



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

A report on

Ysgol Pen y Garth

**1 Redlands Road
Penarth
CF64 2QN**

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Pen y Garth

Name of provider	Ysgol Pen y Garth
Local authority	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	331
Pupils of statutory school age	243
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	50
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 21.3%)	5.0%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 22.2%)	
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	45.6%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	19/05/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/04/2016
Inspection start date	14/11/2022

During the inspection, an acting executive headteacher was in charge of the school and was working at the school on a part-time basis while also continuing with her usual duties. She was appointed to the role in May 2022. A full-time, permanent headteacher has recently been appointed to the school and will begin in the role in January 2023.

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

Leaders have recently adopted a new motto for Ysgol Pen y Garth, namely '*law yn llaw, llwyddiant a ddaw*' ('together, we will succeed'). This statement of intent recognises the need to forge positive working relationships among staff and with the school community to ensure positive outcomes for pupils. In a short period, the acting executive headteacher has begun to develop the role of leaders appropriately and has improved the sense of teamwork throughout the school. However, over time, leaders have not had enough of an effect on improving important areas of provision and the current leadership arrangements are not stable enough.

A majority of pupils make suitable progress in developing and applying new skills. They develop to become confident Welsh speakers, although only a minority persevere with speaking Welsh in informal situations and with their peers in lessons. Most pupils have a sound understanding of mathematical concepts and, when given an opportunity to do so, many use their numeracy skills in tasks across the curriculum. They develop digital and physical skills suitably; however, on the whole, the opportunities they are given to develop their creative skills are limited. Overall, a minority of pupils do not make the expected progress in lessons, particularly those who have been identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) and more able pupils.

The standard of teaching is too inconsistent. In the best practice, teachers create an effective learning climate and provide interesting lessons that capture pupils' imagination. Too often, activities do not challenge pupils to develop their skills to the best of their ability. Learning experiences for the school's older pupils also do not build purposefully enough to develop their skills over time and do not always stimulate them. As a result, a few pupils disrupt the flow of lessons. Too often, feedback provided by teachers on pupils' work is too basic and they do not provide purposeful enough opportunities for pupils to improve their work.

The school has recently begun to adapt provision appropriately to introduce the Curriculum for Wales. In the best practice, this is beginning to have a positive influence on teaching, for example by placing an increasing emphasis on using real life stimuli in lessons. On the whole, the school provides a broad curriculum. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to celebrate their Welshness, for example through the expressive arts.

Although there have been recent improvements to the school's leadership, they have not managed resources well enough over time. There also continue to be shortcomings in the way in which leaders respond to complaints and the governing body does not ensure that the school meets all requirements in relation to eating and drinking healthily.

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen leadership to operate more strategically
- R2 Ensure that self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures are rigorous enough to address the areas for improvement
- R3 Provide activities that set an appropriate level of challenge so that all pupils can achieve to the best of their ability consistently
- R4 Provide stimulating learning activities that support older pupils to develop and apply their skills purposefully over time
- R5 Ensure that teachers' feedback on pupils' work is purposeful and provides regular opportunities for pupils to improve their work

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan showing how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress, usually every four to six months.

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, most pupils' basic skills correspond to, or are lower than, the expected level. During their time at the school, a majority of pupils make suitable progress in their learning. However, a minority of pupils do not make enough progress in lessons, particularly those who have been identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) and more able pupils.

Many of the youngest pupils acquire and develop Welsh speaking and listening skills from a young age, whatever their linguistic background. They endeavour to speak Welsh while enjoying their learning, for example as they re-tell the story of the three little pigs by following a specific structure. Most communicate increasingly successfully during the foundation learning phase. By the end of Year 2, they use their speaking and listening skills purposefully, for example when preparing 'show and tell' videos. Older pupils speak for different purposes with increasing confidence, for example when recording a radio advertisement. However, a majority of pupils turn to English naturally with their peers in lessons and informal situations. A few pupils are beginning to develop an awareness of an international language effectively by introducing themselves in French.

Most pupils' reading skills develop soundly as they move through the school. The youngest pupils develop their knowledge of letter sounds effectively. Many of the oldest pupils talk knowledgeably about their favourite books or authors. They develop their reading skills skilfully and enjoy reading a relevant range of books and texts as they move through the school, for example by playing interactive games and reading information about Cardiff Bay.

