



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

A report on

**Ysgol Yr Hendy
Iscoed Road
Hendy
Pontardulais
Carmarthenshire
SA4 0XD**

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by

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

About Ysgol Yr Hendy

Hendy Community Primary School is in the village of Hendy near Llanelli, Carmarthenshire. Currently, there are 164 pupils on roll, aged from three to eleven, including five nursery pupils who attend full-time. There are seven classes, all of which are mixed age. The school provides education through the medium of Welsh or English in two separate language streams. There are four classes in the Welsh stream and three in the English stream. Pupils in the English stream learn Welsh as a second language.

About 15% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average of 19%. The school has identified around 16% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is below the national average of around 21%. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Most pupils are from a white British background. A minority of pupils speak Welsh at home and very few have English as an additional language.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2014. The school's previous inspection was in February 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

All pupils feel valued, safe and listened to in Ysgol yr Hendy. Behaviour is exemplary and there is a sustained drive on very successful anti-bullying initiatives. Most pupils make effective progress from their starting point.

The school cares exceptionally well for all of its pupils. There is a cohesive ethos around the school that encompasses parents, pupils, staff and governors alike. The very strong working relationships between all pupils and staff ensure that there is a positive attitude to learning throughout the school. Everyone is expected to do their best. Overall, teaching is of good quality, and teachers often adapt their planning skilfully to provide learning opportunities based on pupils' interests and curiosities.

The school benefits from strong leadership. A clear and robust vision has been established for the school that puts the wellbeing of all children and staff at the heart of all that it does. This vision is shared successfully across the whole school community and it results in improved provision and outcomes for all pupils.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all activities provide appropriate challenge in order to develop pupils' skills
- R2 Improve pupils' writing skills across the curriculum
- R3 Refine self-evaluation and improvement planning processes to have a clearer focus on specific areas for development

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to anti bullying strategies for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils enter the school with literacy and numeracy skills that are in line with, or below, those expected of pupils of a similar age. During their time at school, most pupils make effective progress from their starting point. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress towards their individual targets.

Pupils in the Welsh and English streams achieve similar standards and make similar progress throughout their time in the school.

Nearly all pupils show exemplary listening skills. They pay attention well in class and show great respect to each other when discussing their work or listening to each other's viewpoints. Nearly all pupils express their opinions confidently and clearly. For example, they speak passionately about the school and what it means to them.

Most pupils show enjoyment in reading and are keen to read aloud to adults. They are able to decode unfamiliar words appropriately. In the foundation phase, most pupils use their reading skills effectively, for example to decide whether they have the qualities to make a good friend or not. At the end of key stage 2, many pupils have strong reading skills and discuss the books they read enthusiastically. They consolidate these skills well when working across the curriculum, for example when researching information on Neil Armstrong.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing successfully. For example, in the nursery and reception classes they can recognise and write their name. Most pupils demonstrate an ability to form letters correctly, for example when writing using chalk on the floor. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils write interesting sentences, for example when writing instructions on how to remain safe on bonfire night.

When writing, most pupils at the end of key stage 2 use punctuation accurately and make plausible attempts at spelling unfamiliar words. They can write competently for a broad range of purposes and can use paragraphs well. More able pupils produce writing of high quality that is lively and engages the interest of the reader well, for example when writing a diary as the character Danny Champion of the World. However, a minority of pupils do not always use their writing skills to the same standard across the curriculum.

Nearly all pupils develop a sound knowledge of mathematical concepts as they move through the school so that they are confident mathematicians by the time they reach Year 6. In the foundation phase, most pupils gain a strong understanding of number, and can apply their mathematical skills to wider purposes. For example, many pupils in Years 1 and 2 can enter information about how many presents Santa can wrap in a day into a spreadsheet, and make sensible deductions from the graphs. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils are confident in applying their mathematical skills in order to solve more complex real life problems, for example calculating which bus company to hire for their London trip based on a range of criteria. Throughout the school nearly all pupils apply their numeracy skills well across the curriculum.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop strong skills in information and communication technology (ICT). In the foundation phase, they use publishing software to present different aspect of their work in colourful and attractive ways. By the end of the foundation phase most pupils can log into HWB independently to save and retrieve their work successfully. In key stage 2, nearly all pupils use ICT to present their work in interesting ways. They are adept at creating QR codes to highlight and explain work that they have done, and they use databases and spreadsheets to good effect. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 can create databases of historical gladiators whilst Year 5 and 6 pupils can use formulae in their spreadsheets to convert Indian rupees into pounds.

Nearly all pupils in the English stream have a very good understanding of the Welsh language. They respond well to instructions and requests given in Welsh and many pupils respond appropriately. Most can read the work that they produce in Welsh well, and the more able pupils can write Welsh independently to a high standard.

All pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of being bilingual and view Welsh as a living, useful language.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

The very strong working relationships between all pupils and staff are an outstanding feature of the school's work and provide the basis for the school's caring and supportive ethos. Pupils have exceptionally high levels of trust in the staff and believe strongly that they will always do their best for them. As a result, nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning, are motivated to succeed and demonstrate exemplary behaviour throughout the day.

