



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

A report on

Llangadog County Primary School

**Llangadog
Carmarthenshire
SA19 9HP**

Date of inspection: March 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Llangadog County Primary School

Name of provider	Llangadog County Primary School
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	92
Pupils of statutory school age	85
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	0
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>)	15%
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>)	14%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	42%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	1.8%
Date of headteacher appointment	22/02/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	04/11/2014
Start date of inspection	27/03/2023
A number of pupils have moved to the area recently from England and further afield, which has had an effect on the school's Welsh ethos. As a result, staff have adapted provision to ensure that all pupils have appropriate access to education at the school.	

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

The school is a caring community that places a strong emphasis on safeguarding pupils and promoting their well-being effectively. Due attention is given to respecting diversity within the school community. This is reflected in the caring and welcoming way in which pupils and staff value everyone's contributions to the school's work and the way in which they welcome new pupils. This ensures that pupils who join the school settle quickly and become a complete part of its community. As a result, nearly all pupils are happy and feel safe at the school. They know that they can share any concerns with staff and that they will receive a caring and prompt response. The relationship between the headteacher and parents is a positive one.

Most pupils are polite and willing to help each other. Many persevere diligently when they face difficulties in their work and value the varied opportunities they are given to contribute to the content of their tasks and to have a general influence on other elements of the school's work.

Staff are beginning to consider different ways of planning to ensure that pupils acquire and apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills consistently across the curriculum. However, they are not yet established enough to have a positive effect on standards and progress. Although lessons are usually interesting and appropriate, teaching is not always effective. In addition, not all teachers have consistently high expectations in terms of challenging the full range of pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. Where teaching is at its best, activities provide rich experiences that nurture pupils' independence successfully and encourage them to make at least good progress.

Most pupils make appropriate progress in their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills from their starting points and those with additional learning needs make at least good progress. Many develop good creative skills when playing musical instruments, such as the flute and drums, and when competing in local and national competitions.

Following a period of instability in terms of leadership, the current headteacher has introduced a number of essential strategic procedures to try to ensure that provision is effective and that pupils make appropriate progress. However, as these are new, it is not yet possible to measure their true effect.

Recommendations

- R1 Stabilise leadership and ensure that the new strategic procedures continue to have a positive effect on improving provision and raising standards
- R2 Ensure that teaching and learning are consistently high across the school to enable all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability
- R3 Ensure that the teaching team provides regular and co-ordinated opportunities for pupils to acquire and apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in meaningful contexts across the curriculum

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Learning

Most pupils make appropriate progress in their skills from their starting points and those with additional learning needs, particularly in terms of well-being, make at least good progress.

Many pupils' oracy skills are developing appropriately across the school. They respond well to specific strategies to extend their vocabulary and language patterns. Most listen attentively and follow adults' instructions successfully. Many of the youngest pupils develop the confidence to greet and discuss with adults and peers and are keen to explain, for example, how to make hot cross buns.

By the end of their time at the school, many pupils communicate confidently in both languages, for example when discussing the effect of the recent earthquake in Turkey and Syria. A majority of latecomers make appropriate progress in the Welsh language.

A majority of the youngest pupils develop early reading skills successfully. By Year 2, they use phonic strategies with increasing confidence, for example to read recipe instructions. A majority of older pupils discuss the content of their books maturely. They use appropriate strategies to help them to read unfamiliar, more challenging words. However, a majority of pupils' reading skills are lower than expected for their age and ability, particularly in Welsh, and their knowledge of the features of books and authors is limited.

Many pupils' early writing skills are developing appropriately. By Year 2, a majority show an appropriate understanding of sequence through story mapping and writing simple sentences using verbs and punctuation. They develop vocabulary and simple sentence patterns and write in different genres. Many of the school's older pupils develop this further and write suitably for various purposes and demonstrate an appropriate understanding of purpose, form and audience. They develop their understanding of various grammatical elements and apply them to their writing tasks with increasing accuracy. They show an understanding of the importance of paragraphing to structure their creative pieces, such as a letter to thank parents for raising money for the Syria and Turkey Appeal as a result of their previous research into the situation there. Many across the school present their work in a polished format and develop neat handwriting.

