



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

A report on

**Ysgol Ponthenri
Heol Y Pentre
Ponthenri
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA15 5NS**

Date of inspection: March 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Ponthenri

Ysgol Ponthenri is situated in the village of Ponthenri, near Llanelli in Carmarthenshire. There are 70 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.

Over a three-year period, 22% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals, which is slightly higher than the average for Wales of 21%. Thirty-five per cent of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Welsh is the main medium of teaching and learning, and the aim is to ensure that all pupils are fluent in Welsh and English by the end of key stage 2. Nearly all pupils are from white British backgrounds.

Around 19% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is equal to the national percentage. Very few have a statement of special educational needs.

The school was last inspected in September 2012. Since 2012, the school has been part of a formal federation with Ysgol Gynradd Carwe and Ysgol Gynradd Gwynfryn under one executive headteacher and one governing body

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 Ponthenri is a happy and active school with a familial atmosphere. Pupils are very well behaved. Nearly all pupils make good progress in their learning from their starting points.

The school provides an interesting and stimulating curriculum, and teachers plan challenging activities for all pupils. Most pupils apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively across the curriculum.

Leaders have high expectations, and they support and lead others effectively to raise standards and promote pupils' wellbeing. The school works well with the two other schools within the federation. Staff and pupils benefit greatly from the consistent management arrangements across the federation.

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 purposeful opportunities for pupils to write independently across the curriculum
- R2 Ensure that quality improvement procedures are more effective in improving pupils' outcomes and strengthening provision

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' skills are lower than expected for their age. During their time there, most make good progress from their starting points, including pupils with additional learning needs. Most develop their thinking skills effectively.

Nearly all pupils develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. From an early age, they listen attentively and respond purposefully to adults and each other. As they move through the foundation phase, most discuss and explain their work confidently when working with their peers. In key stage 2, most develop their oracy skills soundly in English and Welsh. They use polished subject-specific vocabulary effectively, for example when building a dragon in the outdoor area. Many pupils use relevant idioms and similes during classroom discussions.

In the foundation phase, most pupils acquire sound early reading skills while following and discussing a story. Most develop a sound phonological awareness and use their knowledge successfully to build unfamiliar words. By the end of the foundation phase, a majority read in line with their age and ability. In key stage 2, many pupils read suitably and show a good awareness of punctuation. They discuss the content of their books maturely in both languages, and refer to specific events or their favourite characters. Many older pupils are able to use dictionaries effectively to search for the meaning of the words and gather information confidently from reference books.

Nearly all pupils' writing skills develop well from the outset. Most nursery pupils start to make suitable marks to correspond with the class theme, for example to describe castles. By the end of Year 2, most write a series of exciting sentences correctly, for example to express an opinion about a superhero helping the police. A majority use mature vocabulary in extended sentences. In key stage 2, most pupils build well on their writing skills in both languages. They have a good awareness of the characteristics of a number of writing forms, and they use their knowledge of writing across the curriculum with the support of writing frames, but not independently. However, a majority of pupils do not always write with the correct syntax in Welsh. Older pupils choose interesting vocabulary and show an increasing awareness of the audience, for example when persuading the reader to visit a musical show.

Most pupils make sound progress in their number skills. By Year 2, they develop a good understanding of measurement, money, time and handling data. Many solve mathematical problems successfully. Most pupils build successfully on their previous learning. For example, in key stage 2, they use their understanding of 2D shapes to solve challenging tasks, such as calculating the perimeter and area of complex compound shapes. A majority have a sound understanding of place value, and they are able to use data with increasing accuracy and present it in various forms. A majority of older pupils use different graphs to convey information across the curriculum, such as a double line graph in science to show a drop in water temperature.

Most pupils in the foundation phase and key stage 2 apply a range of skills soundly across the curriculum. A good example of this is the whole-school task to design costumes from recycled materials. All pupils use their literacy, numeracy and creative skills to create costumes and posters to advertise the subsequent fashion show.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their ICT skills successfully in language, data-handling and problem-solving activities. In key stage 2, many present information successfully, search for information on the internet and create animations that are based on the work of a Welsh artist, and combine the sound of hymns with the images effectively. By the end of key stage 2, many create and interrogate databases, use a formula in a spreadsheet and create multimedia presentations purposefully. By doing so, they develop their thinking skills and problem-solving skills successfully.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy the school's life and work. They are aware that they are part of a community where everybody cares for each other. As a result, nearly all pupils are very well behaved. Pupils feel completely safe at school and are confident that they can discuss any worries with members of staff. They use an electronic system purposefully to express their feelings regularly. Staff scrutinise this daily and, as a result, pupils are aware that any concerns will be given due attention. Most pupils have a sound understanding of how to stay safe online. For example, pupils create posters on this theme and present them in assemblies.

Pupils stay on task and strive diligently in their work. They have a positive attitude towards learning. They concentrate and persevere for extended periods, and complete their work enthusiastically and successfully.

Most pupils work confidently and effectively in pairs, small groups, independently and as a whole class. They support each other's learning well and develop into confident and independent learners. They treat each other, their teachers and visitors with respect, for example by taking turns and allowing others to speak.

Members of the school council and eco committee promote good attitudes towards eating and drinking healthily successfully. For example, they encourage pupils to drink water at lunchtime rather than sugary drinks, and they organise for pupils to walk a mile a day. However, the committees do not operate independently enough from the guidance of staff.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide exciting learning activities that motivate pupils and ignite their enthusiasm successfully. Nearly all lessons have a good pace, and activities build purposefully on previous learning. Teachers have high expectations in terms of all pupils' effort, work and behaviour. As a result, pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the content of the curriculum's programmes of study successfully. Staff are good role models and this has a positive effect on pupils' rich vocabulary. All members of staff have a positive working relationship with pupils. They question pupils skilfully and provide

constructive feedback, when appropriate. This ensures that pupils feel confident in their work and are given an opportunity to make progress during nearly all activities.

