



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn Y Forwyn
Darran Terrace
Ferndale
Rhondda
Rhondda Cynon Taff
CF43 4LG**

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by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn y Forwyn

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn y Forwyn is situated in the village of Ferndale in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 190 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 21 full-time and 8 part-time nursery age pupils. Pupils are organised into 7 single-age classes and one mixed-age class.

Over a three-year-period, around 23% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is higher than the national percentage of 18%. A minority of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 30% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. This is higher than the national percentage of 21%. Very few have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2009 and the school was last inspected in October 2011.

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 headteacher provides robust and effective leadership to staff and pupils, which ensures a clear strategic direction for the school and a culture that promotes continuous improvement. All members of staff have a robust vision to promote Welshness, nurture respect and encourage pupils to do their best. Staff are dedicated and enthusiastic, and work very well together to ensure that the school has a caring ethos and that procedures are in place to give attention to pupils' wellbeing. Governors support the school well.

The school is a happy community where most pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils use the Welsh language with pride. This permeates all of the school's life and work. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate and persevere well for long periods. Nearly all pupils behave well, both in the classroom and around the school. They are very caring towards each other and treat adults and visitors maturely and with respect and courtesy.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure appropriate opportunities for pupils in the foundation phase to make choices in relation to their learning so that they develop as independent learners
- R2 Improve pupils' information and communication technology skills
- R3 Ensure that key stage 2 teachers provide a balanced curriculum and develop pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding, in particular

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, most pupils' basic skills are lower than expected for their age. As they move through the school, nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress from their starting points.

Most pupils across the school listen attentively to the views of others and speak clearly when sharing their ideas confidently. They discuss various topics maturely, such as the effect of tourism on Antarctica. Most pupils are very keen to provide answers, comments and express an opinion articulately in Welsh when talking about their work. Nearly all show passionate pride towards the Welsh language and use it enthusiastically when socialising during playtime, as well as in their lessons. At the top of the school, most pupils reach a good standard of bilingualism and change freely from one language to the other when discussing their work.

Most pupils in the foundation phase make purposeful progress when learning to read. By Year 2, they choose reading materials independently and give sensible reasons for their choices. Most show an interest and enjoy reading aloud, and do so with increasing confidence. They enjoy discussing characters in the class' books, such as little red riding hood's grandmother. In key stage 2, many pupils read accurately and fluently in Welsh and English. By Year 2, many are independent readers who gather, recall and organise information from various sources wholly independently. They express an opinion about characters, aspects and authors' styles appropriately.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing purposefully. By the end of the foundation phase, most write independently for different purposes, for example when recalling the story of Rama and Sita and the Gruffalo's adventures. In key stage 2, many pupils present their ideas effectively and show a sound grasp of spelling patterns, paragraphing and punctuation in both languages, in line with their age and ability. By Year 6, many write successfully in a range of forms across most of the curriculum, for example when writing about the history of Anne Frank or presenting facts about Walt Disney. Most pupils' standards of handwriting and presentation of work are neat.

Most pupils in the foundation phase make good progress in their mathematical development. Many pupils in the early years recognise objects that are bigger or smaller than others and measure the height of their peers successfully by using non-standard units. By Year 2, they handle money correctly when role-playing in the class cake shop, for example. In key stage 2, most pupils have a sound understanding of number strategies and, by Year 6, they use a wide range of methods confidently to calculate mentally. They apply these methods successfully in regular activities across many curriculum subjects, for example when comparing the distance that food travels around the world and calculating the cost of goods during the Second World War. However, pupils do not use their numeracy skills to collect, record or analyse data often enough, particularly in science lessons.

Many pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop gradually as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, many use an

electronic tablet effectively when taking pictures and recording their voices. Most pupils in key stage 2 use the internet effectively to search for information and create multimedia presentations successfully, for example when presenting their work on Antarctica. They are beginning to use spreadsheets suitably to calculate the cost of the best burger to eat in a party. However, overall, pupils do not apply their ICT skills consistently enough across the curriculum. This limits their progress in this area.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and happy there and appreciate the caring and friendly environment. When necessary, pupils are confident that teachers respond to their concerns promptly and appropriately. Most pupils treat all adults with respect and are considerate of other people's needs. Most pupils understand how to use the internet safely.

Nearly all pupils take pride in their school and in the standard of their work. They show good attitudes and motivation towards their learning. Most behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. Through the effective work of the 'Cyfeillion Cŵl', most pupils' behaviour during playtimes and lunchtime is also a good feature of the school's work. Pupils are polite, share well with each other, take turns and listen attentively to others. Many pupils are kind, help their peers and support each other at difficult or sensitive times.

