



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

A report on

**Ysgol Pen Rhos
Copperworks Road
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA15 2NG**

Date of inspection: October 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Pen Rhos

Ysgol Pen Rhos is a recently established school following the amalgamation of two schools in Llanelli, Carmarthenshire local authority. There are 447 pupils on roll aged from 3 to 11 years, including 23 part time children who attend the nursery. The school organises pupils into four Welsh medium and 13 English medium classes.

On average over the last three years, about 34% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is considerably above the national average of 18%. The school identifies about 37% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is notably above the national average of 21%. Few pupils have English as an additional language and a very few pupils speak Welsh at home. A few come from an ethnic minority background.

The headteacher took up his post in September 2016. This is the first Estyn inspection of the school.

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 is a highly effective and innovative leader who has a very clear vision for developing the school as a caring and inclusive learning community, with wellbeing at its heart. In the very short time since the school has been established, leaders have ensured that the school has developed as a vibrant and proactive learning organisation, which values every one of its pupils and staff.

Teachers and support staff have high expectations of all pupils. They create a calm and purposeful working environment and manage pupil behaviour effectively. All staff have positive and productive working relationship with all pupils. This contributes successfully to their learning experiences. Most teachers are excellent Welsh language role models and promote the language in a natural and inclusive way in and out of class. This is a strength of the school.

Most pupils listen respectfully to one another when discussing work, and develop increasing resilience in order to persevere with their tasks. Most pupils show high levels of motivation and pride in their work. Overall, they develop their skills consistently across the curriculum and make valuable progress from their starting points.

Leaders act on different strategies to encourage pupils to attend school regularly. However, attendance levels have remained low over time in comparison with those of other similar schools.

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 Develop pupils' skills further in all areas of the curriculum
- R2 Raise attendance levels
- R3 Develop regular opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback in order to develop their work further
- R4 Develop pupils' confidence to contribute and influence all aspects of their learning and school experience

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to support pupils' wellbeing, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time in school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make strong progress from their individual starting points. Generally, there is no significant difference between the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers. Nearly all pupils develop their speaking and listening skills beneficially. Most pupils pay close attention to their teachers and listen respectfully to one another when discussing work, for example with their thinking partners. Nearly all recall previous learning well and develop their thinking effectively when discussing ideas about advertising healthy food. Most pupils have a good understanding of spoken Welsh, and use the language beneficially in class and around the school. Nearly all pupils in the Welsh stream make strong progress in their Welsh vocabulary and sentence patterns, and speak the language naturally with their friends.

Many pupils in the foundation phase make steady progress in learning to read. They develop a secure understanding of letters and sounds and decode unfamiliar words successfully. Many are beginning to read expressively, for example when reading about animals. In key stage 2, most pupils develop their reading skills effectively. Pupils make good use of picture cues to help them understand their stories, and older pupils use context appropriately to aid their understanding of the text. They read aloud clearly and with good expression, occasionally adding interest by adopting characters' voices. They use the internet to collect and collate information successfully, for example on the distance different food travels to arrive at the school.

Most pupils in the foundation phase write for a suitably wide range of purposes. They use basic punctuation skilfully and spell familiar words correctly. Many pupils include effective descriptive vocabulary in their writing and make sensible attempts at spelling more difficult words, such as when writing a list of ingredients for a potion. In key stage 2, many pupils develop their writing skills effectively, and show a growing awareness of how to match their style to suit their purpose. For example, most apply their literacy skills beneficially across the curriculum when writing interesting adjectives for a recipe poem about Wales. Most pupils develop their Welsh writing skills effectively in the 'Cwtch Cymraeg' and write about their favourite sports on the 'Graffiti Wall'. Nearly all pupils present their work neatly and show pride and respect in their accomplishments. However, a minority of pupils do not always know how to further develop and improve their work.

