



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

A report on

**Ysgol Capel Garmon
Capel Garmon
Llanrwst
Conwy
LL26 0RL**

Date of inspection: September 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Capel Garmon

Ysgol Capel Garmon is situated in the village of Capel Garmon, near Betws-y-coed in the county of Conwy. There are 14 pupils on roll in two mixed-age classes.

Around 94% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Over a three-year-period, around 17% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals, which is slightly lower than the national percentage of 18%. Around 16% of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is slightly lower than the national average of 21%.

The school was last inspected in March 2014. Since 2016, the school has been part of a formal federation with Ysgol Betws-y-coed and Ysgol Dolwyddelan, which share 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 Capel Garmon is a happy, familial school that cares well for its pupils. Teachers and staff work together successfully in order to ensure a rich range of engaging activities for pupils. Pupils work together maturely and the relationship between them and the staff is a strong feature. The school provides a varied and interesting curriculum, which succeeds in motivating pupils and ensuring that they make good progress from their starting points.

The school promotes pupils' awareness of their local area and Welsh heritage successfully. Pupils take pride in their area's culture and contribute regularly to events in the local community. The school promotes pupils' awareness of Welsh culture, for example through visits and contemporary music.

The headteacher was appointed formally to the role as head of the federation in March 2016. She has a clear vision for Ysgol Capel Garmon and its place within the federation. As a result, pupils are given regular and valuable opportunities to network with pupils in other schools. However, staff roles and responsibilities are not defined clearly enough across the federation in order to maintain and improve provision and raise standards further.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen leadership at all levels in order to promote close co-operation between all staff in the federation
- R2 Strengthen self-evaluation procedures and planning for improvement across the federation
- R3 Ensure that governors discharge their statutory duties in full
- R4 Share the best features of teaching across the federation in order to ensure that all pupils are challenged consistently to achieve to the best of their ability
- R5 Ensure that teachers' feedback enables pupils to improve their work

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations from the inspection. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, most pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are at the level expected for their age. Most make sound progress during their time at the school and recall previous learning successfully. They speak Welsh enthusiastically and listen attentively during lessons. Foundation phase pupils to whom Welsh is a new language learn it quickly and gain confidence by talking with their peers. By the end of the phase, many use extensive syntax confidently, for example when discussing different buildings in the village. Most pupils in key stage 2 speak confidently and accurately in Welsh and English. They use the Welsh language completely naturally in their lessons and informally. Many express an opinion by asking questions and giving mature answers in school assemblies, for example when discussing global warming.

Most pupils read confidently. The youngest pupils develop an understanding of letter sounds at an early stage and use this to build words within the areas. By the end of the foundation phase, many use various strategies when reading and find meaning in different texts. In key stage 2, most read confidently in both languages. They select suitable texts skilfully and discuss their fondness of different genres maturely. The most able readers at the top of the school read extremely meaningfully.

The youngest pupils' early writing skills are developing soundly, and they form familiar words and phrases confidently. By the end of the phase, they respond well to opportunities to create interesting texts, for example when writing a letter to invite an officer from the local council to the school to discuss recycling. They use extensive vocabulary and show a good grasp of punctuation and spelling. Most pupils in key stage 2 write successfully in both languages. They create imaginative and mature pieces, for example when creating an imaginative piece of writing about the effects of the flooding of Capel Celyn in the sixties. Their factual writing is of a good standard, for example when writing reports about their scientific investigations.

Most pupils in the foundation phase make sound progress in their numeracy skills. Most pupils in the reception class count to ten and discuss the properties of familiar shapes accurately. They build simple symmetrical patterns. Most Year 2 pupils have good number skills. A good example is the way in which they use co-ordinates to locate different equipment on the Capel Garmon playing field and use Venn diagrams to compare the features with the park in a familiar story book.

In key stage 2, most pupils apply their numeracy skills successfully in an effective range of contexts. They have sound number skills and use them confidently to solve problems, for example when comparing the cost of different ingredients to make pancakes. More able pupils achieve to a high level. They identify co-ordinates in the four quadrants successfully and measure the scale of growth of boiling water precisely and accurately.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are sound across the school. In the foundation phase, they use a range of purposeful equipment and programs to facilitate their learning, for example when recording the process of

baking a cake for the three little pigs and when programming direction and distance for simple robots. In key stage 2, most pupils use a range of computer equipment maturely and confidently in order to enrich and facilitate their learning. They make sensible decisions about the most effective hardware and software for different tasks. For example, when working together on a presentation, they use a video package based on local legends sensibly.

Across the school, most pupils have good creative skills. Most pupils in the foundation phase create original models and pictures, for example when emulating the town clocks in Llanrwst. Most pupils in key stage 2 respond successfully to musical stimuli and show a skilful appreciation of pitch, rhythm and texture, for example when evaluating the work of the composer, Rossini.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy school. They behave well in lessons and during break times. They are polite towards each other, staff and visitors and show obvious pride when talking about their school. Most pupils' social and life skills are good. They care for each other during break times and lunchtime, and older pupils are very willing to fulfil their role as 'Bydis Buarth' (playground buddies) and help to care for the younger pupils by encouraging them to play during break times. This promotes care and responsibility among pupils.