The pupil's voice permeates many aspects of school life successfully. One effective example is the way in which pupils have created characters to represent the four purposes of the curriculum for Wales, such as 'Myfanwy mentrus' and 'Ilan uchelgeisiol'. They use these characters effectively to overcome challenges while working independently or with each other in groups. Many pupils across the school show a strong understanding of independence skills, thinking skills and perseverance. Most pupils are very proud of their Welshness and show willingness and enthusiasm towards learning. Many pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work and succeed in specific tasks. At the top of the school, most pupils have a mature awareness of their attainment and the next steps in their learning.

Most pupils in key stage 2 have started to contribute effectively when choosing a theme and suggesting interesting ideas about what they would like to learn. For example, pupils in Year 4 research and discuss for and against keeping animals in captivity. However, the contribution of pupils in the foundation phase is not as evident in this respect.

Many pupils take full advantage of the extensive opportunities they are given to represent other pupils and influence school life and work, and take pride in them. Under the leadership of the eco council, most pupils' understanding of sustainability is developing well. By running a fair trade fruit shop, staff encourage pupils to make wise choices about how to eat healthily. Many pupils have a sound understanding of how regular exercise has a positive effect on their fitness, health and physical wellbeing. Members of the school council listen carefully to the ideas of their peers and act on them. Recently, for example, they have introduced an indoor climbing wall for key stage 2 pupils to practice their practical skills during break time.

Members of the Criw Cymraeg show very positive attitudes towards the Welsh language, and have a key influence on nurturing Welshness across the school. They strive to encourage all pupils to promote the language successfully during lessons and break times. As a result, most pupils' use of the Welsh language and attitude towards it are very strong across the school.

Many pupils in key stage 2 develop as conscientious moral citizens. A good example of this is the way in which they campaign to raise their peers' awareness of different charities through their annual enterprise activities. Weekly visits to a home for the elderly by many pupils from Year 4 to Year 6 strengthen their understanding of social issues and other people's needs well.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

All staff have an effective working relationship with pupils, which fosters a positive and supportive learning environment. The respect between pupils and adults is an important feature of the school's work. Pupils are encouraged to do their best and persevere in a quiet and hardworking environment. Support staff are used valuably by teachers across the school. Staff support learning effectively and, as a result, most pupils make good progress in their lessons. Staff are sensitive to pupils' needs and their encouragement of pupils' wellbeing develops their confidence successfully. All members have high expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour.

Regular opportunities that are provided by all staff to promote the Welsh language and Welshness are a natural part of all of the school's work. Nearly all members of staff are robust role models for pupils in terms of their use of the Welsh language. This contributes successfully towards developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. The school promotes the Welsh dimension successfully through curricular activities, and provides numerous opportunities for pupils to study the work of local artists, musicians and the local environment.

Most teachers ensure that their lessons have a good pace. They set clear learning objectives and use a range of interesting resources to engage pupils' interest. In the best examples, teachers set challenging tasks, which enable pupils to use their previous knowledge and thinking skills, for example to try to solve the problem of global warming.

Teachers use questioning techniques purposefully to help pupils to understand new concepts and develop their knowledge and skills. Their oral feedback focuses well on how pupils can improve their work. As a result, most pupils show good resilience and perseverance to improve specific aspects of their work. Staff give pupils regular opportunities to assess and reflect on their own performance and that of their peers. This enables pupils to know what they have done well and understand what they need to do to improve their work further.

Teachers work together effectively to ensure that all pupils receive a range of appropriate learning experiences. New cross-curricular themes are beginning to extend most pupils' knowledge and understanding fairly consistently across the school. On the whole, the principles of the foundation phase have been embedded suitably. However, at times, adults over-direct activities, which limit opportunities for pupils to make specific choices about their learning. There are few opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners in the older classes in the foundation phase.

The whole school has begun to plan appropriately in line with the requirements of the new curriculum for Wales. Teachers and pupils in key stage 2 plan together successfully, and pupils make particular choices about what and how they would like to learn. There are a number of effective opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 5 have researched pirate illnesses, while others in Year 3 have compared life in the coalmines in Rhondda with modern day life. However, opportunities for pupils to use aspects of their numeracy skills in various subjects are very limited, particularly when using data to develop their scientific knowledge and understanding. Teachers are beginning to plan to implement the digital competence framework. They provide suitable opportunities to enable pupils to use their ICT skills in various contexts, such as creating short films to convey the story and life of Hedd Wyn.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy, diligent and inclusive community. Staff create a caring and homely feel, which is reflected in pupils' respectful and polite behaviour. All members of staff have high expectations in terms of pupils' effort and wellbeing. As a result, pupils are adventurous and confident.

The school has thorough procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress. Staff identify pupils' educational and personal requirements very well and use comprehensive information to identify the needs of pupils who need additional support. Through a number of literacy activities, staff ensure that all pupils are given the support necessary to succeed in their learning. Pupils with additional learning needs have detailed individual education plans, and targets are specific and measurable. Pupils have regular input into setting their targets, and there are effective meetings to discuss their progress with parents. Learning support staff are used successfully across the school to support individual pupils and implement a range of valuable support programmes. This support helps pupils to engage very well with their learning and contributes effectively towards improving their standards and outcomes.