Nearly all pupils state that the school is free from bullying and that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe there. Most pupils demonstrate exemplary respect for other's contributions and have the skills to deal with any disagreements amicably and maturely. A highly effective example of this is the way that a group of older pupils have developed and shared the school's anti-bullying policy by creating a video. They have shared their messages locally and nationally. They also treat adults and visitors with respect, open doors for them and show pride when talking about their school.

All pupils in key stage 2 express their feelings each morning on a computer program and decide with whom they want to share this information. Nearly all pupils value the personal reply they receive and the confidentiality this system offers. Nearly all pupils have a comprehensive awareness of how to stay safe on the internet. Older pupils, in the 'grŵp.com' pupil technology group, offer training to the foundation phase pupils to enforce this message further.

Nearly all pupils know how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Many pupils take part enthusiastically in physical activities both as part of their curriculum and as extra-curricular activities. Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of what makes a healthy diet and know how to prepare a healthy lunchbox.

Nearly all pupils show a positive attitude towards their work, persevere with their tasks and concentrate for extended periods successfully. They work well in groups

and pairs and understand how to avoid distractions in order to complete the task in hand. Most pupils' ability to work independently is developing effectively. For example, pupils in the lower foundation phase chose their equipment sensibly to extract characters that were frozen in ice.

Most pupils take pride in the opportunities that they are given to play a part in their community, for example by taking part in eisteddfodau, fund raising events and, most recently, the 'Carol yr Wyl' contest.

The school's overall attendance over the past four years has placed it below the median in comparison with similar schools. However, the relentless drive to improve attendance has impacted positively on reducing the number of persistent absentees over time. There has also been a reduction, over the same period, in the gap between the absence rates of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. There is a consistent approach and quality across both the Welsh and the English streams. Nearly all teachers provide exciting and engaging learning activities that motivate and enthuse pupils successfully. They adopt a flexible approach to planning and take account of pupils' interests and suggestions well. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils were given literacy and numeracy tasks based on Welsh female members of parliament in response to a pupil naming a suffragette as her heroine. The pace of learning is good in nearly all classes. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and, as a result, lessons are conducted in a calm and respectful manner. All teachers have a very strong working relationship with pupils and they consider the needs of individuals well. They offer constructive praise at appropriate times and, as a result, create classrooms in which pupils feel confident and valued, and are not worried about making mistakes in their learning. In all classes, the learning support assistants help the teachers well and all adults question pupils skilfully in order to assess their understanding and challenge their thinking.

Teachers offer purposeful and efficient written feedback to pupils. Their use of assessment for learning techniques has improved over time and pupils can identify their next steps for learning from the teachers' marking. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to assess their own work and to discuss their work with a partner. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and make good use of their assessments to set targets for pupils to improve in numeracy and literacy. Pupils know their targets well and what they need to do in order to improve. Teachers plan plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and IT skills across the curriculum. However, not all activities provide enough challenge to develop pupils' skills at the appropriate level.

The school considers the principles and ethos of the foundation phase well, ensuring appropriate opportunities for all pupils to engage with active learning. Staff make appropriate use of the outdoor area in order to develop pupils' skills. Generally, there is a good balance between adult and pupil-led activities, for example when pupils were given the opportunity to wrap, decorate and label Christmas presents in the role play area.

The school's curriculum provides a wide range of valuable experiences for pupils that enhance their learning and teachers are always willing to consider adapting the activities according to pupil interest. For example, whilst studying a topic on the 1960s, pupils showed a great interest in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The teacher adapted the planning and set a number of literacy and numeracy tasks based on the incident, and arranged for pupils to email eyewitnesses to the assassination. The responses they received sparked a genuine interest in their learning across a whole range of subjects.

Teachers ensure that pupils learn about the culture and heritage of Wales, for example through visits to Pembroke Castle and Dan yr Ogof, and through their study of Aberfan. There are good opportunities for pupils to compete in the Urdd Eisteddfod and the school choir is prominent in the local community when performing at different events, such as at the village Christmas tree, and through their success in a national carol singing competition that was broadcast on television.

The school's provision for developing the Welsh language is robust. Pupils in the English stream get plentiful opportunities to be immersed in the Welsh language and heritage. This has a positive effect on their Welsh language skills.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school's arrangements for the wellbeing, social and cultural development of all pupils are outstanding. The planning of teaching and learning experiences, around the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, enable pupils to understand their rights and how to be a good, fair and just citizen. A highly effective example of this is how the pupils made bracelets to sell on sports day. Instead of retaining the money towards the school council's playground renewal project, pupils decided to send the money raised towards sponsoring a child in Africa, enabling them to go to school. The African student sponsored by the pupils wrote a letter of thanks. Hearing the letter's contents, in a school assembly, made a highly effective contribution to most pupils' understanding of their responsibility as a global citizens.