When they are given an opportunity to do so, a majority of pupils develop their writing skills in different genres appropriately as they move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 write sentences to list seaside rules and the oldest pupils write a story about the 'museum mystery'. However, too often, activities that are provided for pupils are limited and teachers do not have high enough expectations. As a result, a minority of pupils, particularly those who are more able, do not develop their written skills constructively and extensively enough over time in both languages.

Across the school, most pupils develop a sound understanding of mathematical concepts. From an early age, they recognise numbers to ten and begin to create number sentences successfully. By the end of Year 2, many develop a sound understanding of time by drawing pictures of clocks on the playground and adding numbers in the correct places. Most older pupils use the four mathematical operations confidently. When given an opportunity to do so, many apply their numeracy skills appropriately in work across the curriculum, for example when pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 create charts to record heart rates.

Most pupils develop their digital skills suitably. Pupils in the reception class use a digital art package confidently and, in Year 1 and 2, they use purposeful programs to create an invitation for pupils to attend the school to talk about their memories of Ysgol Pen y Garth in the past. Older pupils create websites to share information

about how to save our planet by adding pictures and links and use their coding skills to create simple games.

On the whole, across the school, pupils develop limited creative skills. In the best practice, the youngest pupils build 3D houses for the three little pigs by using various resources. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also design multimedia self-portraits that convey their likes and values to celebrate diversity. Most pupils develop robust physical skills, for example during their physical education lessons.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils behave very well as they move around the school, during lunchtime and during leisure time on the playground. Their behaviour during mass assemblies is commendable. Nearly all pupils are polite towards adults and visitors and treat each other respectfully, for example by listening to the views of others when discussing what bullying is. Across the school, they are considerate of others and treat each other with respect.

Although most pupils are ready to learn at the beginning of sessions, a few pupils are disruptive during presentations and disrupt the flow of lessons. Many support each other well and work successfully in pairs and groups within the classrooms. Most pupils undertake their tasks and complete them without fuss; however, pupils' level of interest in their work means that they do not always achieve to the best of their ability. Where teaching is at its best, pupils persevere resiliently, participate fully in lessons and work diligently in the classrooms. However, they do not always show enjoyment in learning due to the nature of the tasks, which do not motivate or challenge them sufficiently. They make little progress in terms of developing as independent learning due to the lack of opportunities to do so.

Most pupils feel safe at school and many feel that the staff treat them fairly. They value recent developments to promote and identify positive behaviour. Nearly all pupils show a positive attitude towards the school and take pride in talking about their work and school life in general with visitors and in discussions with each other.

Many pupils take advantage of the opportunities to undertake physical activity during physical education lessons, activities in the outdoor areas and extra-curricular clubs that promote fitness, for example the netball club and keep fit club. Many of the older pupils also take advantage of the opportunity to enjoy other extra-curricular clubs, such as the chess club and the science club. They also have a sound knowledge of how to stay safe online.

Most pupils value the opportunity to contribute to devising class rules and have a good understanding of the rules. They understand the consequences of breaking rules and appreciate being praised for complying, for example by receiving language tokens or an additional break time.

Pupils who undertake leadership roles take advantage of the opportunity to contribute to the running of the school by being members of different councils, for example the school council, eco council or Welsh language charter council. Council members are keen to contribute to improvements at the school. They have created an individual manifesto and have contributed to the process of recruiting a new

headteacher. However, their understanding of their roles and their effect on the work of the school is currently superficial.

Pupils develop as ethical citizens by developing their awareness of equality across the school. For example, they learn about the successes of heroes from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. Recently, the youngest pupils have begun to develop an increasing understanding of pupils' rights.

Pupils are attending school more regularly this year in comparison with last year, when the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative effect on school attendance nationally. The absence rate of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those with ALN is significantly higher compared to other pupils. A very few pupils are also late arriving at school, which disrupts the beginning of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences

The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. In the best practice, teachers provide interesting tasks that engage pupils' interest. However, too often, teachers' presentations are too long, they over-direct learning and are not lively enough. As a result, a few pupils lose focus and interest in their tasks and do not achieve as well as they could. Where teaching is more robust, teachers use a range of questioning techniques effectively, which consider previous learning, reinforce pupils' understanding and guide the direction of learning purposefully. However, in many classes, questioning is not probing enough and teachers do not always respond effectively enough to pupils' needs during lessons.

