



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian**

**Kidwelly  
Carmarthenshire  
SA17 4UT**

**Date of inspection: November 2022**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian

Name of provider	Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	137
Pupils of statutory school age	101
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	23
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 23.0%)</i>	11.3%
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 16.1%)</i>	17.8%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	72.3%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	November 2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	April 2014

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](https://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 Gymraeg Gwenllian fosters pupils' pride in the Welsh language and deepens their knowledge of local history and national traditions highly effectively. Most pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills soundly and use technology confidently to support their learning. Overall, progress in pupils' skills and enjoyment in reading Welsh texts is developing appropriately. The homely and inclusive ethos supports pupils to foster positive attitudes to learning and to immerse themselves in interesting experiences. They enjoy learning in a rich range of activities while '*Llifo at lwyddiant*' ('Flowing to success').

The headteacher leads the school highly effectively and his creative vision for delivering the curriculum for Wales, which is based on the history of the princess Gwenllian, is sound. This supports pupils to broaden their horizons and apply their skills in authentic activities, for example during 'Future Skills Week'. The dedicated team of staff work together skilfully and provide a variety of experiences that support pupils' well-being and learning effectively. They engage pupils' interest in becoming knowledgeable and capable learners which, in turn, supports them to gain confidence and raises their aspirations for the future. Overall, under the teachers' consistent guidance, pupils choose how and what they would like to learn appropriately.

The school seeks the views of parents and forges a productive and supportive relationship with them by communicating proactively about what their children are learning and about the school's wider events. Leaders and teachers share effective and innovative practices with each other and with education providers locally and nationally. The school is supported by the dedicated members of the governing body, who promote the high expectations of pupils, teachers and leaders regularly. Self-evaluation arrangements are thorough and support leaders to develop the school further.

Pupils are happy and courteous towards each other and adults. Their respectful behaviour contributes to their success in all aspects of learning. They strive purposefully to develop their creative and physical skills and talents, which often leads to success in various performances and competitions. Pupils' contribution to charitable and international events helps them to grow to become hard-working and caring learners.

## Recommendations

- R1 Foster a rich culture of reading to support pupils' progress and enjoyment of Welsh texts by Welsh authors
- R2 Ensure regular opportunities for pupils to make independent choices about what to learn and how to present their work

## **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 developing the Curriculum for Wales, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

## Main findings

### Learning

Most pupils make sound progress from their starting points, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals. They develop their literacy and numeracy skills successfully and apply their digital skills skilfully in a rich range of learning contexts. Pupils' pride in the Welsh language and their knowledge of local history and national traditions are a notable element of the school.

Through purposeful learning opportunities, nearly all pupils listen attentively and respond respectfully to each other's contributions and those of adults. They develop their vocabulary and sentence patterns quickly in line with their starting points. Most enjoy contributing to discussions, for example when working together to build a pirate ship. Most enjoy performing on the stage in the outdoor classroom and intonate maturely, such as when presenting poetry about the autumn. The oldest pupils present information about Princess Gwenllian maturely and creatively in an interesting podcast.

Many pupils' reading skills develop consistently as they move through the school. The youngest pupils develop their ability to recognise individual sounds and letters usefully by using '*Ffrindiau Ffoneg*', which has been developed purposefully by the school. This, in turn, supports pupils to recognise words and simple sentences well, for example when reading words such as '*y goes glec*' when labelling a pirate. With the guidance of staff in a structured method, many pupils gain the confidence to use an appropriate range of reading methods. They read a purposeful range of texts, which include digital materials, to gather and collate information about different areas, for example when comparing Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian with Ysgol Capel Celyn. On the whole, a minority of pupils develop their knowledge and enjoyment of reading by discussing a variety of Welsh texts by Welsh authors.

Many pupils develop their writing skills successfully. The youngest pupils make large marks and form letters in purposeful learning opportunities. They develop their ability to write in a relevant range of genres and select words carefully to create effect, for example when writing a monologue about Kidwelly castle. Most of the oldest pupils deepen their knowledge of language skilfully in an interesting range of writing genres which, in turn, supports them to make continuous progress in their writing skills. They develop their skills cohesively and often apply their digital skills when presenting extended pieces. For example, they write a newspaper article about the legend of Cantre'r Gwaelod by applying their digital skills to present it creatively. The broad digital provision enriches pupils' communication experiences successfully, which supports them to gain the confidence to speak and write in Welsh and English with increasing confidence.

