



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Bro Carmel  
Carmel Road  
Carmel  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 8NU**

**Date of inspection: October 2019**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Bro Carmel

Ysgol Bro Carmel is situated in the village of Carmel in Flintshire. There are 189 pupils on roll aged between 3 and 11 years, including 20 who attend part-time in the nursery. There are four single-year classes and three mixed-year classes.

Around 6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is lower than the national average of 19%. Very few pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes or ethnic minority backgrounds. The school identifies about 15% of its pupils as having special educational needs, which is below the national average of 21%.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2007 and the school was last inspected by Estyn in February 2014.

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 Bro Carmel is a happy, caring and inclusive community with a clear focus on promoting outstanding standards of pupil wellbeing. A very strong feature of the provision is the way in which pupils' voice is fully involved in making decisions about what happens in school. As a result, nearly all pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding and they show pride in their school. They challenge themselves to become ambitious and capable learners and most make good progress as they move through the school.

The headteacher provides extremely strong leadership. She has a passionate and clear vision for developing the school into an inclusive and stimulating community for pupils. Staff are dedicated and enthusiastic. They work closely and highly effectively as a team.

One of the outstanding features of the school is the arrangement it makes for staff development. This results in a strong learning community where staff face current developments and changes in education with enthusiasm and confidence. A culture of improvement pervades the school, and reviewing and planning for improvement are central to its ethos.

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

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to extend their writing across the curriculum
- R2 Ensure that all staff use effective strategies so that pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work
- R3 Improve provision for the development of foundation phase pupils' physical skills in the outdoor areas

## **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 the arrangements leaders make for staff development, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Many pupils enter school with skills that are in line with the level expected for their age. As they move through the school, most make good progress, including those with additional learning needs. Most pupils, particularly the more able, recall previous learning well and apply their skills effectively to new experiences and situations.

Nearly all pupils develop strong speaking and listening skills that support them well in all areas of their learning. Nearly all foundation phase pupils listen and respond effectively to instructions and discussions using an increasing range of vocabulary. They use a wide range of sentence patterns successfully in a variety of situations. For example when Year 1 pupils discuss their work on weighing they describe how some natural objects are heavier than others. Nearly all key stage 2 pupils build effectively on this solid foundation. They use their speaking and listening skills confidently to socialise at playtime and to support their learning during lessons.

Most pupils enjoy reading and make good progress over time. Most reception pupils develop quickly a solid knowledge of letters and sounds and use this to read simple words with increasing confidence. By Year 2, most build unfamiliar words successfully and read with appropriate expression. They discuss the content of books with enthusiasm and refer to the features of a text effectively. In key stage 2, most pupils continue to develop their reading skills well. They vary their tone and volume effectively when reading aloud to reflect what is happening in a story. Many more able pupils refer to the content of texts in detail to support their opinions.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their early writing skills successfully. For example, pupils in Year 1 use an effective range of simple sentences to describe the features of spring. By the end of the foundation phase, more able pupils write interesting sentences independently. For example, when describing the 'Rock Man' they use adjectives creatively.

Most key stage 2 pupils continue to develop their writing skills successfully and by the end of Year 6 have solid skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Many show a sound awareness of the features of a wide range of writing forms. For instance, when writing a narrative from the perspective of a person reflecting on his thoughts and feelings through flashbacks, pupils use imaginative and creative vocabulary that allows the reader to understand what the character is thinking and feeling. They use relevant metaphors and similes effectively to enhance their writing, for example, when recalling their feelings during a walk to the woods. However, throughout the school, pupils do not have regular opportunities to use their knowledge of non-fiction text types in their extended writing across the curriculum. Most foundation phase pupils make good progress in their mathematical development. Their recall of simple number facts and knowledge of place value is strong. By Year 2, they develop a good understanding of number, for example they begin to make the link between multiplication and division while planting seeds for growing plants in the school garden. Most key stage 2 pupils make purposeful links to their previous learning. They use their numeracy skills successfully. For example, when calculating the height of the tide during different times of the day, pupils apply their understanding of data handling, and plot their results on a line graph.

Most pupils develop valuable speaking and listening skills in Welsh. Pupils across the school recognise the importance of learning Welsh in order to become members of a bilingual society. They respond well to the regular use of Welsh language commands and conversations initiated by staff. In the foundation phase, pupils ask and answer simple questions such as 'sut wyt ti?' and join in with daily routines with enthusiasm. Many pupils develop suitable reading skills in Welsh, reading simple texts with a level of understanding that is appropriate for their age and ability. Most write with suitable accuracy. For instance, pupils in Year 5 write informative descriptions about their friends.