Most pupils in the foundation phase have a good understanding of mathematical concepts. They solve number problems confidently and recall simple number facts quickly when organising numbers up to twenty on a washing line. They apply what they have learnt successfully in new situations in engaging outside learning areas. For example, most pupils develop their measuring skills successfully using millilitres when mixing liquids to make different shampoos. In key stage 2, most pupils make beneficial progress. They develop their number work effectively when organising a trip to a theme park by working out best value for money. Most pupils in Year 4 develop their skills confidently when measuring different body parts in centimetres and metres to make a human skeleton. In Year 6, most pupils use digital software to

calculate the area and perimeter of the school building and grounds as part of the development of the new school site. They develop their numeracy skills effectively by reading different scales on maps to design a creative and stimulating playground. However, a minority of pupils do not apply their numeracy skills confidently, for example in problem solving activities.

Most foundation phase pupils use an effective range of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and software confidently. Most Year 2 pupils access their own online account independently when saving and retrieving their work. Most use electronic devices such as simple tills in the role play area, for example when buying different articles from the class shop. They use word processing software successfully and use graphics to enhance their writing. Many pupils collect data about the height of members of the class and make decisions about which format is most effective to show their results in graphical form.

Most pupils across key stage 2 maintain their progress in skills through using an effective variety of ICT equipment to enhance their learning. They save and retrieve their work confidently. Most upper key stage 2 pupils use data bases effectively to find and display information. They use presentation software successfully, for example when displaying a virtual time capsule from a specific year. They present historical information using green screen technology, for example when presenting to their classmates about the Titanic's maiden voyage.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils develop as confident and respectful individuals within the school's highly supportive and inclusive ethos. Pupils feel safe and know whom to approach if they are worried. Nearly all pupils behave well during activities and around the school. They respect the school's values and socialise with their friends in a caring manner. Playground Buddies show high levels of care and consideration as they help other pupils at break times.

Nearly all pupils have strong relationships with staff and peers. They gain confidence and develop increasing resilience to persevere with their tasks. Most pupils show high levels of motivation and pride in their work. For example, key stage 2 pupils' estimate and measure objects in the outdoor environment confidently with an increasing level of independence.

Nearly all pupils show respect for others. For example, pupils in key stage 2 act as 'Teachers in Training' to support their classmates effectively. Most pupils are proud of each other's achievements and support their efforts contentiously. They listen attentively to each other responding beneficially, for example when pupils listen and discuss the importance of sharing as part of a circle time activity.

Most pupils respond positively to opportunities to influence their own learning, for example to investigate how the northern lights are formed. Nearly all pupils engage with new, unfamiliar experiences and ideas confidently, and sustain concentration, with perseverance to succeed in their tasks, for example when creating a recipe to make a crumble for the Gruffalo, and when measuring acute and obtuse angles whilst making a path following the scuba diver's journey. As a result, most pupils develop as increasingly confident and ambitious learners.

Many pupils have the opportunity to present ideas and suggestions through a useful variety of pupil groups. The school council encourage their friends to share their ideas appropriately on how to develop the school by using a suggestion box. As a result, they organise a worthwhile food bank and a school talent event. However, a minority of pupils do not influence their own learning or contribute to school development successfully.

Most pupils take part in a suitable range of after school activities including coding, choir practice and a variety of sports clubs. Most pupils have a strong awareness of how to stay safe when using the internet. For example, they are aware of the importance of securing their passwords. Digital leaders support pupils to develop their ICT skills successfully.

Nearly all pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and taking part in regular exercise activities to improve their fitness, such as the daily yoga lessons and the race for life challenge. Nearly all develop a good awareness of the importance of personal hygiene, including looking after their teeth and washing their hands. They create posters to promote the effects of different drinks on tooth decay and the importance of having clean hands.

Most pupils are proud of their local community and take pride in being Welsh, for example when taking part in an entrepreneurial project that involves creating and selling Welsh produce, such as love spoons, in Llanelli market. Nearly all pupils are proud of their creative tasks when discussing art work around the school.

Many pupils and parents respond appropriately to the school's focus on improving attendance. Most understand the importance of attending school regularly. Leaders act on different strategies to encourage pupils to attend school. However, attendance levels have remained low over time in comparison with those in other similar schools.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers and support staff have high expectations of all pupils. They create a calm and purposeful working environment and manage pupil behaviour effectively. Teachers provide pupils with strong and consistent classroom organisation and routines that benefit their learning and wellbeing. All staff have positive and productive working relationships with all pupils that contribute successfully to their learning.

