



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

A report on

Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddygarreg

**Mynyddygarreg
Kidwelly
Carmarthenshire
SA17 4RL**

Date of inspection: February 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddygarreg

Name of provider	Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddygarreg
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	38
Pupils of statutory school age	30
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	
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>	10.5%
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 16.1%)</i>	23.3%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	73.3%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	28/02/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	15/06/2014
Start date of inspection	27/02/2023

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

Nearly all pupils enjoy their time at this homely and caring school. They feel that the staff listen to them and are willing to respond to any concerns they may have. Staff work together highly effectively to ensure that pupils make sound progress in nearly all skills. A strong feature of provision is the effective methods the staff use to refine the pupils' Welsh language. As a result, nearly all pupils' Welsh language skills are developing robustly and they take pride in their bilingual skills. On the whole, teachers do not provide enough purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across all areas of the curriculum.

Nearly all pupils' behaviour is excellent. They treat their peers and adults with respect. Pupils work together effectively and discuss and share ideas maturely. They demonstrate strong motivation and curiosity about their learning. Teachers plan a good range of activities that engage and hold pupils' interest successfully. They ask pupils probing questions that support them to develop their skills consistently. However, teachers do not provide activities that meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those who have been identified as being more able.

The acting headteachers have developed a consistent vision that supports them to develop different aspects of the school. With the enthusiastic support of a small team of staff, they focus on improving pupils' skills and provide stimulating experiences that enrich learning. The governing body has an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, the current uncertainty surrounding the leadership and management of the school is hindering the ability of leaders to make strategic and sustained decisions for the benefit of pupils and all of the school's partners. The school has a beneficial relationship with parents and the wider community.

Recommendations

- R1 Provide strategic and sustained leadership and management for the school
- R2 Provide an appropriate challenge for all pupils so that they achieve to the best of their ability, particularly those who are more able
- R3 Provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills 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

During their time at the school, most pupils develop knowledge, understanding and skills that are appropriate for their stage of development and starting points. Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress in their learning and achieve well.

In the school's lower years, most pupils speak Welsh skilfully. They use a suitable range of vocabulary to extend their conversations, for example when discussing their favourite fruit in a healthy food tasting session. By Year 2, most pupils use extensive vocabulary and Welsh patterns when talking confidently about their work. Nearly all pupils listen attentively in story sessions and follow teachers' instructions.

Most of the youngest pupils use their phonological knowledge confidently while reading simple words in language sessions. As they develop their skills, they read aloud with increasing confidence by using a range of reading techniques. They discuss text sensibly and refer to characters in the books they read. Most pupils' early writing skills are developing well. With the support of staff, pupils in the Reception class are beginning to write simple sentences and include punctuation that is suitable for the text, for example when describing their favourite foods. By Year 2, they use verbs and adjectives confidently to enrich text, for example when writing a letter to a character in their favourite book.

Most of the youngest pupils use number strategies with increasing accuracy. They have a good grasp of number facts up to 100 and add and subtract 2-digit numbers well. Most complete tables and graphs confidently, for example to show the favourite colour of pupils in the class. Many pupils' digital skills are developing appropriately. They use an electronic tablet skilfully to record and save their work. They control a programmable toy effectively, for example when finding their way to the house of the three little pigs.

As pupils move through the school, most pupils' oral skills develop robustly in both languages. They speak Welsh confidently, for example by using rich vocabulary to describe a book cover as part of activities to celebrate World Book Day. They are keen to express an opinion and use a range of suitable vocabulary when presenting specific reasons.

At the top of the school, most pupils read with increasing confidence. They read a range of texts in both languages and usually pronounce unfamiliar words correctly. They discuss characters and the main topic effectively and are keen to present information about the story. They read, analyse and summarise the content of factual texts appropriately, for example when learning about historical Welsh organisations. Most older pupils write in an interesting range of appropriate genres in both languages. Most pupils have neat handwriting and show respect when recording their work. They use sentence patterns with increasing accuracy and include interesting adjectives to enrich their work, for example when writing poetry describing the negative effect of people on animal habitats.