Many pupils make good progress in their mathematical skills. In the youngest class, a majority count appropriately and handle numbers with increasing confidence. Many count eggs in baskets and sort them by colour. They go to the shop to buy eggs and understand that different-coloured ones cost different amounts. A few older pupils in the reception class are beginning to understand that different coins are needed to pay for the eggs in the shop. In Years 1 and 2, most form numbers correctly and use different strategies fairly confidently to add and subtract in various contexts. For example, they are beginning to understand the value of coins and calculate the change that is needed while shopping.

In the school's upper classes, many use various mathematical methods confidently to solve real-life problems. For example, under the current theme '*Sbio drwy'r ffenest*'

(‘Looking through the window’), they conduct a transport survey on the road outside the school. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 count how many different-coloured vehicles go past each hour. They display their results in the form of a digital block graph and answer specific questions to compare the number at different times of the day correctly. This is developed further in Years 5 and 6 where most pupils use a device to measure the speed of cars to see how many have slowed down or gone faster. They calculate the range, median, mean and mode of the data gathered fairly confidently and display the results appropriately in the form of a graph.

Although good examples exist, such as those above, where pupils apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum, opportunities for them to do so regularly are limited.

Many pupils’ digital skills are developing appropriately. By Year 2, many use an electronic tablet effectively to create block graphs, for example to show the different types of houses that pupils live in. Many older pupils research confidently for information from different sources and use a digital package to create sounds and musical effects.

Most pupils develop their creative skills successfully in a number of media from an early age. The youngest pupils work creatively with a variety of materials to create images using twigs, stones and moss, for example. Older pupils draw a variety of pictures and create models of castles and buildings in the village. Many play musical instruments, such as the flute and drums, to a high standard and compete successfully in local and national competitions.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils state that they are happy and safe at the school. They know that they can share any concerns with staff and that the response will be caring and prompt. Most have a sound understanding of how to stay safe online.

Most pupils behave politely and are willing to help each other in lessons and on the playground. Many persevere diligently when they face difficulties in their work. For example, they use a specific approach to seek support from peers and other sisters before asking an adult. As a result, there is a supportive and helpful atmosphere across the school. Many pupils concentrate well on their activities without letting other events distract them. They are ready to learn and show resilience when facing new challenges, such as creating a badge to place on medals for the Urdd Eisteddfod, which is being held locally this year.

Most pupils respond positively to the opportunities they are given to contribute to the content of their themes. They think about relevant questions to research and identify the aspects they would like to learn more about. As a result, pupils are happy that the teaching team, namely the teachers and learning assistants, consider the ideas and are willing to include them in relevant activities, where appropriate. This ensures that they have ownership of what they learn. Many respond suitably to feedback from teachers and act on it.

Members of the school council and eco council take their responsibilities seriously and contribute appropriately to various aspects of their well-being and learning. For example, they ensure that a wide and adequate range of play resources are available for their peers during break time.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and how undertaking regular exercise activities has a positive effect on their health and well-being. They show an interest and confidence during practical lessons and extra-curricular sessions and enjoy the opportunities they are given to take part in activities such as horse riding, cycling, football and dancing.

Teaching and learning experiences

The teaching team presents the main principles of the Curriculum for Wales increasingly successfully. It plans appropriately and is beginning to adapt and trial different approaches and teaching methods as necessary. It aims purposefully to pursue pupils' lines of enquiry, which is a means of increasing their ownership of their learning. Overall, provision motivates pupils to apply themselves conscientiously to their tasks across the areas of learning and experience.