Teachers provide a wide range of rich learning experiences in a vibrant environment, which engage pupils' interests successfully and develop them as motivated and creative individuals. They share learning intentions with pupils consistently, set a brisk pace to lessons and challenge all pupils purposefully. They use questioning effectively to encourage pupils to explain their thinking and to develop their learning further. All staff contribute successfully to enhance pupils' understanding of new contexts and support them to develop their skills successfully. They support pupils sensitively and encourage them to persevere in an inclusive environment. All staff promote and model the Welsh language to a very high standard. This is a notable strength of the school. They speak both Welsh and English with pupils, which has a positive impact on their confidence to speak both languages in and out of class.

Teachers provide pupils with valuable oral feedback during activities. They encourage and support them effectively to improve their work. However, teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own work. Teachers' written feedback does not always provide pupils with a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their own work. As a result, a few pupils do not always make enough progress.

The principles of the foundation phase have been embedded successfully. Staff make effective and flexible use of the school's resources, in order to develop pupils' skills effectively, for example when Reception pupils make a cake in the mud kitchen. Teachers provide enriching opportunities in the outside classroom for pupils to develop their skills beneficially and develop as independent learners, for example when organising a party for the Gruffalo. Most pupils develop their independence skills well in key stage 2. Staff provide a range of activities and experiences for pupils to apply their skills appropriately, for example reciting and copying times tables on a chalk board in the Victorian school.

Teachers plan a skills based curriculum that ensures consistency across the school, and builds systematically on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding. They provide a range of relevant opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy, Welsh and ICT skills consistently across the curriculum. Teachers provide valuable opportunities to enhance pupils' experiences by arranging a variety of trips to support their learning, for example to Kidwelly Castle and to Caerphilly Forest. Nearly all pupils apply their skills effectively across the curriculum, for example when writing a recount diary from the Battle of Hastings and measuring the distances between different castles in Wales. As a result, most pupils are enthused and eager to learn.

Pupils are encouraged by staff to use their Welsh oracy skills in a wide range of formal and informal contexts across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils are provided with opportunities to solve money problems through the medium of Welsh. As a result, most pupils make effective progress in their use and understanding of the language.

Care, support and guidance: Good

School leaders track and monitor pupils' academic progress purposefully as they move through the school. Information is used effectively to identify and provide beneficial support for learners. Teachers provide an extensive range of intervention support to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills effectively, for example reading sessions with Ruby the dog. As a result, most pupils make strong progress towards their targets.

Pupils' wellbeing needs are identified effectively through a tracking system that includes wellbeing surveys and attendance information. This is used skilfully to identify pupils requiring additional support. For example, pupils identified as having behavioural, social and emotional challenges are assigned to effective nurturing intervention groups or individual mentoring sessions with specialist staff.

Leaders place strong emphasis on partnership work with external agencies that provides effective support for pupils with additional learning needs. They track

progress of pupils with special education needs effectively in relation to their individual targets. They hold regular reviews of pupils' individual plans and nearly all make strong progress towards their individual targets.

The school is proactive in helping parents develop their understanding on how to support their children. For example, teachers inform them with useful curriculum maps, and information leaflets about the importance of regular attendance. Family engagement sessions for parents are arranged to support positive parenting and online safety. School reports offer parents appropriate information on their child's progress and targets for improvement.

Teachers make effective provision for developing pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyle choices. For example, key stage 2 pupils study the benefits of healthy eating and exercise as part of their science curriculum. The school makes effective use of the police liaison officer and school nurse to support pupils in developing their knowledge and understanding of a variety of personal safety issues, for example to keep safe online. Effective discussions surrounding these topics embed an understanding of how informed choices can impact on pupils' lifestyles. Outdoor play areas and extra-curricular activities provide beneficial opportunities for physical exercise.