On the whole, teachers' feedback does not explain clearly enough what pupils need to do to improve their work. There are very few appropriate opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' comments and refine their work. As a result, not all pupils make the best progress they could and teachers do not always have a sound enough grasp of the next steps in pupils' learning to plan an effective sequence of lessons. At times, work that is incorrect is marked as being correct and given positive comments. There are very few opportunities for pupils to assess the work of their peers. Annual reports for parents report appropriately on pupils' achievements, alongside what they need to do to improve.

Staff deal with pupils positively and there is an increasingly positive relationship between them following recent training on creating a welcoming ethos in classes. As a result, nearly all pupils communicate respectfully and politely with adults. On the whole, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. However, they do not always ensure that pupils are ready to listen and contribute appropriately at the beginning of lessons. As a result, a few pupils disrupt the flow of lessons at times.

There are a few examples where teachers plan activities that meet pupils' needs. For example, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 choose the level of challenge in their tasks independently and appropriately when answering questions about the time on an analogue clock. However, on the whole, learning experiences do not provide an appropriate level of challenge for pupils and teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement are not always high enough. As a result, a minority of pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

Overall, suitable opportunities are provided to develop digital skills across a range of contexts. For example, pupils in the reception class use a digital painting package confidently and pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 create a multimedia presentation about the history of Penarth during the Second World War. Appropriate opportunities are provided to apply literacy skills across the curriculum; for example, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 write a description of Betty Campbell by using a series of suitable sentences. Although there are purposeful opportunities across the school to develop mathematical concepts, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop numeracy skills in their work across the curriculum. On the whole, plans to develop skills over time are not always cohesive enough and, as a result, there is no consistent progression in the development of pupils' skills.

Teachers provide appropriate learning experiences for the youngest pupils in the outdoor area. For example, pupils in the reception class become excited when taking advantage of opportunities to help the wolf from the story of the Three Little Pigs to measure objects. As a result, they have good attitudes and enthusiasm towards their learning. However, on the whole, opportunities to use the school's extensive grounds to develop a majority of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are limited.

In response to curricular reforms, members of the school community have worked together to create a new vision for the school with the motto, '*law yn llaw, llwyddiant a ddaw*'. The vision corresponds to the principles and ethos of the Curriculum for Wales and the needs of the community in Penarth. Teachers develop beneficial opportunities for pupils across the school to contribute to setting activities and themes within their classes as part of the process of planning to deliver the curriculum, for example through the *Cynllunwyr Craff*. As a result, many pupils are beginning to influence what they learn.

Teachers provide appropriate learning experiences that reflect the multicultural nature of Wales, including opportunities to learn about Black, Asian and minority ethnic history. For example, pupils prepare e-mails to influential and inspirational black Welsh people. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to celebrate Welsh culture and traditions, for example through the expressive arts. Teachers also do not influence pupils consistently enough to speak Welsh when working independently and during their leisure time.

Care, support and guidance

The school supports the development of pupils' social and emotional skills appropriately by developing a supportive ethos. Leaders have recently prioritised fostering and maintaining a friendly relationship between pupils and all staff. As a result, the school is developing as a caring community in which there is an emphasis on treating all individuals with respect. For example, morning greeting sessions are an effective means of creating a sense of respect and belonging to the school community. The school has also prioritised pupils' well-being and social skills by organising beneficial residential trips to Llangrannog and Glan-Ilyn after re-organising the school's classes.

The school has recently refined its procedures for supporting pupils with ALN to comply with the requirements of the new legislation. On the whole, the school makes appropriate provision for these pupils through specific support schemes. However,

provision to support these pupils in inconsistent in classes and across the school. As a result, they do not make sound enough progress in their learning across the curriculum.

Leaders track pupils' progress appropriately and are beginning to introduce suitable interventions for pupils who would benefit from developing their literacy and numeracy skills further. However, it is too early to see the effect of these interventions on pupils' skills.

The school has beneficial partnerships with local schools and other agencies to provide support for learners with additional learning needs. The ALN co-ordinator has planned purposeful training for all teachers on how to meet the needs of pupils with ALN in the classroom. However, many of the developments are relatively new and leaders have not yet evaluated their effect on these experiences of these pupils in full.

The school promotes robust links with the community by providing learning experiences for pupils in the local area, for example by working closely with a local delicatessen during their theme on 'the high street'. The school also promotes pupils' Welshness through activities that are linked to the targets of the Welsh language charter. However, the school does not take full advantage of opportunities to develop a Welsh ethos and support pupils to engage in the cultural arts in the wider community.