Across the school, many pupils develop their mathematics skills soundly. The youngest pupils deepen their knowledge of numbers, place value and money skilfully. For example, they apply their money-handling skills in the outdoor classroom by buying and selling ice-cream in the ice-cream parlour. By Year 2, a majority of pupils have a sound grasp of a range of mathematics skills and apply them effectively. The oldest pupils deepen their knowledge of the four rules skilfully and begin to apply

their skills with increasing confidence. For example, they calculate perimeter and area to form regular shapes on the playground correctly. Year 6 pupils apply their number skills and use mathematical vocabulary purposefully in a good range of contexts. For example, they gather and analyse data to find information about lava eruptions from volcanoes. Through a variety of experiences, a majority of pupils apply their number skills confidently, for example when solving real-life problems as part of 'Gwener Gwario' activities.

Through a wide range of learning experiences, most pupils develop their digital skills highly effectively. The youngest pupils use devices confidently, for example by taking a selfie, adding text and changing the font size effectively. By Year 2, pupils create and program animations skilfully. As pupils move through the school, they become confident in using apps and programs independently. The oldest pupils use spreadsheets successfully when investigating different topics. For example, they compare and analyse the price of food in different supermarkets as part of their duties associated with running the fruit shop.

Nearly all pupils' sound creative skills are a strong feature of the school. Provision offers continuous opportunities to promote pupils' imagination and curiosity in all areas of the school. The youngest pupils develop their creative talents successfully; for example, they create imaginative pictures in response to music. As pupils' skills mature, they combine their numeracy and creative skills skilfully, for example by using natural resources to create a symmetrical composition when emulating a Rangoli pattern. At the top of the school, pupils work with a chief bard to research the rich history of the local area and write a series of poems that are displayed artistically in Celtic knots near the school entrance.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Nearly all pupils are happy within the inclusive and supportive environment and show pride in their work. Pupils feel safe at school and know whom to approach if anything is worrying them. They are given every opportunity to express their feelings and share them with adults within the school and know that good support will be available to them continuously. Pupils have a sound understanding of the digital area and know how to stay safe while learning online, for example by presenting a video clip in the form of a blog on the importance of e-safety.

Nearly all pupils behave politely and treat each other, adults and visitors with respect and care. Nearly all pupils listen maturely to presentations, concentrate for extended periods and are committed to completing their tasks successfully. They understand and respond highly positively to the school rules and take good ownership of the 'Class Saving Chart', which promotes continuous good behaviour and commitment. This contributes effectively towards fostering the school's impressive learning environment.

Most pupils show enthusiasm and a high level of commitment in their activities and take full advantage of the rich range of experiences. They work together productively and show respect for the contributions of others, for example when comparing different types of shelters from the Second World War. They show resilience in their willingness to try new and more challenging tasks and accept and respond positively to feedback to improve their work.

Most pupils are aware of the importance of making healthy choices and keeping fit and are very keen to participate in the wide range of physical activities. They respond positively to visitors and partnerships, for example by famous sportspeople. This encourages pupils to take part in a variety of sports which, in turn, leads to local and national success.

Across the school, pupils are aware of the importance of taking care of their emotional well-being and are given a daily opportunity to record it as part of the effective provision. Pupils benefit from gardening activities in regular visits to the allotment on a nearby farm. Most have a sound understanding of children's rights and promote and implement them successfully. Pupils learn well from their understanding of the right of the month, which is embedded in all classes. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to reinforce their rights by expressing opinions, suggesting ideas, respecting the ideas of others and learning about different aspects of their own lives and those of children around the world. This contributes regularly to the ethos of respect and care that is a strong feature of the school.

Nearly all pupils develop leadership skills effectively through the different groups that give them a say and, in turn, have an effective influence on the school's developments. For example, the 'Super Ambassadors' group works with a local charity to recycle school uniforms. As a result, they develop as knowledgeable and caring citizens who are keen to be active members of their local community.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Across the school, all staff forge a caring working relationship with pupils, which fosters a productive and secure learning environment. Staff manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and sensitively. The Welsh language is at the heart of the school's life and work and staff take advantage of every opportunity to model and support pupils' spoken and written Welsh skills.

The learning environment is attractive, which engages pupils' interest in learning successfully. Teachers and teaching assistants work together highly skilfully in planning and providing stimulating activities that meet most pupils' needs effectively. They link their lessons with pupils' previous learning skilfully and use methods ably to support them. Teachers deliver activities in a lively manner and use their questioning skills masterfully, which engages and holds pupils' interest successfully. They provide valuable opportunities for them to work independently, in pairs and in groups in the indoor and outdoor classrooms. However, teachers do not take full advantage of opportunities to support pupils to make independent choices about their own learning. At times, this limits pupils' ability to make decisions about what they learn and how to present their work.