Most members of the teaching team have good knowledge of pupils' needs. On the whole, they consider these needs appropriately when planning activities for them. These include interventions to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and their emotional well-being. The teaching team is beginning to consider different ways of strengthening planning in a co-ordinated manner to ensure that pupils acquire and apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills consistently across the curriculum. However, it has not yet been established sufficiently to have a positive effect on pupils' standards and progress.

Nearly all members of staff model language of a high standard purposefully and place a consistent emphasis on extending pupils' oral skills. During this academic year, the school has adopted a specific approach to modelling Welsh patterns and vocabulary, which is beginning to have a positive effect on the communication skills of pupils across the school. The teaching team uses various questioning techniques skilfully to extend pupils' responses and understanding and identify their level of knowledge and understanding. These are usually a helpful support in informing the next steps for pupils, although they do not always lead to tasks that are challenging enough to stretch all pupils, particularly those who are more able.

On the whole, teachers' feedback is suitable and usually helps pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. However, the effectiveness of teaching and the expectations of all teachers are not consistently high in terms of challenging the full range of pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. In around half of classes, where this practice is at its best, activities provide rich experiences that foster pupils' independence successfully and encourage them to make at least good progress.

The teaching team takes good advantage of the new and attractive environment since the renovation of the building and site. For example, in the school's early years, the teaching team provides a range of stimulating and appropriate activities for pupils in the outdoor area, such as studying a live chicken and encouraging pupils to create a fact file of its characteristics. The garden is used purposefully to share stories and hold events, such as school assemblies and the Christmas Fayre.

The teaching team identifies appropriate opportunities to promote pupils' knowledge and appreciation of their local area, for example by organising visits for them to local rivers, which form the names of the four classes. This promotes their interest and pride in their local area. Similarly, it promotes pupils' sense of their Welsh identity. It

does this through various activities, which include taking part in a project based on local stories organised by the Urdd National Eisteddfod, which is being held locally this year. It promotes pupils' place successfully in the context of the wider world. For example, it has established an online link with a school in Kenya and provides an opportunity for pupils to study and discuss the effect of the war in Ukraine on the lives of its people.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring, supportive and happy community that places a clear emphasis on safeguarding pupils and promotes their well-being effectively. Pupils are encouraged to value diversity and respect everyone's contributions to the school's life and work. Respecting diversity is given due attention within its inclusive community and this is reflected in the caring and welcoming way in which pupils and staff treat latecomers to the school with respect. This ensures that they settle quickly and become a full part of the school community. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concerns. Similarly, its procedures to ensure pupils' regular attendance are sound.

The teaching team provides regular and successful opportunities for pupils to shoulder responsibilities and develop their leadership skills through the different school councils. For example, it has encouraged them to provide input on the content of the school behaviour policy, to organise opportunities for other pupils to recycle various materials and to make effective use of the garden each term.

The school promotes pupils' creative development effectively, particularly through musical performances within the school, the community and local and national eisteddfodau. This contributes well to raising their confidence and strengthens their awareness of their heritage and culture. They are also encouraged to undertake art and design activities. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils are inspired to create a costume for a character from the story '*Siôn Ddiog a'r Dywysoges*' and create a three-dimensional model of a castle for her. These imaginative experiences increase many pupils' confidence well and encourage them to work together effectively as a team.

Staff foster a productive relationship with parents. Parents appreciate this and enjoy playing their part in the school's life and work. For example, the parent and teacher association raises money to purchase resources to be used in the outdoor area or digital equipment for pupils to use in their lessons. Communication between the school and parents has strengthened significantly since the school introduced the Weekly Bulletin and the new electronic format.

The school has a good range of activities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. The teaching team provides purposeful opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of their Welsh identity, heritage and culture effectively. Collective worship sessions provide wonderful opportunities for pupils to take part in collective activities and contribute purposefully to developing robust values and explore their spiritual and moral beliefs. Opportunities that are provided for pupils to take part in local social events, such as Remembrance Day, help them to become conscientious and thoughtful citizens. This is reinforced, for example, by their dedication to raising money for charities such as support for people who are suffering as a result of the disasters in Turkey and Syria. Activities that

involve the school garden provide excellent opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of issues relating to sustainability and the importance of eating healthily.