The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' emotional needs and encouraging good behaviour. Many pupils attend excellent multimedia and social sessions regularly. These activities enable pupils to talk about their feelings in small, supportive groups and help them to cope well with day-to-day life. 'Cyfeillion Cŵl' provide their peers with a listening ear, which also encourages pupils to share their concerns in a less formal environment. As a result, pupils develop their confidence and engage with their work more confidently.

There is a supportive relationship between parents and the school. Parents are informed regularly about the school's activities and events through letters and social media. Staff know the pupils and their families particularly well and have very positive relationships with nearly all of them. By holding a coffee morning every term, the school refers families to specialist support, such as the behaviour agency, where appropriate.

The school has robust procedures for promoting eating and drinking healthily. Through a number of curricular and extra-curricular activities, pupils have a good knowledge of what they need to do to stay healthy. Opportunities to develop pupils' moral and social skills are successful, through circle time sessions and in relevant

lessons. Staff organise valuable opportunities for pupils to experience spiritual elements by reflecting in collective worship sessions and learning about various religious principles in lessons. Through whole-school activities, such as 'show the red card to racism', pupils gain respect for people from different cultures and backgrounds appropriately. The school provides limited opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the wider world, but this element has not been developed in full.

The school has suitable guidelines for improving attendance. They have recently introduced the 'ten days of Christmas' challenge at the end of the term to encourage pupils to attend school regularly. It is too early to measure the effect of this strategy on the school's attendance data.

The school's provision for developing pupils' creative skills is purposeful. The school provides a number of opportunities for pupils to take part in concerts, sing in the school choir and compete in the Urdd Eisteddfod. This contributes successfully towards increasing pupils' confidence and social skills. Staff plan a wide range of interesting activities that develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of Welsh culture. For example, pupils work with Welsh artists to create murals and cartoons. Educational visits to places of interest, such as Rhondda Heritage Park and the residential weekend to the Urdd residential centre in Llangrannog, develop pupils' awareness of history, both locally and further afield, effectively.

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

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has a clear vision that is based firmly on raising pupils' standards, wellbeing and Welshness. All of the school's staff realise this vision successfully. Co-operation to ensure improvement within a supportive, Welsh ethos is one of the school's prominent strengths.

The headteacher provides robust and clear strategic leadership and sets high expectations. She distributes responsibilities sensibly and ensures that all members of staff have good opportunities to develop their leadership skills. As a result, all members of staff understand their roles and fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. Staff monitor pupils' achievements frequently and in detail, which leads to improvements in most pupils' standards of literacy and numeracy. However, leaders have not addressed ensuring better provision to develop pupils' scientific skills.

Self-evaluation arrangements are rigorous and are based on a wide range of first-hand evidence, including tracking pupils' progress and evaluating the quality of provision. Leaders have a strong and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. There is a clear link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation report and the priorities in the development plan. Staff monitor the plan's main priorities regularly in order to measure the success of activities. As a result, the school has a record of ensuring continuous improvement. A typical example of success is the improvement in pupils' standards of oracy. Nearly all pupils communicate confidently in Welsh, and use correct and polished language in their lessons and around the school.

The school is a successful learning community. Performance management arrangements contribute effectively to staff's professional development and to improving their practice. They benefit from valuable opportunities to share good practice both inside and outside the school. For example, after leaders visited another school, they introduced intervention programmes that are having a very positive effect on the wellbeing and behaviour of a significant number of pupils. Following training courses, staff share good practice with their colleagues. This has a beneficial influence on improving staff's skills and contributes effectively to the quality of effective teaching that exists across the school.

The governing body is supportive and knows the school community very well. Most governors contribute effectively towards evaluating the school's work, and they have a sound understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. They are effective critical friends who challenge leaders skilfully in order to ensure continuous improvement.

The school is staffed very appropriately and good use is made of individuals' expertise to enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, they use specialists to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their design and technology, and performance skills. Indoor learning areas are very attractive and promote learning successfully. However, the outdoor areas have not been developed to the same standard, and use of them is very limited.

The school responds purposefully to local and national priorities, such as developing pupils' literacy skills soundly across all areas of learning and establishing the Welsh Language Charter to raise the standard of pupils' spoken Welsh. The school has begun to adapt its planning to meet the requirements of the new curriculum for Wales effectively in key stage 2. However, the school has been slow in planning to introduce the digital competence framework.

The headteacher and governing body manage expenditure carefully. They measure the effect of programmes and activities on pupils' outcomes carefully to ensure that they are cost-effective. Good use is made of the pupil development grant to improve provision to develop the wellbeing and literacy skills of pupils who are eligible to receive it.

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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