



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

A report on

Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Nantgaredig

**Station Road
Nantgaredig
SA32 7LG**

Date of inspection: March 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Nantgaredig

Name of provider	NANTGAREDIG
Local authority	Carmarthenshire
Language of the provider	Welsh-medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	216
Pupils of statutory school age	146
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	38
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 21.3%)</i>	5%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 20.6%)</i>	37%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	65.1%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	November 2009
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	10-06-2014
Start date of inspection	21-03-2022
Additional information	

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website:
mylocalschool.gov.wales

- (a) The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school

Overview

Ysgol Gynradd Nantgaredig is a happy and homely school. All staff work together effectively to create a caring, Welsh, and inclusive ethos. The additional learning centres are an integral part of the school's life and all pupils benefit from the rich experiences that come from working with each other. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are a strong feature of the school. Pupils have a strong voice in the school's life and are given regular opportunities to question staff and influence decisions. The pupil's voice, 'Nantlais', is an effective means of including pupils' ideas in the school's themes. They celebrate their successes and the fact that everyone is different and important.

The school is run very effectively and the management team identifies aspects of the school's work that are in need of improvement and the steps that are needed to achieve this. The school's monitoring and evaluation activities are incisive and accurate. Leaders consider the views of parents and governors carefully and their voice has an appropriate influence on the direction of the school. Leaders share their vision clearly with everyone and the school community works diligently to 'learn today for a better tomorrow'. Governors have a good awareness of the school's work and support the school very effectively. The school needs to address the transport arrangements on the school playground when parents and carers drop-off and collect their children at the beginning and end of each day.

Pupils develop their basic skills strongly on their journey through the school. They develop as confident mathematicians and gain a sound grasp of Welsh and English. By the end of their time at the school, they use their digital skills in different ways to solve problems and demonstrate their knowledge skilfully. Staff ensure that pupils take pride in their community and their county and develop an awareness of their place in the world. However, there are not enough opportunities for them to make choices independently enough across the school and the level of challenge that is provided to pupils is inconsistent.

Recommendations

- R1 Address the health and safety issue that was identified during the core inspection
- R2 Ensure that teaching provides enough opportunities for pupils to make choices more independently across the school
- R3 Share best practice within the school to provide an appropriate level of challenge to all pupils

What happens next

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

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, many pupils' basic skills correspond to what is expected for their age, except in Welsh, which is a new language to around half of pupils. During their time at the school, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Nearly all pupils who attend the additional learning needs bases make appropriate progress from their starting points over time.

Most pupils listen exceptionally well to adults and each other. The oral skills of the school's youngest pupils are developing successfully. By Year 2, they converse confidently in Welsh about their work and experiences and use local dialect naturally. For example, pupils communicate effectively with each other to plan and create an insect shelter in the outdoor area. Most of the school's older pupils develop their oral skills skilfully in Welsh and English. They communicate effectively in both languages and contribute purposefully to class discussions, expressing their views clearly and maturely. Most pupils take pride in the Welsh language and use it naturally when talking to each other in their classrooms.

Many pupils' reading skills are developing well. The youngest pupils use an appropriate range of phonic strategies to read familiar and unfamiliar words. By Year 2, they use their reading skills confidently, for example when reading information to discover facts about famous Welsh people. Many of the older pupils read intelligently in various contexts in both languages. They vary their tone of voice and use punctuation correctly to show their understanding. They also develop their higher-order reading skills purposefully to gather information from different sources, for example when finding information that deepens their understanding of the main features of the planets and the universe.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing well. By Year 2, many write in an appropriate range of contexts for different audiences, for example when writing a report about the life of St David. They extend their ideas effectively. Many of the school's older pupils build on their writing skills successfully in both languages. They show a secure grasp of familiar spelling patterns, paragraphing, and punctuation. They adapt their style and structure to different texts effectively, for example when writing a formal letter expressing concern about plans to flood a village to supply water or when writing a report describing the effect of bombing on Swansea during the Second World War.

In the school's youngest years, most pupils make good progress in their mathematical development. By the end of Year 2, they have an intelligent grasp of number facts and measurement and handle money correctly. By the top of the school, they convert fractions into decimals and use percentages confidently. They have a sound understanding of mathematical properties. This enables them to interpret data in different ways and find the area and perimeter of composite shapes. Most pupils apply their numeracy skills effectively across the curriculum.

Many pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing well. By Year 2, they combine their skills successfully, for example when controlling a programmable toy to move around a map of the local area and collect data about the favourite colours of pupils in the class and using a program to present their results. The skills of most of the school's older pupils build firmly on this foundation. For example, they use a wide range of digital equipment to design and edit repetitive patterns when emulating the work of Mary Quant.