The headteacher has refined and tightened the procedure for identifying pupils with additional learning needs and the school now works effectively with the local authority's support services to expand provision where necessary. All staff are now aware of their responsibilities in this area and understand what they need to do to meet the needs of these pupils. The school now has supportive and effective arrangements to help pupils identify and manage their personal emotions and feelings. For example, beneficial use is made of the Cwtsh, a small room that provides an opportunity to specific pupils to calm down through the caring support of a member of staff who has received specialist training to provide this kind of support and assistance.

Leadership and management

The school's leadership has been very unstable for a number of years. Since being appointed a little over a year ago, the current headteacher has introduced a number of strategic procedures to improve provision and standards and there are signs that they are beginning to have a positive effect in a number of important areas. However, these procedures have not yet had time to stabilise fully and the headteacher will be leaving the school at the end of the summer term to assume another post.

During the year, the headteacher has acted diligently to try to realise the school's vision. This is based on co-operation to provide the pupils with solid roots that prepare them for a successful future. The school's motto, '*Cyd-baratoi heddiw at ddyfodol yfory*' ('Preparing together today for tomorrow's future'), crystallises this well.

The headteacher has high expectations of herself, the staff and pupils. She models and promotes high professional values and conduct that contribute positively to improving the school and encourage effective co-operation among the staff. She has strengthened teamwork appropriately and promotes the well-being of staff and pupils' successfully. She gives a high priority to ensuring that all staff understand their teaching roles and promote the school's culture of safeguarding continuously. Teacher performance is managed appropriately by the headteacher to improve their practice and address any issues relating to underperformance, where necessary. However, this practice is new and it is too early to see its full effect on provision, standards and pupils' progress.

Since being appointed and with the support of local authority officers, the headteacher has refined and tightened the school's self-evaluation procedure. The revised procedure is thorough and based on gathering and analysing first-hand evidence of standards and provision. This includes scrutiny of pupils' work, conducting formal observations and learning walks, informal discussions and listening to learners. All teaching staff are part of these procedures and there is a clear focus on the effect of provision on pupils' progress and well-being. The headteacher now uses the findings of this procedure to produce priorities and relevant actions for improvement. She has identified the current strengths along with important areas for improvement accurately and has established an appropriate plan

to address them. Although there are early signs of improvement across the school, these procedures are still new and have not had time to become established in full.

Governors understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities conscientiously and intelligently. They give full consideration to relevant legislation and guidance, including the way in which they manage complaints and appeals from parents. Through the headteacher's comprehensive reports, they have a clear understanding of the school's current strengths and areas for improvement and contribute appropriately to setting the strategic priorities. Before the pandemic, they played an active part in self-evaluation activities, but they have not yet resumed this work in full. However, they provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge and hold the headteacher and staff to account appropriately on behalf of the local community in their role as 'critical friends'. The governing body ensures that the food and drink that are provided comply with legislation and that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. The school's financial resources, including the pupil development grant, are managed appropriately.

Recently, a more positive culture and ethos have been created to promote and support the professional learning of all staff. They are now encouraged to experiment and focus on ensuring improvements in terms of pupils' progress and well-being. Recent professional learning activities have linked clearly to the improvement priorities. For example, they have placed a clear focus on providing training for staff on effective methods for addressing behavioural difficulties, the needs of vulnerable pupils and how to teach effectively outdoors.

The headteacher has begun to identify good practice within the school, ensuring that other staff benefit from it directly. She has also begun to work with other staff so that staff can benefit from effective practices in other places. She monitors the effect of professional learning on the effectiveness of teaching and on pupils' progress and well-being.

The school has an open-door policy and the headteacher sends a weekly bulletin to parents to convey important messages to them. These are a successful means for her to build a productive relationship with them and ensure that they have effective lines of communication to seek their views and raise any issues that may affect their child's learning and well-being.

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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