



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

A report on

**Ysgol Clywedog
Ruthin Road
Wrexham
LL13 7UB**

Date of inspection: October 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Clywedog

Ysgol Clywedog is an English-medium 11 to 16 mixed comprehensive school maintained by Wrexham County Borough Council. The school is situated in the west of Wrexham and draws from the villages to the north and west of the town as well as from the town itself. The number of pupils has decreased from 883 at the time of the last inspection to 779.

Around 22% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average of 16.4%, and close to 20% live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. Almost 26% have a special educational need which is higher than the national average of 22.5%. The school has resourced provision for pupils with both specific and moderate learning difficulties. Less than 2% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. This figure is lower than the national average of 2.2%.

Close to 12% of pupils receive support to learn English as an additional language. Less than 1% of pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard.

The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, who took up post in September 2016, a deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers and a finance officer.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

The school has an inclusive and caring ethos that supports the wellbeing of pupils suitably. Many pupils feel safe in school and the majority understand how to live healthy lives. However, around half of pupils lack confidence and resilience in their learning. Pupil attendance, and the punctuality of a minority, require improvement.

Since his appointment in 2016, the headteacher has restructured the senior leadership team and provided supportive and reflective leadership. This has contributed to improving staff morale and gaining the confidence of the local community. However, leadership at all levels has not led to sufficient or sustained improvements in important areas of the school's work including the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve.

The headteacher has worked towards establishing common and secure structures and processes, for example to help promote consistency in teachers' planning. However, shortcomings in teaching in around half of lessons limit the progress pupils can make.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve standards across the school
- R2 Improve teaching, including the level of challenge, questioning, the monitoring of pupil progress and the impact of feedback
- R3 Improve provision to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT)
- R4 Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels
- R5 Improve attendance and punctuality
- R6 Ensure robust financial management

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion, that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress on a termly basis.

Main findings

Standards: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

In their lessons, around half of pupils recall previous learning appropriately and develop their subject skills suitably. They recall basic aspects of previous learning such as storyline and characters in novels and the use of adjectives and nouns to describe their school uniform in French. A minority of pupils who demonstrate secure recall of prior learning apply their understanding successfully to new contexts. These include comparing the technique of poets such as Owen and Pope, and applying the relationship between power, energy and time and also work, force and distance to measure work done by different people climbing a stepladder. However, where pupils are not secure in their recall and are unable to apply their learning to different situations, they make limited progress in developing their subject knowledge and skills. For example, when pupils offer opinions on aspects of their learning but cannot provide any further useful justification, or when they follow instructions and conduct experiments, but can give only basic explanations of what they are doing and do not have a clear understanding of the purpose of the work.

A minority of pupils listen to the teacher and their peers with attention and respect. The majority who do not miss information and instructions that would support their learning. A few pupils are willing and able to provide developed verbal responses to the teacher's questions, for example, when linking and justifying adjectives to describe characters in 'Of Mice and Men'. A very few express their ideas thoughtfully and articulately, for example when considering the impact of rhetoric. In small groups, a minority of pupils make worthwhile contributions when discussing issues such as the tone of language to be used in letters. However, many pupils lack the confidence and skills to provide a developed verbal response.

Many pupils skim and scan suitably a range of literary and non-literary texts to identify key information. A minority are able to use basic inference well to support their understanding of characters and events in novels such as 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas', and of authorial intent in persuasive articles including those on capital punishment. However, a majority of pupils do not use a sufficient range of reading strategies to support their learning and more able pupils do not develop their higher order reading skills well enough.

A few pupils produce extended descriptive and narrative writing that is structured well and technically sound. A very few produce travel writing that is crafted well and engaging. A minority of pupils use persuasive techniques appropriately and show a suitable grasp of purpose and audience when, for example, writing a letter to the prime minister expressing concern about the declining bee population. Around half of pupils, however, do not demonstrate sufficient control in their writing, making basic errors including confusing tense and using subordinate clauses rather than properly constructed sentences. They do not proof-read or take enough responsibility for improving the quality of their work before they hand it in.

The majority of pupils have sound number skills. When given the opportunity, they use these skills appropriately across the curriculum, for example when converting Fahrenheit to Celsius or carrying out distance, speed and time calculations in

science. The majority of pupils construct graphs accurately, such as when they show the relationship between sea levels and the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. However, a minority produce careless and untidy graphs that omit key features such as scale or labelled axes. In addition, only a very few pupils analyse or interpret their graphs in order to reach reasoned conclusions.

When given the opportunity, pupils use their information, communication and technology skills (ICT) skills appropriately across the curriculum. For example, when participating in the skills challenge, pupils use video-editing software well to amend their presentations on wind energy in order to adapt them for their year 6 audience. Pupils also use video editing to evaluate their performance in physical education, spreadsheets to plan a household budget in personal and social education, and a variety of software for composition in music.