Most pupils show positive attitudes towards their work. They are hard-working and enthusiastic learners who work well together and stay diligently on task for extended periods. Most show good levels of perseverance, interest and pride in their work. They discuss their work confidently and show maturity when working independently, in pairs or in groups. They listen well and respond with interest in their lessons. They move smoothly from one activity to another, for example when completing tasks based on the story of the three little pigs in the outdoor area. This contributes successfully to the ethos of effective learning within the school and has a positive effect on many pupils' standards. However, pupils' skills in terms of their ability to improve and guide their own learning are only just beginning to become embedded.

Pupils who are members of councils fulfil their roles responsibly and conscientiously. For example, they promote activities that help their fellow pupils to understand the importance of protecting the environment, such as creating an eco-brick from waste materials. Pupils take pride in the opportunity to support various charities and contribute to activities in the community, such as the harvest service in the chapel or when raising money for children in need. They participate successfully in community activities, for example when having lunch with, and talking to, elderly people from the local community.

Through activities such as Fair Trade Day, pupils gain an awareness of life in economically-developing countries and the importance of working towards ensuring more equal communities and society. This has a positive effect on their understanding of other people's needs in the community and the wider world.

Nearly all pupils have a sound awareness of their Welsh identity. They show genuine pride in their local area, its landscape, culture and rich heritage. For

example, they played a full role in the preparations for the National Eisteddfod that was held recently in the local area.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and exercise, and have a good awareness of the effect this has on their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Pupils feel completely safe at school and are happy to discuss problems with members of staff and are confident that they are listened to. Most have a sound understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet. They are aware of the importance of attending school regularly, and this is reflected in the school's high attendance rates.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and the school has an extremely homely relationship. Staff are exceptionally effective language models. They encourage pupils to take ownership of the Welsh language and use it in all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils make good progress in their oral skills and use the Welsh language confidently in lessons and socially. Activities such as listening to new Welsh songs develop pupils' awareness of contemporary elements of the Welsh language successfully.

Teachers provide effective guidance in lessons and ensure that pupils stay on task for extended periods. They share clear objectives with pupils and use success criteria regularly in order for pupils to gain confidence in evaluating their own progress. Teaching responds effectively to the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities. Teachers are beginning to plan activities which, on the whole, challenge pupils to gain independence and think for themselves. In the few less successful activities, particularly in the foundation phase, over-use of ready-made worksheets limits learning at times. Activities do not always provide an appropriate level of challenge in order to enable pupils to make as much progress as they could.

Teachers provide effective oral feedback, which enables pupils to progress to the next step in their learning. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to discuss with their peers, for example in key stage 2, when pupils discuss the features of different portraits before creating their own portrait of the 'afanc' (water demon) from the local legend of 'Llyn yr Afanc'. Teachers provide personal targets for pupils and these procedures are beginning to become embedded. Pupils are given regular opportunities to evaluate their peers' work and provide comments on the next steps. However, teachers' written feedback does not always give pupils clear enough guidance on how to improve their work.

Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to suggest ideas for the themes that they would like to study. They adapt their plans in order to ensure that activities are of genuine interest to pupils. They trial different ideas and evaluate their effect without fear of failure. As a result, many pupils, particularly in key stage 2, feel that they have increasing ownership of their learning.

Teachers make effective use of resources in the building, on the site and in the local area to enrich pupils' learning, for example when studying local legends and participating fully in the National Eisteddfod that was held in Llanrwst recently.

The school's schemes of work are developed jointly with teachers from schools within the federation and are implemented skilfully and successfully. Pupils in key stage 2 are given regular opportunities to work with pupils from Ysgol Betws-y-coed and Ysgol Dolwyddelan to focus on specific aspects very successfully. A notable example is the project that was undertaken recently, in which pupils were given opportunities to work with their peers and learn computer skills while designing an aerodynamic car.

The school's plans to deliver literacy, numeracy and ICT in different contexts are thorough. The curriculum is broad and rich. There are stimulating opportunities for pupils to learn about scientific elements effectively. They learn about Welsh geography and history, for example when scrutinising the history of castles in north Wales. Teachers take advantage of every opportunity to use the local area to prompt varied and rich learning activities, for example by gardening in the village and going on nature walks. These activities develop pupils' community engagement very effectively.

Care, support and guidance: Good

An excellent feature of the school is its familial and caring ethos, which creates a close-knit community in which pupils and staff care for each other naturally. The school promotes good behaviour, courtesy, respect and commitment very successfully. As a result, pupils treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect.

The school provides an effective scheme of personal and social education, which nurtures attitudes such as tolerance and equality successfully. The 'Bydis Buarth' (playground buddies) scheme, which encourages pupils to support and care for each other during break times, contributes towards ensuring an inclusive and equal community.