Many pupils develop confident information and communication technology (ICT) skills. In the foundation phase, they input instructions effectively to move a programmable toy and use data handling programs successfully to create simple graphs about natural objects in the local area. Most pupils in key stage 2, create multimedia presentations to present their work successfully. For instance, Year 6 pupils use the internet and presentation software to research and present their work on the four purposes to the governing body. They use spreadsheets to create various graphs and summarise information well.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent**

The standard of wellbeing and the attitude of nearly all pupils to learning is excellent. Nearly all pupils' standards of behaviour and self-discipline in lessons and around the school are particularly strong. They feel safe at school, attend regularly and are confident that staff respond to any concerns they have promptly. Nearly all pupils are extremely courteous towards their peers, staff and visitors. Most pupils are confident and articulate speakers who listen to each other respectfully and take turns in conversations. The positive interaction and strong levels of co-operation among pupils of all ages, both in work and play, are a strong feature of the school. Nearly all pupils take responsibility for their actions using the school's 'high five code'. They are extremely caring of each other and show great respect for others in lessons, in the lunch hall and in the school yard.

Nearly all pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of regular exercise and the need to eat and drink healthily. Many pupils take part in the vast range of extra-curricular activities that promote physical wellbeing, including dodgeball, football, netball and yoga. The sports ambassadors encourage pupils to play games at lunchtime and proudly talk about achieving a platinum award for their dedication to sport. Many key stage 2 pupils participate in local festivals and tournaments, which contribute very positively to the development of their fitness, self-esteem and social skills.

Nearly all pupils show enthusiasm for taking on responsibilities, such as becoming part of the varied pupil voice groups within school. Members take their roles very seriously and produce plans which map their actions for the year clearly. They understand that they give a clear voice to their fellow pupils and enable them to make a positive impact on school life and the wellbeing of their peers. They take pride in what they achieve to improve the school. For example, the school council are campaigning to keep dogs off the school field after school hours. The ICT committee are active in reminding their classmates about the rules of the internet and, as a result, all pupils understand the need to stay safe and behave responsibly when online.

The Criw Cymraeg have been instrumental in developing incidental Welsh and bilingualism throughout the school, which has improved the Welsh ethos. Most pupils develop an excellent awareness of sustainability through the work of the 'One World' committee. They have worked innovatively to teach others about reducing their carbon footprint. Most pupils take on responsibilities maturely and understand the importance of giving a clear voice to their fellow pupils to enable them to make a positive impact on school life and the wellbeing of their peers.

A very strong feature is pupils' attitudes to learning and the way they develop independent learning skills. From an early age, pupils show high levels of concentration and resilience in their work, particularly when faced with a challenge. Across the school, pupils influence how and what they want to learn regularly. As a result, nearly all pupils are highly enthusiastic about their work and demonstrate high levels of determination to succeed. By using a variety of effective strategies, nearly all pupils have many of the essential skills for effective learning and show a willingness to tackle new challenges. For example, when unsure about how to complete a task, most pupils will ask their learning partner or use the learning walls independently to find a solution. This encourages pupils to remain on task and overcome obstacles to their learning successfully. Nearly all are ready to start activities enthusiastically, concentrate well, work together and stay on task for extended periods. They enjoy challenge and work well independently, displaying a high level of perseverance.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

Teachers know pupils well and develop positive working relationships that foster a successful learning environment. They create a purposeful and supportive atmosphere based on courtesy and respect. They have high expectations and ensure that nearly all pupils work diligently.

Most teachers have up-to-date subject knowledge and use it skilfully to plan rich learning experiences and interesting lessons. The school has begun to plan purposefully in line with the requirements of the new curriculum for Wales. Teachers ensure that pupils in key stage 2 have a prominent role in deciding on the success criteria for their tasks. This helps pupils make specific choices about what and how they learn. In the best practice, teachers encourage pupils to work together to support each other in their learning. For example, when planning and discussing the benefits of holding an autumn fayre, teachers encouraged pupils to work in pairs and teams to find out what stalls made the most profit.

Teaching assistants provide valuable support for groups of pupils and individuals across the ability range. A notable example of this are the daily basic skills sessions arranged by staff that help them with their literacy and numeracy skills. These learning activities offer a good level of challenge for pupils.

There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to speak, read and write in Welsh. All adults use the Welsh language with the pupils regularly during the school day. As a result, nearly all pupils have strong skills in Welsh and a positive attitude towards the language. All teachers include a Welsh cultural thread in their planning, for example, studying Welsh artists and musicians, and celebrating Welsh music day.

Across the school, staff plan a valuable range of stimulating learning experiences that develop pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. Teachers have embedded the requirements of the literacy, numeracy and Digital Competency Frameworks firmly in to their schemes of work. By incorporating pupils' ideas into the planning process, teachers provide them with beneficial opportunities to make mature choices about their learning. For example, when planning a visit to Snowdon, pupils decided to write risk assessments, worked out costs and organised a timetable for the day's itinerary.

Teachers provide appropriate oral and written feedback to pupils so that many know how well they are achieving. They provide useful opportunities for pupils to assess their own and others' performance. However, teachers do not ensure that pupils have a clear and consistent understanding of how to improve their work.