The school's vision and values for delivering the Curriculum for Wales have been embedded firmly. By acting creatively on the pupils' voice, teachers plan an imaginative and rich curriculum to meet their needs. Across the school, they provide experiences and activities that stimulate pupils' enthusiasm to learn and challenge themselves in relevant learning areas. For example, in a range of 'Anni' activities that are provided by teachers, pupils are given valuable opportunities to apply their skills with increasing independence across the areas of learning and experience.

The curriculum is enriched highly effectively through the regular and valuable use of visitors and educational visits. For example, as part of the 'Future Skills Week',

teachers organise for members of the community to visit the school to share their expertise in the world of work. This contributes soundly to supporting pupils to make progress in their literacy and numeracy skills and to raise their aspirations for their future careers.

Opportunities to promote Welsh identity, history and culture are a core part of all of the school's work. For example, pupils present the story of Princess Gwenllian to the manager of the Wales women's football team at Kidwelly castle as inspiration to the squad in an international tournament. This, in turn, has a positive effect on pupils' enthusiasm towards developing their physical skills and excelling at sports.

Teachers develop opportunities to engage proactively with parents to support their children's literacy skills. For example, teachers present a series of idioms, such as '*bwrw hen wragedd a ffyn*' ('raining cats and dogs') with families and encourage them to convey the meaning by sharing a digital clip on the school app. As a result, this contributes consistently towards enriching pupils' spoken language in partnership with parents. However, literacy provision does not always foster a culture that encourages pupils' enjoyment and progress in Welsh texts by Welsh authors.

As part of provision for personal and social education, teachers plan a variety of activities that deepen their knowledge of healthy choices in relation to their lifestyle. For example, pupils apply their numeracy skills effectively when calculating how many grams of insulin are needed by someone with diabetes. Teachers also develop the youngest pupils' digital skills effectively in the outdoor classroom.

Across the school, teachers track the progress and development of individual pupils and groups in detail. They use various assessments skilfully to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to succeed. Teachers assess pupils' work correctly and use this information purposefully. They offer constructive oral and written feedback and ensure that pupils understand what they need to do to progress their learning. For example, teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to refine content and develop their skills further. Pupils use specific methods to highlight good aspects and areas for development in their work effectively. As a result, many pupils discuss how they improve their work and the progress in their learning confidently.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school promotes robust values that are based on the principles of the Curriculum for Wales, which underpin a caring community where all pupils can develop and grow. The headteacher and teaching team set high expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour and commitment. As a result, pupils behave consistently well and apply themselves conscientiously to the wide range of learning activities. They are caring towards each other and are respectful and welcoming to adults, including visitors.

The headteacher and teachers have an excellent interest in, and a thorough awareness of, the needs of all pupils. They place a strong emphasis on offering provision that meets pupils' individual needs to develop them into well-rounded individuals. The school has established effective arrangements to track and monitor pupils' well-being and progress, and this information is used effectively to plan the next steps in their learning. It provides support through purposeful support programmes for those who need additional support, including those who are a cause for concern. The school has effective partnerships with nearby schools, including the



secondary schools, and external agencies, including the speech and language team and the educational psychologist.

Teachers provide individual education plans, which includes well-being and learning targets, to support pupils who are identified as having ALN in order for them to make progress. Teachers and parents produce these plans together, which support pupils to know the next steps in their learning. Provision, for example support to develop pupils' well-being as part of gardening club opportunities, is a strength.

The contact and co-operation between the school and parents are close and productive. The parents' association is active and organises fundraising activities every year to help the school to buy resources and contribute to the cost of educational trips, such as the pupils' visit to Pembrey Country Park. Through various presentations, staff provide parents with useful information, for example by sharing ideas and activities to support the development of their children's numeracy skills.

The school has robust arrangements to develop pupils' awareness of the importance of eating and drinking healthily, for example by encouraging them to eat fruit and healthy snacks and to drink water regularly. A range of opportunities is organised to develop pupils' fitness and physical skills through the sports club and opportunities to take part in a wide range of sports competitions and succeed. Promoting pupils' creativity skills is also a priority as part of a plan to promote creativity.