The school is a happy, safe and inclusive community which places exceptional emphasis on each individual's role and contribution to the school family. A powerful example is the inclusive approach to creating student-led committees. Groups of learners, of all ages and abilities, come together on the school council, 'Playtime Peacemakers', 'group.com', eco council and 'Cryw Cymraeg'. These groups provide outstanding representation of the 'pupil's voice' and are integral to ensuring that every pupil enjoys their time at Ysgol yr Hendy. For example, following training, the 'Playtime Peacemakers' lead games and activities that include all pupils. This strengthens the pupils' sense of wellbeing and has positive effect on behaviour at playtimes.

The school's outstanding work on anti-bullying initiatives has embedded a culture of equality, tolerance and respect throughout the school. Parents and most pupils have embraced the highly effective, values based approach used to eradicate bullying in the school. Staff reinforce these values exceptionally well and pupils apply them consistently in their daily lives, and have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. These activities develop nearly all pupils' skills and abilities to deal very effectively with different situations, empathise with others and resolve issues maturely.

Staff use the school's tracking systems efficiently to monitor the progress of all pupils. This helps them to identify quickly any pupils in need of additional support. Pupils with additional learning needs have effective individual education plans that are specific and measurable. Pupils and parents contribute purposefully to setting and reviewing targets.

The school fosters very strong links with parents and is making beneficial strides in developing parents' capacity to support their own children. For example, parents have attended sessions on how to question their child when listening to them read. Also, a group of parents responded effectively to a school initiative in the community booklet to develop worthwhile numeracy, in order to support parents in developing both their own and their child's numeracy skills outside school. Most parents have an extensive understanding of the school's pupil attendance figures and promote the importance of regular attendance with their children. Parents are well informed about their child's progress throughout the year, beginning with individual target reports in the autumn term, reviews during parents' evenings and informative end-of-year pupil reports.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting pupils' healthy eating and drinking. There are a wide range of sports, structured playtime games and extra-curricular experiences that promote health and fitness well. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has lead a highly effective improvement journey with the wellbeing of all pupils and staff at the heart of the process. She has established a clear and robust vision for the school. She is supported ably by a conscientious deputy and senior leadership team. Together they share this vision across the whole school community and create an ethos of close teamwork that focuses purposefully on improving provision and outcomes for all pupils.

All staff have clear job descriptions and fulfil their roles diligently. Senior leadership, staff and departmental meetings have a clear focus on developing school priorities. This has led to clear improvements in aspects of provision and standards. For example, the foundation phase leader has worked successfully with all members of staff in the key stage to establish sound foundation phase principles based on active and experiential learning.

Leaders have established comprehensive self-evaluation activities that identify the school's strengths and most areas for improvement effectively. All members of staff play a beneficial role in these activities. For example, members of staff take part in the scrutiny of work to identify areas for improvement, such as the quality of feedback to pupils. They invited pupils to staff meetings to work with staff to improve this process. Consequently, pupils have a better understanding of the steps they need to take to improve their work. Although reports that derive from monitoring activities generally recognise strengths and areas for improvement appropriately, they are often long and overly descriptive, and do not always have a sharp enough focus on evaluating specific areas of provision or pupil outcomes.

Leaders plan well to improve priorities identified from self-evaluation activities. The school development plan identifies clear actions for improvement along with effective opportunities to develop staff professionally. These have a close link to performance management procedures. Leaders measure progress against priorities in the school development plan successfully, using appropriate success criteria. They have used these processes robustly to move the school forward. For example, the focus on developing pupils' numeracy skills has had a positive effect on most pupils' ability to use their numeracy skills to solve problems across the curriculum. However, the school development plan contains too many targets, which means that the main priorities are not always clear for all stakeholders.

Leaders plan effectively to develop local and national priorities. They have encompassed the four purposes of the new curriculum into the vision and curriculum planning for the school, using initiatives such as 'Heriau Hendy' to develop elements of effective foundation phase pedagogy into key stage 2. Leaders have a clear strategic plan for developing the Welsh language across both streams and use training such as sabbatical courses to improve the language skills of staff. The clear focus on developing the language charter is also having a positive effect on pupils' use of the Welsh language in formal and informal situations around the school.

The governing body have supported the school conscientiously through the improvement journey. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and use information from a variety of activities, such as learning walks and data analysis, to challenge leaders suitably.

Leaders make effective use of resources to deliver a stimulating curriculum for pupils. Although there are challenges with the building, leaders make the best use of all areas to provide a purposeful learning environment for pupils. The headteacher is highly proactive in sourcing additional grants and funding to improve the school. This has enabled leaders to purchase new ICT resources and to develop an exciting outdoor environment to develop pupils' skills. Leaders make effective use of the pupil development grant to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive a variety of new experiences. A drama workshop, for example, has improved the confidence and oracy skills of specific groups of pupils. Leaders tailor the use of this grant purposefully for the individual needs of specific pupils.

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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