In the school's upper years, most pupils have a sound understanding of number facts and counting methods. They have a sound grasp of number work and multiply

three-digit numbers with one-digit numbers confidently. They have a good understanding of shape and space, for example when finding the area and perimeter of standard and non-standard shapes. As pupils move through the school, many pupils' digital skills build consistently. They use the internet to search for information and create presentations successfully to summarise their findings, for example when promoting the importance of not wasting food.

Across the school, pupils apply their literacy skills successfully for different purposes. For example, the youngest pupils write a factual diary to describe their visit to a local restaurant. The oldest pupils develop their writing skills effectively, for example when writing a fictitious newspaper article describing a natural disaster in the local area. When they are given appropriate opportunities to do so, pupils apply their numeracy skills in a variety of contexts that link appropriately with their termly themes. For example, as part of their work on fair trade, the oldest pupils discover the price of products in the shops and calculate the percentage of profit farmers they receive for their produce. However, teachers do not plan purposefully enough for pupils to develop their number skills across all areas of the curriculum.

Across the school, most pupils' creative skills are developing effectively. They use a good range of resources to emulate the art methods of famous Welsh artists and enjoy performing in concerts and local eisteddfodau. As a result, this has a positive effect on pupils' confidence as they present themselves creatively, including their ability to develop their oral Welsh skills.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils enjoy attending school and are proud of the school and its community. They feel completely safe there and know that staff are always available to listen and give them advice. They are confident that staff respond promptly to any concerns they may have. Nearly all pupils behave excellently in the classroom and around the school and treat adults and visitors with respect and courtesy. The oldest pupils take care of the youngest ones naturally and maturely. Nearly all are polite and considerate and demonstrate pride when talking about their school. This is a strong feature of the school.

Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning and develop as hard-working and curious learners. They listen attentively to presentations and work consistently well individually, in pairs and in small groups. They work together harmoniously and, on the whole, apply themselves enthusiastically to challenges that encourage them to work increasingly independently. However, at times, a minority of pupils do not always complete tasks to the best of their ability.

Most pupils respond enthusiastically to influence what they learn within their termly themes. Through the effective use of planning walls and discussions at the beginning of a new theme, pupils share their ideas and add questions about what they would like to learn. As a result, most pupils feel that adults listen to their ideas and consider them when planning their learning activities. This makes a positive contribution towards ensuring that most pupils show enthusiasm and an interest in their work.

A majority of pupils read over their work and correct some errors, for example spelling and punctuation, well. They respond appropriately to feedback and improve some aspects of their work and, on the whole, understand the next step in their learning.

Pupils who are members of the school council undertake their responsibilities enthusiastically. They contribute effectively to the school's life and work and develop their leadership skills effectively. For example, they deepen their understanding of the importance of recycling, saving energy and reducing the use of plastic within the school by sharing useful information with their peers. They also organise activities to raise money for children in a school in Tanzania as part of the Luhimba project. As a result, this contributes positively to supporting pupils to learn about environmental issues both locally and internationally.

Most pupils' understanding of moral values and equality is developing well. They deal with topics such as same-sex marriage sensitively and maturely and express their views clearly, listening carefully to the contributions of others. As a result, they develop as knowledgeable and tolerant citizens who discuss contemporary and current issues sensibly.

Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and understand the effect of physical exercise on their health. They participate enthusiastically in physical activities and enjoy taking part in county competitions, including cross-country running and football tournaments.

Teaching and learning experiences

All members of staff have an extremely strong working relationship with pupils that supports their well-being and education successfully. Teachers provide an appropriate and interesting learning environment in which attractive displays celebrate pupils' work effectively. As a result, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy the school's life and work and take pride in it, in addition to their local community.

Staff plan a wide range of engaging experiences that promote the values and principles of the new Curriculum for Wales effectively. Teachers adapt their schemes of work appropriately and cover the areas of learning and experience effectively. This ensures that pupils are given interesting and stimulating experiences that engage the interest of nearly all of them successfully. Within their termly themes, the youngest pupils are given valuable opportunities to develop their skills and broaden their knowledge and understanding through various activities. For example, they learn about the cultures of other countries while tasting different foods from around the world.