The school provides effectively to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural attitudes. Periods of collective worship provide valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on important values and aspects, such as healthy relationships. Pupils are given regular opportunities to learn about ethical issues, such as protecting the environment and supporting charities. Staff plan purposefully to raise pupils' awareness of diversity and equality. For example, as part of the 'International Women's Day' celebrations, pupils deepen their understanding and knowledge of the importance of equality through their work on Malala Yousafzai. Through purposeful activities during Black History Month, pupils learn about rights and diversity by learning about influential individuals, such as Betty Campbell. Extensive provision prepares them effectively to become capable, hard-working and responsible citizens.

The school is a central part of the local community and takes full advantage of opportunities to hold activities, such as services and concerts, in the local churches and centres. The school is established as one that promotes fairness and peace effectively and the approaches that foster a positive ethos and well-being, such as the 'Global Goalkeepers' and the 'Global Walk', support this successfully. The peace garden on the school's grounds is a purposeful resource for pupils to enjoy a quiet and peaceful retreat, for example through well-being sessions during break time. This, among a number of other activities, has earned honourable recognition, with the school having received an international award.

On the whole, teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to contribute to the content of their lessons, shoulder responsibilities and express their views on relevant issues through the school council, the eco committee and the super ambassadors. This prepares them purposefully to take responsibility for their decisions and promote their voice in a variety of activities across the school.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding and staff provide a caring and safe environment for pupils. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' punctuality and regular attendance are robust.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher leads the school highly effectively and encourages pupils to develop their skills and talents in a happy and inclusive learning environment. His robust vision, which is based on the history of Princess Gwenllian, has been crafted skilfully to foster pupils' pride in belonging to the local area and Wales. This, in turn, supports pupils to broaden their horizons and apply their skills in a rich range of learning experiences while '*Llifo at lwyddiant*' ('Flowing to success').

The high expectations of leaders and a culture of co-operation among all members of staff are a strong feature of the school. They are keen to develop their practice while fulfilling their duties skilfully. Leaders encourage and support staff to investigate and experiment with their teaching methods while developing the Curriculum for Wales. For example, following discussions and after seeking the views of the school's partners, teachers have adapted the themes and learning activities to increase pupils' pride in the Welsh language and their sense of belonging to Wales. The '*Diwygio'r Dysgu*' ('Learning Reform') method encourages staff to reflect and improve their practice in a supportive environment.

Staff are given opportunities to take part in a useful range of professional learning experiences. This develops their skills effectively and in line with performance management arrangements. These opportunities are provided purposefully to improve provision which, in turn, supports pupils to make progress in their skills. As a result of the effective practices that are fostered and developed within the school, leaders and teachers present information to local and national audiences regularly, for example when adapting provision for online learning. The school operates highly effectively as an organisation that develops and innovates creatively.

Leaders know the needs of the pupils, the school and its community exceptionally well. They conduct a relevant variety of activities that support them to develop the school within a shared culture of trust. Self-evaluation reports identify strengths and areas for improvement thoroughly. The school improvement plan identifies clear actions and challenging targets to refine and develop aspects that focus most specifically on improving pupils' well-being and supporting their progress, by referring regularly to national priorities. Leaders have a successful record of implementing changes and maintaining sustainable improvements, for example by striving diligently to develop the learning environment in an old building and a very limited site.

Members of the governing body support leaders and staff well and work diligently to provide high quality Welsh-medium education. They receive valuable information and presentations from leaders about the school's work, which prepares them to support and challenge the school on standards and provision. By undertaking a variety of relevant monitoring and evaluation activities, they have a sound awareness of the school's strengths and the priorities for improvement. They work regularly with the headteacher while aiming to improve the learning environment continuously, for example by investing funding in developing different areas that promote pupils' emotional well-being in a nook in the outdoor area.

The school has robust arrangements for managing resources, which include financial resources. Leaders spend the budget prudently and it is monitored effectively by the governing body, including the use of the pupil development grant. Members of the governing body promote a culture of safeguarding and encourage provision for pupils' health and well-being successfully.

The school's relationship with parents is a strength and the continuous co-operation and communication promote the school highly effectively within its community. For example, pupils perform and compete in a rich variety of creative and physical activities, both locally and nationally, and often succeed in winning awards, such as with Cricket Wales. This, in turn, fosters pupils' confidence and develops their talents and skills effectively.

The headteacher seeks the views of parents on important aspects of their children's learning experiences regularly and acts on them skilfully as part of planning for the Curriculum for Wales, for example by providing activities to deepen pupils' understanding of financial education. This is developed skilfully as staff take advantage of the skills and expertise of parents and partners in the community in authentic learning contexts to engage pupils' interest and raise their aspirations.

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

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**This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).**