Teachers employ the principles of the foundation phase well. They provide effective opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through a series of purposeful challenges. For instance, pupils solve the problem of the lost vegetables in order to help the kitchen staff prepare the roast dinner. Overall, teachers plan engaging learning activities successfully within the classroom and the outdoor area. However, they do not plan sufficiently well for the development of pupils' physical skills in the outdoor area.

### **Care, support and guidance: Excellent**

The school is a very happy and caring community that nurtures pupils' personal, social and cultural skills very successfully. Staff know pupils extremely well. They provide a warm environment that focuses on the whole child and builds pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Leaders and staff analyse information on pupils' progress and use assessment information very well to plan effective support in classes and through intervention programs adapted to the needs of the pupils. Well trained staff deliver worthwhile support to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The arrangements the school makes to support pupils with emotional needs is outstanding. For example, the play sessions for pupils experiencing attachment difficulties and trauma have a positive impact on engaging pupils in school life. The staff deliver support passionately to ensure every child has the best start in life.

The school offers a very good range of opportunities for parents to engage with the school and to find out about the work their children are doing in school and how to support their child's learning at home. For example, in addition to regular parents' meetings, they offer extensive and very high quality one-to-one meetings to discuss specific information about their children's progress. This helps parents to support their children's learning at home. The school works closely with parents to implement a range of strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality. Senior leaders provide effective opportunities for evaluative feedback from parents through questionnaires and on-line surveys.

Staff provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of eating and drinking healthily. They promote the importance of taking regular exercise very well. For example, they arrange for pupils to participate in an extensive range of sports festivals and provide a wide range of high quality extra-curricular sporting activities that help pupils to become fit and active. The numerous opportunities that



pupils are given to visit centres in the local area, in addition to performing in front of audiences, are a strong feature. This develops pupils' expressive and social skills exceptionally well.

Pupil voice is highly developed throughout the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to play an active part in decision making and leadership. For example, the school council, Criw Cymraeg, digital leaders and 'Agents of Change'. These develop pupils' leadership skills effectively and influence their decisions about school life and wider environmental issues. For example, the 'One World' committee teaches other pupils about the importance of sustainability and how their carbon footprint impacts on climate change.

The school links effectively with community organisations to enhance the learning experiences for pupils. For example, pupils work with a local poet and author to raise standards of writing through the use of animation. Leaders and teachers offer good opportunities for pupils to engage in trips and visits to places, such as Bodelwyddan Castle and a trip to Talacre beach to support their topic work.

The school is highly inclusive. There is a strong emphasis on respecting the child as a whole person and meeting the needs of all learners. Pupils have worthwhile experiences to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues during assemblies and classroom activities, which encourage them to respect other beliefs and religions. They have a good range of opportunities to perform at school and in their local community. There is a clear emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of making the right choices through the school's 'high five code'. This has a highly positive influence on pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

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

### **Leadership and management: Excellent**

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and a clear vision for the school. She has very high expectations of staff and pupils. She has established a close, successful team of teaching and support staff. The senior leadership team are highly effective, particularly in ensuring the consistent implementation of new initiatives across the school. Currently this includes developing pupils' ability to work as learning partners and using classroom displays as a learning resource. All staff have leadership responsibilities that they undertake diligently. The work done as part of teaching and learning teams is particularly valuable in supporting the school in addressing priorities for improvement. The governing body provides exceptionally strong support for the school. Governors use their very detailed knowledge of standards, provision and finance to support the headteacher in delivering her vision for the school.

The process of planning for improvement is highly effective, particularly in building on the good standards that pupils achieve and maintaining the very close focus on pupils' wellbeing. Leaders ensure that pupils across the school contribute their ideas for improvement and involve many of the well-organised pupil groups in actively addressing the issues raised. Currently, for example, pupils are involved in developing the playground areas and extending the wide range of sporting opportunities available to pupils.

The arrangements the school makes for staff professional development are exceptional. Staff have valuable opportunities to share their expertise, skills and training. Leaders ensure all staff have support and encouragement to move forward with their careers. This has included teachers taking secondment opportunities to work in other schools and support staff moving into the teaching profession. Staff have benefited from the school's very proactive approach to working with other schools in the local cluster and further afield. For example, a member of staff was recently part of a small group who visited New York and delivered a presentation on the current changes being made to the curriculum in Wales.

The headteacher and governing body monitor the school finances rigorously and keep spending under continuous review. School leaders make highly valuable use of the pupil development grant to support pupils' progress and wellbeing. This work has a robust effect on the standards of wellbeing, the quality of provision and pupils' attitudes towards their work. They focus particularly on maintaining a high level of support staff. This has a very positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and the standards they achieve. The headteacher ensures that teaching and support staff with leadership responsibilities have designated leadership time in order to fulfil their roles successfully. Staff use the school building effectively with good quality displays that create a stimulating learning environment. The well-maintained school grounds are extensive. However, there are insufficient outdoor resources to fully support foundation phase pupils to develop their physical skills in the outdoor area.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	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](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

© Crown Copyright 2019: 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: 09/12/2019