Teachers provide rich opportunities for the youngest pupils to apply their literacy skills purposefully, for example when writing a series of funny sentences to create a creative story. The oldest pupils develop their skills effectively, for example by choosing interesting adjectives and similes when writing poems to describe nature and how to care for the environment. Teachers provide an effective range of activities for pupils to develop their digital skills, for example when presenting information about how to stay safe online. However, teachers do not plan purposeful and regular opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across all areas of learning and experience.

Teachers encourage pupils to contribute their views about what they would like to learn effectively by recording their ideas on the question tree and mind maps. Staff pay attention to pupils' ideas and suggestions sensibly when planning a range of

stimulating activities, for example by providing an opportunity for them to perform a traditional dance at Eisteddfod Mynyddygarreg.

Teachers have thorough knowledge of different areas across the curriculum. They work enthusiastically and passionately to refine pupils' Welsh language. For example, they use songs and movements effectively as part of the presentation methods and reinforce vocabulary and language patterns successfully. Staff speak Welsh skilfully and correctly and encourage and support pupils to use polished Welsh that is natural to their local area well. As a result, most pupils make sound progress in acquiring and developing their Welsh skills. Pupils' language skills are also developed effectively in English and in French as pupils move through the school.

Teachers and assistants know their pupils well and respond soundly to their needs, including their emotional well-being needs. They track pupils' progress appropriately and adapt their plans to meet most pupils' needs. However, teachers do not provide activities that provide an appropriate level of challenge to meet the needs of all pupils consistently across the areas of learning and experience. As a result, a few pupils do not always achieve to the best of their ability, particularly those who have been identified as more able.

Teachers and assistants provide appropriate oral feedback to celebrate pupils' successes and guide them towards the next steps in their learning. They are beginning to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers, which encourages them to take more responsibility for their learning. Pupils respond well to written feedback, which helps them to know what to do and how in order to make progress in their skills.

Staff provide a range of interesting learning experiences that support pupils to be ambitious and confident learners in Welsh contexts. For example, as part of their theme '*Does unman yn debyg i Mynyddygarreg*' ('There's nowhere like Mynyddygarreg'), pupils are given valuable opportunities to learn about local history and some of the main Welsh legends, including the story of Princess Gwenllian. Staff take advantage of purposeful opportunities to enrich curricular activities by planning educational trips and inviting visitors to the school. Provision to deepen pupils' understanding of personal and social education is effective, for example by providing opportunities for them to reflect on important aspects of life, such as equality and respect for others.

Care, support and guidance

The school is an extremely caring community that nurtures robust care, support and guidance for pupils. The supportive and friendly relationship between staff and pupils is a strong feature of the school. This is reflected in the good behaviour and courtesy of nearly all pupils and their positive attitudes to learning, the school and the community.

Staff promote the Welsh language and Welsh values highly effectively. They ignite and support pupils' pride in the culture and heritage of Wales effectively and provide beneficial activities for them to develop their multilingual skills. Teachers plan rich opportunities for pupils to learn about famous Welsh individuals and cultural organisations, for example as part of their St David's Day celebrations. Nearly all pupils sing Welsh melodies and songs passionately and appreciate opportunities to

foster and take pride in the Welsh language and all aspects of Welsh culture and history.

Teachers provide activities that ensure purposeful opportunities for pupils to foster a sound understanding of the importance of sustainability. For example, pupils develop their understanding of the effect of people on the habitats of different animals and the importance of respecting each other and the world. Teachers raise pupils' awareness of the importance of being caring and conscientious citizens well through activities that support local and national charities, for example by collecting goods to contribute to the local food bank. Staff promote pupils' spiritual and moral development successfully. In whole school assemblies, pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their own values and beliefs and learn about diversity in society.