Teachers provide pupils with appropriate oral and written feedback. Written responses to pupils' work are simple and effective. They give pupils clear guidance on strengths in their work and what needs to be improved. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers. Teachers assess pupils' work correctly and make good use of their assessments to set targets for pupils to improve their work.

Teachers plan suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. They provide writing frameworks regularly to help pupils produce written work of a high standard. However, opportunities for pupils to write independently across the curriculum are limited.

Staff have a sound understanding of the principles and ethos of the foundation phase. They make good use of the outdoor area in order to develop pupils' skills. Staff stimulate pupils to discover and learn independently from the outset, and develop pupils' skills effectively by providing them with stimulating and interesting experiences.

The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about the Welsh language and its culture. The effective development of the Welsh Language Charter ensures pupils' pride in their language and country. Teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about Welsh history and culture, for example by visiting Kidwelly and Carew castles, studying the work of Welsh artists and welcoming well-known people from the media to the school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school uses a pupil progress-tracking system effectively to target individuals and specific groups. Teachers use the information from this system purposefully in order to identify pupils who need additional support or who need to be challenged. Staff provide beneficial intervention programmes in order to ensure that pupils with additional learning needs make sound progress in their learning. For example, pupils make good progress in their listening and oracy skills by using a specific intervention programme. Pupils' individual education plans include purposeful targets and regular input from parents. They are reviewed regularly. As a result, nearly all pupils make good progress. The school celebrates pupils' successes effectively by displaying their best work throughout the school. This ignites pupils' pride in their work.

The school works closely with various agencies in order to support pupils and provide support and guidance for staff. A good example of this is the work of the specialist teacher to provide strategies to improve specific pupils' standards of reading. The school has a good working relationship with parents. Through training sessions for parents on aspects such as reading and information technology, they are able to help their children better and support them with their schoolwork.

The school promotes pupils' respect and tolerance effectively by providing opportunities for them to reflect on spiritual and moral aspects. The school promotes attitudes and values well by encouraging working together as one community. They celebrate various different celebrations during the year, for example the Chinese New Year and Mothering Sunday.

The Welsh dimension and use of the local area are planned and promoted very effectively in the school's curriculum and themes. Teachers organise a wide range of visits and activities in order to develop pupils' awareness of Welsh history and culture, for example by visiting the museum in Carmarthen, visiting a local chapel and taking part in Urdd activities. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to develop their creative skills by studying legends and famous Welsh people, such as Hedd Wyn, Rebecca's Daughters (Merched Beca) and Betsi Cadwaladr. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have created an ethos of co-operation across the three schools in the federation successfully. As a result, all staff are aware that they are the federation's staff, not the staff of a particular school. One of the innovative features of this system is that staff are able to teach at short notice at any of the schools in the federation without disrupting the pupils' education. This is an exceptional strength. The federation's staffing structure enables teachers and assistants to develop a sound understanding of all work of the three schools. The federation's leaders and staff share and develop a strategic vision and clear aims purposefully with the federation's whole community.

The headteacher and assistant headteachers have strong leadership skills. They have high expectations, and they support and guide others effectively to raise standards and promote pupils' wellbeing. Robust leadership across the federation has succeeded in creating an ethos of successful co-operation among the three schools' staff. This includes effective co-operation when planning, assessing and standardising jointly as one body of staff. The Hwb digital network is used purposefully in order to share documents across the federation. However, leaders do not have a clear enough overview of how effectively curricular plans are implemented in the three schools.

Governors have a sound understanding of the performance of the schools in the federation. They are responsible for specific aspects of the schools' priorities. By working with the schools' leaders, observing lessons and scrutinising books, they play an active part in the school's self-evaluation processes. They use information effectively to make decisions and to set a clear strategic direction for the school's work. An example of this is the way in which governors have challenged the school about provision and have made difficult decisions in order to maintain standards. However, they have not been challenging enough in ensuring that pupils attain the higher levels over a period of time. The governing body monitors the budget carefully. An example of this is the way in which it has challenged the school about the effect of the pupil development grant on pupils' attendance, punctuality and developing their life skills.

The school's self-evaluation processes are effective and are based firmly on broad evidence, such as scrutinising pupils' work, observing lessons and seeking the views of pupils and parents. On the whole, reports following monitoring and scrutinising books identify strengths clearly. However, they do not always identify consistently the next steps for improvement. The self-evaluation report provides a comprehensive, honest and balanced picture of the school's strengths and areas for

improvement. There is a clear link between self-evaluation findings and the priorities in the school development plan. However, improvement activities do not always have enough of an effect on pupils' outcomes. An example of this is the fact that improving the performance of more able and talented pupils has appeared in the development plan for a number of years.

All of the federation's staff work together very effectively and there are valuable opportunities for them to share experiences and good practice within the school. That has helped to reduce the teachers' workload and enriched experiences for pupils. A specific example of this is the rich and creative experiences that pupils are given in the foundation phase.

Leaders use resources creatively to enrich the curriculum and raise pupils' standards. They link expenditure appropriately with the priorities in the school development plan and monitor funding carefully to ensure value for money. The school uses a wide range of grants purposefully, including the pupil development grant, to raise pupils' standards and develop their wellbeing. As a result, nearly all pupils make appropriate progress.

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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