A report on

Ysgol Craig Yr Wylfa
Francis Road
Borth
Ceredigion
SY24 5NJ

Date of inspection: November 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Craig yr Wylfa

Ysgol Craig yr Wylfa is situated in the village of Borth, Ceredigion. The school serves the village itself and the surrounding rural area. There are 40 pupils between 4 and 11 years old on roll. They are divided into three mixed-age classes in the morning and two mixed-age classes in the afternoon. There is a continuous pattern of inflow and outflow of pupils at the school.

On average, over a three-year-period, around 19% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is similar to the national percentage of 18%. Very few pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. The school has identified 50% of its pupils as having special educational needs. This is significantly higher than the national percentage of 21%.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in March 2011 and is responsible for another school in the area. The school is part of an informal federation with Ysgol Gymunedol Talybont. The school was last inspected in April 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 Craig yr Wylfa is a caring and inclusive community, in which staff and leaders place a high priority on developing pupils' wellbeing. As a result, pupils behave well, show enthusiasm towards their learning and take their roles and responsibilities seriously. Overall, teachers plan an interesting curriculum that engages most pupils' interest successfully. However, they do not plan purposefully enough to develop pupils' Welsh language skills. As a result, many pupils make sound progress from their starting points in their numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and English skills, but do not make strong enough progress in their Welsh skills, particularly their oracy skills.

Leaders have a clear vision that is based on the care, support and wellbeing of pupils' and staff. The school's self-evaluation procedures enable leaders to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement suitably. However, procedures are not always specific enough to lead to making improvements quickly enough.

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

Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills

R2 Strengthen planning for improvement procedures to make improvements more effective and timely

R3 Raise teachers' expectations in order to provide an appropriate challenge for pupils to achieve to the best of their ability

R4 Improve pupils' independent learning skills

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

Many pupils make sound progress in developing their numeracy, English and ICT skills from their starting points. However, they do not make enough progress in their Welsh skills, including those who are latecomers to the language. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress towards their targets. More able pupils do not always make effective enough progress in relation to their ability.

Many pupils across the school listen well to instructions. Overall, they develop a suitable understanding of the Welsh language. In the foundation phase, many are beginning to use simple language patterns accurately within the daily routine and specific tasks, such as dramatising parts of the story of Branwen. However, as pupils move through the school, they do not build purposefully enough on their Welsh oral skills in lessons or in their leisure time. They have a tendency to turn to English rather than persevering with conversations in Welsh. They do not have a sound enough grasp of Welsh syntax and lack of vocabulary hinders their ability to discuss their work confidently. In key stage 2, many pupils' English oral skills are developing effectively.

Across the school, many pupils develop their Welsh reading skills suitably. In the foundation phase, a majority read familiar texts fairly confidently and discuss the content of their stories competently. In key stage 2, pupils' Welsh reading skills have not developed as well as their English reading skills. Many pupils develop their English reading skills moderately. Overall, a majority read with appropriate fluency and expression. By Year 6, a majority are beginning to use their higher-order reading skills suitably in both languages to predict the content of their stories, and explain their logic clearly. A very few more able pupils discuss different authors' styles effectively, for example when explaining how the author writes in a surreal way. However, a majority of pupils across the school do not have robust enough phonological awareness to help them to build unfamiliar words.

A majority of pupils develop their writing skills competently as they move through the school. Although pupils begin to form letters suitably soon after they start at the school, their pre-writing skills are not always developed strongly enough. By the end of the foundation phase, a majority write intelligently and use adjectives and similes successfully to colour their work, for example when writing a portrayal of Branwen. Across key stage 2, a majority make sound progress in their writing in a wide range of writing genres, for example when writing a factual report about famous Welsh athletes. More able pupils are beginning to create effect in their writing sensibly, such as including rhetorical questions when writing a diary from the perspective of a sea creature. However, overall, a majority of pupils are over-reliant on scaffolds and word mats, which hinders their ability to write creatively.

During their time at the school, many pupils make moderate progress in their numeracy skills. By Year 2, many recognise and order numbers to 100 from smallest to largest correctly. Most recognise coins correctly, and a minority add numbers within £1 confidently. However, pupils do not apply their skills regularly enough when working within learning areas. By the end of key stage 2, many make purposeful

progress in their number, shape, measuring and data-handling skills. They are beginning to apply these skills competently when working across the curriculum. For example, pupils calculate how much profit was made on each stall at the Christmas Fayre.