A few pupils create new and original ideas to represent visually their interpretations of the holocaust. A few, recognise that different perspectives help to shape their viewpoints on religion and morality. However, overall, pupils do not use their creativity often enough.

A majority of pupils are able to construct simple written sentences in Welsh and a few use idioms and connectives suitably. Although a minority of pupils can hold a basic conversation in Welsh, the majority have a very limited vocabulary and lack confidence.

Over the period 2016-2018, performance at key stage 4 declined considerably. It did not compare well with similar schools and pupils made much less progress than expected.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement

Most pupils know where to go for support and guidance if they have any problems and many feel safe in school. However, a minority are concerned about the impact of other pupils' off-task behaviour on their learning.

A minority of pupils listen well to their teachers and show suitable concentration when completing tasks independently. A few engage diligently and enthusiastically in their learning. However, around half of pupils are too reliant on their teachers and lack confidence and resilience in their learning. A minority struggle to sustain concentration. They do not listen with attention and respect to their peers or their teachers, while a few pupils disrupt the learning of others with persistent off-task behaviour.

Pupils' attendance, including that of pupils eligible for free school meals, does not compare well to that in similar schools, and a minority of pupils are frequently late to school and lessons. This has a detrimental impact on standards and progress. The rate of fixed-term exclusions is high.

The majority of pupils understand how to live healthy lives and they participate in a broad range of extracurricular activities at the school and within the community. Pupils value the opportunity to take on a range of leadership roles to support their social development by becoming senior prefects or sports leaders, joining the eco-group or participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

Teaching and learning experiences: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Over the last year, the school has revised its strategies for the medium-term planning of learning. It has developed a strong focus on ensuring a uniform style of designing sequences of lessons. This has resulted in a more consistent approach to teachers' planning. However, teaching has not had a sufficient impact on pupils' progress, the development of their skills or their attitudes to learning.

In around half of lessons, teachers plan suitably structured sequences of activities that enable pupils to make appropriate progress. They develop positive working relationships with their classes, and manage pupils' behaviour well where necessary. In these lessons, teachers use appropriate questioning to test pupils' understanding and recall of previous learning.

In around half of lessons, shortcomings in teaching limit the progress that pupils make. In these lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. They provide pupils with undemanding tasks that simply keep them busy rather than stretching or challenging them, and are too tolerant of pupils' off-task behaviour and lack of engagement. They do not use questioning well enough to check or develop pupils' understanding. In these lessons, teachers plan activities that are not matched closely to pupils' ability and do not build on pupils' prior learning or develop their skills alongside their subject understanding.

In a minority of instances, teachers provide suitable feedback that helps pupils to improve their work. In a few cases, they provide clear advice and guidance and monitor pupils' responses carefully to ensure that they make substantial improvements. In the majority of instances, however, teachers do not use feedback effectively enough to help pupils make progress. Either they do not provide pupils with sufficiently clear guidance, or they do not monitor pupils' response to their feedback closely enough. In a few cases, teachers assess pupils' work carelessly, for example by rewarding inaccurate or incomplete work.

The school offers a wide range of academic courses at key stage 4. Through helpful partnership working with other local providers, it also offers a broad selection of vocational choices. In addition, the school uses these partnerships to adapt its curriculum beneficially to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils. Curriculum arrangements support the delivery of the skills challenge certificate well, and this has a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

The school provides more able and talented pupils with appropriate opportunities to extend their learning experiences, such as participation in a national student conference on climate change. There are suitable opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to learn about Welsh heritage and culture, for example the study of coastal tourism in geography and the lives of Welsh saints in religious education. An appropriate range of trips, visits and projects, such as the Faraday challenge, helps to extend pupils' subject knowledge and understanding, and raise their aspirations. This is especially useful in developing pupils' interest in science and technology.

The school's provision for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is underdeveloped and has a negative impact on their ability to make progress in subjects across the curriculum. A minority of subject areas have started to plan activities that focus on the development of pupils' skills. However, there is too much variation in how meaningful and challenging these activities are. Subject areas and individual teachers do not plan well enough for the progressive development of pupils' skills. Teachers' feedback does not focus on pupils' literacy and numeracy development well enough. Arrangements for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils with weaker skills are also underdeveloped.

The school's coordination of its provision for developing pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is at an early stage of development. Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills has been too variable, partly due to staffing issues.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

The school has an inclusive and caring ethos that supports suitably the wellbeing of all pupils. Those pupils who face significant challenges are able to access swiftly beneficial support and advice from, for example, the student support centre and the nurture room. The school has recently introduced a new system to promote good behaviour. Generally, it is used consistently by teachers, but has not had sufficient impact on improving the behaviour of a few pupils. Overall, provision for care support and guidance has not impacted well enough on pupils' attendance, attitudes to learning and the progress they make.