Nearly all pupils' physical skills are developing soundly through a variety of experiences and activities. The school's youngest pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to '*Mawrth Mwdlyd*' (Muddy Tuesday) activities in which they develop their physical skills effectively while completing different tasks outdoors. The school's older pupils develop their physical skills by taking part in a variety of sports activities or as part of their theme, for example when dancing during their work on the 60s.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils show pride in their school and feel safe within its inclusive and familial ethos. They are happy to discuss any concerns with member of staff and are confident that they are listened to. Nearly all pupils' behaviour, both indoors and outdoors, is exceptionally good. They are polite and treat their peers, staff, and visitors with respect. Nearly all pupils are very caring towards each other and work and play together in harmony. The ethos of family and empathy towards others is supported very effectively by the '*ffrindiau ffeind*' (kind friends). They are very vigilant on the school playground and are ready to respond sincerely to any sadness or distress among their peers.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of online safety. Pupils have a sound understanding of the dangers that can arise as a result of unsuitable use of the internet. Most understand how to stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking water, and keeping fit. In addition to the regular physical education lessons, older pupils state confidently that mental health strategies are extremely important to ensure a fulfilling life. They discuss maturely by referring often to the school's '*Tŵr Twf*' (Growth Tower) map. They believe that facing challenges, making mistakes and perseverance are a natural part of everyone's life.

Most pupils across the school have positive attitudes to learning. They listen attentively to teachers' instructions and concentrate well on their work during lessons. Many are enthusiastic learners who apply themselves confidently to new experiences. Most are willing to discuss their work with their peers. They treat the contributions of others with respect and respond positively to their ideas. The pupil's voice, 'Nantlais', is a strong aspect of the school's life. Most contribute beneficially to their learning. They express valid opinions, for example when offering ideas to be included in the termly themes.

Most pupils are conscientious and take their responsibilities seriously, and pupils are enthusiastic members of the school council, the eco committee, the healthy school council, and the digital leaders. As a result, they have a sound understanding of their leadership work within the school. They discuss their leadership responsibilities confidently and give purposeful reasons for making shared decisions on behalf of their peers.

Most pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of moral citizenship through their awareness of the values that are promoted by the school. Older pupils explain maturely the importance of equality as part of their work on rights. For example, the school council does valuable work to spread messages of equality in assemblies. Nearly all pupils participate in planning activities to raise money for local and national charities. They have recently raised a significant amount of money for a children's charity in Ukraine. This increases pupils' awareness of the importance of their contributions to create a caring society.

Following the pandemic, inspectors are not reporting on pupil attendance rates during the 2021-2022 academic year. Instead, the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance will be reported on as part of inspection area 4.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff work skilfully to ensure very strong working relationships with pupils. They encourage respect and courtesy, which leads to the supportive ethos that permeates the school. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour positively. As a result, nearly all pupils are respectful, caring and support each other effectively in their learning. Teachers create a supportive learning environment that enables pupils to take risks, persevere and overcome challenges. Pupils at the learning base and other pupils work together effectively in a number of wider activities that enrich the ethos of inclusivity across the school.

Teachers explain new concepts well. They encourage pupils to make effective links between their current work and previous learning and ensure that there is variety in learning sessions. They use a balance of effective techniques, which include activities in pairs and group work that develop linguistic and social skills effectively. They give clear directions that enable pupils to undertake their work confidently. Teachers ask questions purposefully to help pupils to understand and extend their knowledge and skills. They use praise and feedback purposefully to celebrate successes and guide them to the next steps in their learning. Opportunities for pupils to assess and reflect on their own performance, and that of other pupils, are developing appropriately. However, there is a lack of consistency in provision to provide an appropriate level of challenge to all pupils.

The school's curriculum is based on teaching basic skills soundly and applying them in themes that expand and celebrate pupils' knowledge of their heritage, their local area, and the wider world. Provision promotes the Welsh language very successfully and reinforces pupils' pride and enjoyment in their language and culture. Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to visit their local area to enrich their experiences, for example by following the route of the River Towy or visiting local supermarkets. Foundation phase staff provide appropriate experiences and activities that develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well. In key stage 2, staff plan purposeful opportunities to develop and apply pupils' skills, for example as older pupils analyse data in scientific experiments. However, teaching does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to make choices independently across the school. As a result, this limits opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. The school reflects on the effectiveness of the curriculum regularly and gives appropriate consideration to developments towards the new Curriculum for Wales.