Leaders have robust arrangements to identify pupils who are in need of further support with their well-being and learning needs from an early age. Teachers and assistants work with parents regularly to develop individual plans to support pupils to make progress in their skills. Staff provide excellent care to support pupils' emotional well-being. They ensure that pupils have regular access to a range of appropriate support programmes that help them to deal with their feelings and emotions. By doing so, the school succeeds in responding to the concerns of any pupil sensitively. This is supported well by providing beneficial training for pupils about different aspects and features of learning, for example about autism. This supports pupils to respond sensitively and supportively to each other, for example during break times.

Staff provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to express their views about provision, including appropriate opportunities to discuss their ideas at the beginning of a new theme. They provide valuable sessions for pupils to shoulder responsibilities by joining influential groups. For example, by leading the rewards system, pupils on the school council promote the use of the Welsh language during break times highly effectively.

A number of rich visits are provided for pupils, which promote their interest in culture and the community successfully. For example, as part of the theme on Welsh history and culture, teachers organise beneficial opportunities for pupils to visit historical sites, such as St Fagans. Provision to develop pupils' creative skills is sound. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to develop their creative skills through interesting musical and artistic activities, including performing in eisteddfodau and local events, such as 'cawl a chân' evenings.

Leaders ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding permeates the school. The school's arrangements for ensuring pupils' regular attendance are sound.

Leadership and management

In the short period of time since appointing the two acting headteachers, they have developed a consistent and robust vision for the school. They are supported enthusiastically by a small team of staff and, together, they work diligently to provide rich educational opportunities for pupils. One of the school's strong features is the purposeful provision to improve the Welsh language skills of pupils across the school. As a result, the Welsh language skills of nearly all pupils are developing soundly and their attitudes towards the language and their culture are a strong feature of the school.

The acting headteachers have high expectations of themselves, the staff and pupils. They encourage pupils to show respect and positive attitudes to learning. Staff are given regular opportunities to attend sessions that meet their professional learning needs successfully. For example, the headteachers attend training that supports them to develop their leadership skills. The headteachers also receive support from local authority officers to plan and implement improvement priorities more strategically. This, in turn, provides specific arrangements for them to develop the school purposefully and sensibly, which includes aspects of local and national priorities.

Leaders now have appropriate self-evaluation arrangements that respond well to the school's areas for improvement. For example, the headteachers conduct learning walks and scrutinise pupils' work each term. They give meaningful attention to what is good and what needs to be improved in terms of provision to have a positive effect on pupils' progress. Findings are prioritised sensibly in a practical manner, acting on arrangements that focus on teaching and learning. However, it is too early to evaluate the effect of this on raising pupils' standards.

The governing body has an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Members of the governing body take part in learning walks each term, based on the improvement priorities, for example by visiting classes and talking to pupils about their work. They meet to discuss progress against the areas for improvement and report on their findings in timely meetings, challenging leaders where appropriate. On the whole, governors are not confident in their knowledge of the effect of provision on pupils' progress. They take advantage of opportunities to promote healthy eating and drinking among pupils, for example by encouraging them to eat fruit and drink water regularly.

The governing body has sub-committees that meet to discuss a number of areas, including the budget, staffing and managing the performance of the headteachers. However, the school's leadership and management situation remains unstable. As a result, this impairs the ability of leaders to plan strategically and sustainably for the future.

Staff make appropriate use of the school's limited grounds to enrich provision for pupils. The local authority has recently made an assessment of the condition of the building, which is in need of significant investment to maintain it to a good standard and quality. The standard of the school building and grounds hinders the staff's ability to make full use of resources to enrich provision for pupils.

The school has a productive relationship with families and the school's wider community. Staff promote the ethos of being part of one big family. As a result, parents feel confident that the school listens to any concerns they have. Staff ensure that parents receive regular information about the school's activities through an app that is updated regularly. Staff are visible at the beginning of the school day when welcoming pupils and their parents to the school grounds.

The school's parents and friends' association operates effectively to support the school through its activities each term, for example by organising fundays on the field to raise money for the school. The school makes purposeful links with local businesses; for example, with the support of a gardening centre, pupils are planting plants to improve the environment in the community.

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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