There are opportunities for pupils to benefit from varied extra-curricular provision and a majority take advantage of these opportunities and enjoy the range of provision offered by the school. For example, they take advantage of opportunities to attend sports clubs, football, a reading club and the school choir. The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to stay healthy through regular physical education lessons and activities to raise pupils' awareness of eating healthily.

Collective worship arrangements provide beneficial opportunities to develop pupils' moral and spiritual understanding. Whole-school assemblies reinforce the messages of specific national weeks and the effect of the school's procedures on pupils' well-being. For example, they discuss the school's procedure of sharing '*cardiau cwtsh*' ('cwtch cards') during anti-bullying week. Pupils' moral and spiritual understanding are also reinforced effectively in class assemblies, where pupils are given opportunities to discuss what makes them different and to reflect on important messages.

The school develops suitable opportunities for pupils to take part in decisions at school level through membership of the school council, the eco council and the Welsh language charter council. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to express an opinion on how to improve different aspects of the school. However, the effect of the councils' activity on making beneficial decisions about teaching, learning and the curriculum is limited.

The school promotes a culture of safeguarding. There is an established system for reporting safeguarding concerns about pupils and the school makes timely referrals to external agencies, where appropriate. On the whole, the school has suitable processes for monitoring pupils' attendance. However, it has not addressed the low

attendance levels of groups of learners successfully enough, such as those who are eligible for free school meals and pupils with ALN. Registration processes are also not clear enough to be able to track pupils' punctuality thoroughly enough. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The executive headteacher, who is in post temporarily, and the governing body share a clear vision for the school in the short term, which is based on addressing important areas for improvement identified by the local authority. With intensive support from the local authority and the regional consortium, they have identified the strengths and areas for improvement appropriately. On the whole, they have begun to act strategically to address these areas. They have established a management team and have a positive influence on the willingness of most staff to co-operate. They have succeeded in achieving a few beneficial changes in a short period. For example, by introducing the 'meet and greet' routine to support pupils' well-being. However, leadership arrangements have been unstable over time, there is no permanent full-time headteacher in post and the role of the management team has not been established sufficiently to have an effect on important elements of provision.

Leaders have recently produced and presented appropriate improvement plans that give suitable attention to national priorities. These identify useful actions to address some important areas of provision. However, they do not identify clearly enough what needs to be done to address important areas for improvement in terms of teaching and learning. Middle leaders have a robust vision for their areas of responsibility, for example to develop the curriculum and provision for pupils with ALN, although they do not always have a sufficient influence on the school's strategic plans. On the whole, leaders have not had enough of an effect on making and maintaining improvements over time. An example of this is the fact that not all of Estyn's recommendations that were made at the time of the previous inspection have been given good enough attention.

Over time, the school's processes for evaluating its own performance have not been rigorous enough and have not focussed clearly enough on making improvements, where necessary. Leaders have recently placed more emphasis on identifying strengths and useful areas for improvement when conducting self-evaluation activities. They have begun to plan suitable steps to improve these areas, for example by introducing '*disgwyliadau disglair*' to promote positive behaviours. However, on the whole, it is too early to see the effect of these new self-evaluation arrangements in order to lead to improvements in important areas.

Over time, leaders have not managed the school's budget purposefully enough. However, with the support of the local authority, they have made suitable decisions recently to ensure that they make efficient and sustainable use of resources. For example, they have adapted the staffing structure to align better with the number of pupils on roll. They make appropriate decisions about expenditure, for example by investing in improving the physical environment for pupils. Leaders make suitable use of additional grants, for example introducing intervention programmes to support pupils to develop literacy, numeracy and social skills.

Leaders have recently introduced beneficial activities to forge positive working relationships with families, such as regular coffee mornings. Members of the recently formed parents' forum also work with staff to improve different communication methods. However, when complaints are received, leaders do not always deal with them as outlined in the school's policy.

Leaders organise suitable professional learning activities for staff. For example, they work with other schools to plan to develop the curriculum and organise beneficial training to support pupils' well-being. Leaders have recently formalised performance management processes for teachers and support staff, but this has not been embedded in full.

The governing body ensures that the food and drink provided by the school comply with the legislation. However, leaders do not ensure that the school complies with the statutory guidelines on healthy eating, for example by allowing pupils to drink squash in the classrooms.

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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