The school has an appropriate overview of the needs of pupils with specific, personal and social needs. Staff use this information suitably to provide effective support that helps pupils overcome challenges and supports their engagement in learning. The on-site inclusion centre provides beneficial support and tailored intervention for pupils at risk of exclusion or for those who struggle to cope with mainstream classes. This provision is beginning to have a positive impact on the attendance and motivation of these pupils.

The school works well with a range of partners, including local authority services, to ensure that support is tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils. For example, youth workers help pupils develop confidence and self-esteem through beneficial group and one to one sessions.

The school records and monitors the attendance, behaviour and wellbeing of vulnerable pupils closely. This system is used well by support staff to track the progress and engagement of these pupils. The school also has appropriate systems for monitoring all pupils' academic progress. However, the school does not have a sufficiently coordinated approach to evaluating the impact of care, support and guidance arrangements on the progress and standards of pupils.

The school has sound provision to support pupils with special educational needs (SEN). This includes, small group support for literacy, catch up provision and help to develop communication skills. Individual pupil plans capture appropriately the strengths and challenges of pupils with SEN. They identify suitable targets for pupils and suggest useful approaches to help teachers address the specific learning needs of these pupils. However, generally, teachers do not use well enough the information

contained in the plans to address pupils' learning needs. Furthermore, they do not make sufficient use of the additional guidance on teaching pupils with SEN to inform their planning.

Overall, the school supports pupils appropriately in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, lessons in religious education provide valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss morality. The annual school production, talent show and eisteddfod provide useful opportunities for pupils to engage in cultural activities. Pupils have suitable opportunities to support community and charity events including food collection for local foodbanks, helping adults with learning difficulties undertake gardening tasks and supporting after school clubs in local primary schools.

The school provides an appropriate programme of personal and social education that helps pupils prepare for the responsibilities of adult life. For instance, pupils enjoy learning about financial planning for their future. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. It offers a variety of clubs and activities to promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle. Pupils have suitable opportunities to participate in organised sports and attend classes at the on-site fitness suite.

Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 receive useful, impartial advice and guidance that helps them make informed decisions about their future pathways. This helps them be aware of the variety of opportunities they have to further their ambitions and learning.

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

Leadership and management: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Leadership at all levels has not led to sufficient or sustained improvements in important areas of the school's work including the quality of teaching, pupils' attendance and the standards they achieve.

The headteacher provides supportive and reflective leadership and has been successful in improving staff morale and gaining the confidence of the local community. He articulates a clear vision to establish common and secure structures and processes, for example to help promote consistency in teachers' planning, and has restructured the senior leadership team, allocating responsibilities appropriately to address the school's strategic objectives. However, leaders' expectations for all areas of the school's work including improving attitudes to learning, as well as the quality of teaching and assessment, are too low. In particular, the school does not have effective strategies to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

Senior leaders monitor closely the progress of subject departments in adapting their learning plans to take account of information regarding pupils' progress. This is contributing to useful improvements in this aspect of subject leaders' work. However, in other areas of the school's work such as supporting pupils' skills development and the quality of teaching, line managers do not support and challenge staff effectively enough to promote improvement. In general, middle leaders do not drive improvements to ensure high standards in teaching and learning in their areas well enough. Overall, line management arrangements are not sufficiently robust and do not hold staff to account fully for the quality of their work.

The school has a suitable programme of evaluative activities, including reviews of teaching and pupils' work. However, their focus is primarily on operational aspects and compliance with specific approaches. As a result, these activities do not provide an accurate or robust evaluation of the impact of teaching and assessment. Consequently, leaders have an overly generous view of the quality of teaching and learning. This makes it difficult for them to implement appropriately robust and precise strategies to improve these aspects.

The school takes suitable steps to ensure that professional learning activities are aligned broadly to whole-school and departmental priorities. Whole-school training days cover a range of appropriate issues, and leaders evaluate and amend this particular aspect of the school's work suitably. A variety of staff share helpful ideas about classroom practice through brief, weekly 'pedagogy sessions'. Overall, however, there is not a strong enough culture to support the engagement of all staff in developing their professional knowledge and skills. The sharing of effective practice both within and across departments is underdeveloped. In general, the school does not evaluate its professional learning activities thoroughly enough. As a result, professional learning has insufficient impact on the quality of teaching.

The governing body provides constructive and valuable support for the school. It is developing appropriately its role as a critical friend. Individual members of the governing body benefit from their involvement in departmental line-management meetings. Governors ask relevant and occasionally challenging questions, for example where they have concerns about performance in specific subjects and with the accuracy of target-setting and tracking arrangements. The governors are developing a realistic view of the aspects that most require improvement.

The headteacher, together with the finance manager and chair of finance, monitors budgets carefully. The school currently operates a licensed budget deficit. It has implemented a range of appropriate initiatives to secure efficiencies and reduce expenditure. This is helping the school to reduce this deficit in line with projected targets. There is a suitable number of appropriately qualified staff to deliver the school's curriculum. The school's use of the pupil development grant has not led to sufficient improvements in the attendance and performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

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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