Care, support and guidance

Teachers and assistants promote the culture, languages, and heritage of Wales highly effectively across the school. As a result, pupils take pride in their Welshness and the area's traditions. The Welsh ethos that exists in school life spreads effectively to the local community.

The school offers effective provision for pupils with additional learning needs, which includes purposeful support programmes. Staff acknowledge the importance of early intervention and provide comprehensive support to individuals and groups of pupils from an early age. Pupils with additional learning needs have an effective individual education plan. These include relevant information and appropriate targets to move pupils forward well in their learning. These plans are reviewed regularly with pupils, teachers, and parents. As a result, many pupils make good progress from their starting points.

Staff provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to undertake physical activity sessions in lessons and extra-curricular clubs, such as rugby and netball. These effective arrangements motivate pupils to keep fit. The school promotes pupils' wellbeing purposefully and encourages them to take responsibility for their mental health, in addition to their physical health. A good example of this is the daily mindfulness sessions that are held in the classrooms. A positive attitude towards problem-solving is embedded in the school and has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to their work. In many lessons, teachers often encourage pupils to 'aim for the top' or try another strategy. This encourages pupils to persevere with their work successfully.

The inclusive ethos ensures that pupils have good opportunities to be members of various councils. Councils meet regularly and their contribution to the school's work and the community is very valuable. The school's ethos and collective worship sessions promote pupils' spiritual and moral development successfully. Staff encourage pupils to consider the views of others sensitively, to acknowledge and respect diversity and the importance of values such as tolerance. The school is an inclusive and homely community. The school's staff promote the importance of good behaviour, courtesy, and respect successfully. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding children. There is a caring ethos towards all pupils within the school. However, the current arrangements for parents and carers to bring their cars onto the school playground to drop-off and collect their children are not appropriate.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's effective and robust leadership sets a clear strategic direction for the development of the school. He has a clear vision that is based on preparing pupils today for a better tomorrow. He shares this vision effectively with staff, pupils, governors, and parents. Members of the management team support the headteacher purposefully. As a result, a caring, hard-working, and Welsh ethos permeates all of the school's activities. All members of staff ensure that pupils in the learning needs bases are an integral part of the school's life and the sense of inclusivity is at the heart of the school.

The school's self-evaluation arrangements are thorough and effective. Leaders consider first-hand evidence and the views of parents, pupils, and staff by analysing questionnaires when evaluating the school's performance. Although the activities in

the monitoring process have had to be adapted as a result of the pandemic, leaders identify areas that need to be addressed correctly. This means that the school is able to prioritise its work relevantly. For example, following the lockdown periods, priorities focus on raising standards of wellbeing and literacy, and preparing purposefully for the Curriculum for Wales and the programme to transform additional learning needs. The school's most recent activities have identified the need to ensure consistency in the level of challenge that is provided throughout the school.

Members of the governing body are highly supportive of the school and know it well. By resuming visits to the school, taking part in learning walks, volunteering and challenging the headteacher on his regular reports, they are very aware of the school's work. They have a sound understanding of the nature of teaching and the support that the school provided during the lockdown periods. Governors worked closely with the headteacher to ensure that all pupils had digital devices to reduce the strain on families. This ensured that all pupils had access to the school's virtual education. Governors work with leaders and pupils to ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. As a result, most pupils talk confidently about healthy eating habits and understand the importance of a balanced diet.

The relationship between the school and parents is sound. The school operates an open-door policy and communicates effectively with them to ensure that they are aware of events and the like. Staff organise regular activities to raise parents' awareness of different ways that they can support their children at home, such as purposeful training on how to stay safe online.

The headteacher manages funding carefully under the watchful care of the governing body. They support the school to manage and organise its resources effectively, which includes good use of the pupil development grant. The school has a sensible expenditure plan which ensures that it has enough resources to meet pupils' needs purposefully. Teachers use the outdoor areas suitably to enrich pupils' learning experiences. However, the condition of some of the school's equipment has deteriorated and is in need of attention.

The school has effective procedures to manage the performance of teachers and assistants based on their individual professional needs and the school's priorities. Leaders ensure that all staff are given good opportunities to develop professionally. Because of the restrictions on meeting with others, they have taken advantage of virtual methods of attending purposeful training and sharing expertise within the school. The school accepts students from local teacher training providers regularly. Staff are responsible for training students in several areas. This reinforces the positive attitudes of all staff towards professional learning. Effective training for staff at the learning bases strengthens and broadens their knowledge of how to deal with issues relating to additional learning needs across the school, in addition to within the bases.

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/members of the management committee 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, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), 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 (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- 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' well-being, 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 (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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