The school has rigorous procedures for tracking pupils' progress and wellbeing. Staff use the findings to plan the next steps in learning and provide appropriate intervention, where necessary. All pupils with special educational needs have an individual education plan that is produced in consultation with parents. Staff monitor the progress of pupils who receive intervention and work effectively with external agencies to help pupils to develop. As a result, most make good progress against their targets. This provision is one of the school's strengths.

The school has good arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. For example, pupils are encouraged to drink water regularly and eat fruit at break time. The school places an emphasis on promoting physical health through physical education lessons and, recently, pupils have started to walk a mile a day. The school gives careful consideration to protecting pupils' mental and emotional wellbeing, and promotes resilience and perseverance. This has a positive influence on pupils' mindset and confidence in their learning. As a result, they develop an effective understanding of issues that relate to their health and wellbeing.

The school provides effectively to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural attitudes. Periods of collective worship provide effective opportunities for pupils to reflect on values such as respect, care and valuing diversity. Pupils are given an

opportunity to learn about ethical issues, such as protecting the environment and fair trade, and their part in ensuring a fairer world, for example by reducing waste. These activities prepare them successfully to be the responsible citizens of the future and reflect the school's motto, 'Ysgol fach, Ysgol i fyd'.

Staff provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to express their views and contribute to their learning and to the school's life and work. This enriches their experiences and prepares them well to take responsibility for their decisions and consider the views of others. However, the pupil councils' real effect on whole-school issues is limited.

The school places strong emphasis on promoting the use of the Welsh language and pride in the Welsh language and Welsh culture. Pupils are given every opportunity to take advantage of rich experiences through Urdd activities and by making the most of the local area's rich culture.

The school communicates effectively with parents through a range of methods. Parents appreciate the open-door policy. The school is willing to listen to parents' views and suggestions, and encourages them to play an active and full part in school life. The school organises informative evenings for parents, which help to increase their understanding of what they can do to support their children's learning. Teachers provide beneficial reports and share information with parents regularly about their children's progress.

The school is at the heart of the local community and maintains this link through a variety of activities, for example by taking part in concerts and services, and by inviting the elderly to the school every month to have lunch with pupils.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

Leaders have a clear vision that is based on ensuring that all pupils develop to their full potential in a happy, safe and stimulating learning environment. This is done by introducing all pupils to their Welsh heritage and developing them as full members of society. The vision for the federation is shared effectively with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. A positive feature is that each individual school has kept its own unique ethos.

Staff have begun to support the headteacher by taking responsibility for developing elements of the school's life and work effectively. For example, arrangements and provision for pupils with special educational needs are now consistent across the schools in the federation. This has a positive effect on raising relevant pupils' standards. Foundation phase staff also come together to plan activities jointly in order to share good practice and ensure consistency in provision successfully. However, although the federation has existed for three years, these practices have not yet been established in full.

All members of staff have a sound understanding of their roles within their individual schools. However, there is no rigorous or agreed understanding about leaders' roles

and teaching and learning responsibilities across the federation. This means that duties are not distributed fairly and lines of accountability are not robust enough. As a result, the current leadership and staffing structure is not sustainable enough to have a full effect on maintaining and improving provision and raising standards further.

The headteacher provides useful opportunities for all staff to report on strengths and areas that need to be strengthened within the school. On the whole, this is an effective tool for identifying the need for improvement across the federation. For example, when analysing staff's comments, the need to ensure consistency in pupils' ICT experiences was identified. Leaders arranged for all pupils in key stage 2 to visit Ysgol Betws-y-coed every week for ICT lessons. As a result, pupils' standards have increased across the federation.

However, the range of regular monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance activities is limited. As a result, processes are not always robust enough to address areas for improvement successfully; for example in a few lessons, over-use of ready-made worksheets limits learning.

Leaders promote the professional development of all staff at the school effectively. They provide staff with regular training, which has a beneficial effect on provision and pupils' standards. For example, training on how to promote pupils' thinking skills in English has led to increasing pupils' confidence and standards of oracy, in addition to their thinking skills. Training is often linked to whole-school priorities.

Since being established as one unified body, the governors have been very supportive of the federation and have a good grasp of pupils' standards and achievement and the schools' financial situation. They visit the schools regularly and receive useful information from the headteacher about the federation's life and work, which reinforces their knowledge and understanding well.

They recognise the benefits of being in a federation and make decisions for the three schools, for example as they address the challenging financial situation. They see the potential of sharing staff expertise across the federation in the future. However, governors have not yet published an annual report for parents.

Leaders manage the school's resources effectively, and decisions about expenditure are included appropriately in targets for improvement. On the whole, leaders provide good quality resources that meet pupils' needs sensibly. Leaders manage the outdoor areas in the foundation phase effectively to improve pupils' learning experiences successfully. The school uses the pupil development grant effectively in order to provide additional support to work with vulnerable learners. This has a positive effect on ensuring that nearly all of these pupils achieve well.

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)

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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