the school. A conscientious deputy and senior leadership team support

her successfully. Together they create an ethos that encourages close teamwork and focuses purposefully on improving provision and outcomes for all pupils. The headteacher has succeeded in drawing together staff across the school to work together collaboratively and have high expectations of themselves and each other. Whole staff discussion and involvement in monitoring progress have led to a strong culture of improvement and accountability, changing attitudes, improving understanding and raising standards successfully.

Professional, open and honest dialogue at every level enables staff to work well together. The distribution of responsibilities enables teachers to be more aware of their specific roles in delivering strategic plans for improvement. Meetings lead to clear action points that ensure consistency in approaches and expectations across the school, for example in improvements to pupils' behaviour and attitudes to, and engagement in, their learning.

Governors support the school's work well, understand their responsibilities and act appropriately as a critical friend. Their involvement in learning walks, book scrutiny and discussions with subject leaders supports their understanding suitably. It enables them to ask questions that are becoming more challenging about pupil progress and standards.

The school gathers the opinion of a wide range of stakeholders as part of its self-evaluation processes. This includes the views of parents, pupils, all staff and governors. Leaders gather information on pupils' progress through scrutinising pupils' books, undertaking lesson observations and analysing data. Although reports that derive from monitoring activities recognise strengths and areas for improvement appropriately, they do not always have a sharp enough focus on evaluating pupil outcomes and progress over time.

Leaders base priorities for improvement firmly on the outcomes of self-evaluation and use the findings from external monitoring reports well. As a result, the school has a successful track record of improvement. The school development plan identifies areas requiring further improvement accurately. It focuses well on improving pupils' literacy, numeracy, Welsh and ICT skills. Leaders ensure that funding links appropriately to each priority and that staff understand their responsibilities for delivering actions and monitoring progress, for example in using online resources effectively to develop pupils' ICT skills.

There are effective systems for managing the performance of teaching and support staff that help to bring about improvements to provision and standards. Leaders arrange relevant and regular professional learning opportunities to develop staff expertise and knowledge. These have a positive impact on the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils. For example, staff training to implement a specific programme to develop pupils' phonic skills has led to improved standards of writing across the school.

Teachers welcome opportunities to develop their professional expertise. A notable example is the introduction of a whole school approach to developing pupils' reasoning skills, and improvements to the teaching of mathematics. This helps pupils to apply their problem solving and numeracy skills across the curriculum consistently well.

The school has enough experienced teachers and support staff to deliver the curriculum effectively. Leaders make appropriate use of staff expertise to raise pupils' standards. Welsh speaking staff support their colleagues in developing their Welsh language skills. Staff from the resourced provision share their expertise in supporting pupils with specific additional learning needs very effectively. This helps these pupils to integrate into the life of the school, raising their self-esteem, and enables them to make good progress from their differing starting points.

The headteacher and governors manage the budget well and monitor spending carefully. Recent investment in a reading programme is improving most pupils' reading skills effectively. The school uses the pupil development grant purposefully to support pupils eligible for free school meals, for example by supporting them in attending residential trips and visits to local attractions. The nurture class develops targeted pupils' self-esteem and engagement in learning very successfully.

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:

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