Most pupils make effective progress in their ICT skills. By the end of the foundation phase, many log in to their accounts independently. With support, they insert pictures into a video program confidently and record their voices to explain the cooking steps when making Irish food. In key stage 2, most pupils use word-processing programs confidently to create posters to inform people about the importance of recycling. They create a beneficial branching database to classify sea creatures according to their physical features.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and outdoors. They treat visitors, staff and their peers with courtesy and show pride when discussing their school. Older pupils are naturally caring towards the youngest pupils and solve any conflict themselves successfully. Nearly all pupils feel safe at the school and know who to approach should they need help or support. They have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe online.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the work of charities and explain in detail the kind of support that they provide. Pupils contribute well towards raising money for a number of charities that are important to them, for example by selling cakes to raise money for a cancer charity. This has a positive effect on their awareness of the needs of others in their community and the wider world.

Most pupils understand how to live healthily. They make sensible choices in relation to food and physical activity. For example, many take advantage of opportunities to attend a cooking club. This develops their understanding of the importance of a balanced diet well. Bronze ambassadors lead on increasing pupils' co-operation by providing sports clubs and ordering purposeful resources for break times. This has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and co-operation, in addition to their physical skills.

Nearly all pupils have a strong voice in the school's life. Pupils take their roles on various committees seriously and see the value of their discussions and decisions. Members of the school council play a key role, for example in promoting children's rights among other pupils. This ensures that pupils have a strong awareness of their rights and discuss them confidently. The work of the 'Digital Wizards' in developing pupils' ICT skills is a strong feature of the school. They take care of ICT equipment and share effective practice, such as using a new animation app successfully. This has a positive effect on pupils' confidence and skills across the school.

Most pupils work sensibly with a partner and in groups. Nearly all pupils stay on task well during lessons and concentrate on their activities for extended periods. They have a sound understanding of their strengths and targets, and explain that they need to do and why in order to improve their work. They refer to success criteria successfully when completing their work, and a few pupils are beginning to set some for themselves. However, overall, they are too reliant on guidance from adults to complete their work. This hinders their ability to work independently effectively enough.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Across the school, all staff forge a supportive working relationship with pupils. They manage behaviour skilfully and deal with any unacceptable behaviour firmly and sensitively. This creates a safe learning environment.

On the whole, teachers have relevant subject knowledge. They share lesson aims and objectives and clear success criteria with pupils. They ensure that lessons have a suitable pace and, overall, tailor work suitably to meet a majority of pupils' individual learning needs. However, they do not always plan activities that challenge pupils to achieve at the level that they should. They do not always have high enough expectations or aspirations for pupils, particularly in terms of developing their Welsh oral skills. Across the school, adults over-direct activities. This limits opportunities for pupils to develop their independent skills soundly enough.

Overall, the school's curriculum provides a suitable breadth of stimulating learning experiences for pupils, which engage their interest successfully. For example, pupils in key stage 2 use their oracy and ICT skills to create an animation on the themes of sea creatures. However, teachers have a tendency to use the same language and mathematics prompts with pupils every year. This does not provide enough stimulation or progression for pupils in their learning, particularly in key stage 2.

Planning for the foundation phase ensures an effective balance between indoor and outdoor activities. For example, there are valuable activities to develop thinking and problem-solving skills outdoors, as pupils work with a variety of resources to build a bridge between Wales and Ireland in the small world area. Teachers plan a number of suitable activities to develop pupils' skills across the areas. However, activities in these areas do not always provide enough challenge for pupils to apply and develop their skills.

On the whole, teachers plan valid opportunities to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Teachers provide valuable opportunities to develop pupils' ICT skills across the school and pupils' numeracy skills in key stage 2. Overall, teachers plan suitably to nurture pupils' reading and writing skills in both languages, but there is not enough focus on developing pupils' phonological knowledge or their ability to write freely, independently. Teachers are effective language models within lessons and present new language patterns and vocabulary suitably. However, they do not correct pupils' language consistently enough or plan purposefully enough to develop their oracy skills increasingly over time.

The school has taken part in a valuable creative project to develop a wide range of pupils' skills across the school. They have worked successfully with external artists to develop pupils' confidence. This has contributed positively towards improving pupils' skills when taking part in plays, composing songs and creating animations. Pupils were very proud of broadcasting their films from this work at the local cinema. This nurtures pupils' respect and pride towards their work effectively.

The curriculum is enriched beneficially by making extensive use of the local area and through a wide range of educational visits, for example a visit to the lifeboat station in Borth. Myths and legends and current topics, such as studying the lives of people in the sporting world, are also used skilfully to develop pupils' awareness of Welsh history and culture.