Many pupils are given opportunities to represent the school and be active within the community, such as at local sports tournaments and church activities. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness within the local and wider community. For instance, pupils take part in the local Eisteddfod and jamboree, and learn about festivals and celebrations such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. The school develops pupils' ability to reflect on religious morals and on their own beliefs and values successfully. Pupils also compare other religions valuably, such as Hinduism and Buddhism.

Teachers provide activities for pupils to develop their understanding of values and to distinguish between right and wrong. They make effective use of different strategies to develop pupils' sense of tolerance for others. They foster positive attitudes to manage behaviours and to create a friendly learning environment.

Lessons and educational visits encourage pupils to develop their creativity effectively. For example, they visit the local supermarket and experiment with Victorian art and traditional Welsh music. The school is pro-active in developing pupils' understanding of a diverse global world. For example, Year 5 pupils compare and contrast climates and carry out investigations on river usage in different localities around the world.

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

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher is a highly effective and innovative leader who has a very clear vision for developing the school as a caring learning community, with wellbeing at its heart. He is supported highly effectively by assistant headteachers, teachers and support staff. All members of staff work together diligently to develop the provision at

the school, and to ensure that pupils receive enriching opportunities to learn within a supportive and inclusive ethos. In the very short time since the school has been established, leaders have ensured that the school has developed as a vibrant and proactive learning organisation, which values every one of its pupils and staff.

The governing body fulfils their duties successfully. Members meet regularly, often through sub committees, and scrutinise the school's provision and progress efficiently. They support the school through engaging in an effective range of activities, such as learning walks and scrutiny of pupils work. They speak to pupils and are aware of the importance of listening to their opinions about the school. They value opportunities for pupils to present relevant information to them in meetings. Governors receive useful information from the headteacher, the leadership team and subject leaders about progress in specific areas of the curriculum. Members attend meetings with local authority and regional consortium officers, and discuss the actions from these visits. They accompany school leaders on visits to schools in neighbouring authorities to observe and share good practice. They have a sound awareness of progress against agreed targets. However, their role as a critical friend is not fully developed, such as when challenging the school about standards and progress in learning.

The school has established effective and thorough self-evaluation procedures. The headteacher and senior leadership team ensure opportunities for staff to participate in a wide and effective range of evaluation activity. They undertake what they refer to as the 'magic 8' activities, which include learning walks and lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. They also talk to a range of pupils of different ages and abilities and take their views into account when assessing provision. They seek the views of all stakeholders at the school. Processes are open and honest, and highlight strengths and weaknesses successfully.

Leaders use relevant information to set priorities in the school development plan. This is an effective, working document, which outlines appropriate actions to be carried out during the academic year. Responsibility for leading specific activities, allocation of funding, review dates and success criteria are included. As a result, the leadership team have a strong and robust strategic view of progress against specific targets, and the impact of actions on pupil progress and wellbeing. For example, there has been a very positive impact on standards in Welsh across the school following prioritising this aspect in last year's school development plan.

Leaders place a very strong focus on professional development opportunities and the school is developing as a very successful learning community. For example, staff benefit from professional learning opportunities about pupils' wellbeing. As a result, this has an extensive and positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and learning experiences in school. Staff receive purposeful opportunities to share practice within school, and visit other schools which have been recognised as having strong practices in specific areas. Also, teachers have been released to follow 12-month sabbatical courses in Welsh, taking responsibility for Welsh-medium classes upon their return.

Teaching assistants are provided with a wealth of learning opportunities, closely aligned to school's development needs, for example on supporting pupils' wellbeing. The headteacher works closely with a range of partners, providing support and

training both regionally and internationally. As a result, leaders make effective use of staff members' specific strengths and collaborate effectively to develop provision. This is a particularly strong feature of the school.

Leaders manage and monitor the school budget effectively and make appropriate decisions about staffing and resources. Funds are allocated appropriately according to current priority areas. Leaders make effective use of grants, including the pupil deprivation grant, to support learners across the school.

The school has an excellent range of buildings and resources, which they use to best effect. The classrooms are bright and welcoming and support the learning effectively. The outside areas contribute successfully to developing the pupils' creative and independence skills.

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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