Recently, the school has focused on providing pupils with useful feedback to improve their work. As a result, teachers give pupils timely feedback and support during lessons, by asking appropriate questions to encourage pupils to think. Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to respond to written work through strategies such as 'perfect pink' and 'green for growth'. This has strengthened pupils' understanding of how to improve their work and leads to purposeful improvements in their written work.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is an inclusive and welcoming community with effective arrangements to provide care for pupils. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to take care of each other and on promoting the importance of good behaviour and courtesy. The school ensures equal opportunities for all pupils and there are useful arrangements to support vulnerable, emotional pupils. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to discuss their feelings and emotions. This enables them to measure pupils' emotional state in order to deal with problems at an early stage, so that pupils are ready to learn in lessons.

The school has robust systems for tracking pupils' progress at individual level. Teachers gather useful information about pupils' progress on their journey through the school and analyse this information appropriately. They identify pupils who need additional support quickly and put beneficial steps in place to support them. For example, teachers and learning assistants provide a variety of successful intervention strategies to target pupils who are underachieving in their reading or numeracy skills, or to improve their emotional wellbeing. The school provides effectively for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers produce comprehensive plans for them and include pupils and parents as an integral part of the process. They work effectively with other agencies, where appropriate, for example in order to work on language development programmes in co-operation with a language therapist.

The school has a productive partnership with parents. The school promotes children's wellbeing well by sharing relevant information with parents, for example when giving them information about suitable and unsuitable use of the internet.

The school has effective arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to keep fit and to teach them how to care for the environment. An effective example of this is 'Wheel Wednesday', when they encourage pupils to bring their bicycles and scooters to school rather than travelling by car.

Teachers ensure valuable opportunities for pupils to get involved in their community. Regular visits are organised to the local community, which adds robustly to pupils' understanding of their local area and culture. Very recently, the school has arranged for pupils to win Welsh tokens from the local shop, cinema and the zoo for using the Welsh language in the community. This is beginning to help pupils to realise that the language is alive in their community and is beginning to encourage them to use the language more regularly.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural attitudes are promoted comprehensively. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect and take part in collective worship, which nurtures their morality and understanding of others sensitively and respectfully. Extra-curricular clubs, such as the cooking club and the 'cool club', are effective in developing pupils' physical and social skills. A number of valuable activities are provided for pupils to represent the school, for example through the swimming gala, the Urdd Eisteddfod and the tennis festival.

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 the care, support and wellbeing of pupils and staff. They share this vision successfully to create an environment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity. The headteacher shares his time with another school within an informal partnership and is supported effectively by the assistant headteacher. Together, they create a caring and inclusive ethos for pupils and staff. However, they do not always have high enough expectations, particularly in relation to developing aspects of teaching or developing pupils' Welsh oral skills.

The school has robust self-evaluation procedures, which are based on firm evidence. Leaders seek the views of parents and pupils regularly, and ensure valuable opportunities for them to contribute ideas. Through lesson observations and learning walks, leaders have a suitable understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. In the best instances, they address these areas and ensure that all staff adopt specific approaches in order to improve standards. A positive example of this is the recent success in ensuring consistency and strengthening teachers' methods for responding to pupils' work. However, the effect of procedures on planning for improvement is inconsistent. Planning for improvement processes are not always incisive enough and do not always include clear enough actions to enable staff to understand what needs to be done to improve provision and raise pupils' standards. As a result, important areas for improvement, such as developing pupils' Welsh oral skills, have been persistent issues in the school development plan for too long.

Staff are given appropriate opportunities to research new techniques and share effective practice internally. An effective example of this is the way in which the ICT co-ordinator has trained Digital Wizards to distribute new information throughout the school successfully. This has led to pupils improving their ICT and creative skills, for example by using an animation app. Professional training is used effectively to develop staff, for example to upskill learning assistants in order to improve the support that is available to pupils with special educational needs. The school has suitable performance management procedures, which place an appropriate focus on developing staff professionally. However, leaders do not use these procedures robustly enough to hold teachers to account for pupils' standards.

The school's governing body provides suitable challenge and support. Members are given appropriate opportunities to visit the school and contribute to the self-evaluation process informally. As a result, they have an increasing awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. They support leaders to manage

the school's budget effectively, which includes making difficult decisions in order to ensure the sustainability of the school, for example by reviewing the staffing structure.

Purposeful use of grants, including the pupil development grant, enables the school to provide additional support to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and wellbeing. Expenditure on learning resources corresponds to the school's priorities and contributes suitably towards raising standards. For example, investment in suitable resources for the foundation phase ensures that teachers plan more purposefully for activities in the outdoor area.

The school is staffed appropriately and, on the whole, staff are used suitably to teach the curriculum. However, leaders do not ensure that staff have a sound enough understanding of when to intervene in learning and when to support pupils to develop their skills independently. The school uses its indoor and outdoor environments purposefully. Overall, learning resources are used effectively to enrich the curriculum.

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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