



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

**A report on**  
**Ysgol Padarn Sant**

**Llanbadarn Road**  
**Aberystwyth**  
**Ceredigion**  
**Aberystwyth**  
**SY23 1EZ**

**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 Ysgol Padarn Sant

Name of provider	Ysgol Padarn Sant
Local authority	Ceredigion County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Roman Catholic school
Number of pupils on roll	125
Pupils of statutory school age	107
Number in nursery classes	*
Percentage of 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 Primary is 23.0%)	17.1%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 16.1%)	34.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	22.4%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	02/06/2014
Start date of inspection	27/03/2023

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to 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 Gatholig Padarn Sant is a happy diverse community where pupils make good progress across their range of skills. Nearly all pupils behave very well during activities and enjoy collaborating with their friends when completing tasks and solving problems. Older pupils are very caring towards their younger peers and develop strong relationships with them.

The school values the diversity of its pupils and provides worthwhile opportunities for everyone to appreciate different cultures and traditions. This promotes a strong feeling of mutual respect and supports pupils' well-being successfully. There are a number of pupil groups and committees which allow pupils to make decisions about their experiences at school.

Most pupils express themselves confidently during their activities and collaborate well together. Many pupils' Welsh language skills are developing well and they use an increasing range of vocabulary confidently, with good pronunciation. Most read with good expression, and many older pupils decipher messages beyond the text, discussing characters and inference maturely. Across the school, most pupils apply their numeracy skills successfully in a good range of interesting contexts. Their digital skills are strong, and they make decisions about the best equipment and software to support them with different tasks. Most younger pupils' writing is developing well. They show good understanding of simple punctuation and spell familiar words correctly. Many older pupils produce a good range of creative and factual writing, but do not always produce extended written work in a wide enough range of forms.

The school continues to develop their curriculum, providing effective opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and build confidence and resilience. Teachers ensure that the curriculum is based in the local area, developing pupils' awareness of Wales in a wider context. The staff provide a valuable range of activities which develop the pupils' independence well. However, opportunities for mainly older pupils to make decisions about what and how they learn are less well developed.

The headteacher and leaders, including members of the governing body, set high expectations for all, and have well embedded processes which impact well on school development. Staff share practice, both internally and with other schools, and professional learning has a positive impact on practice.

## **Recommendations**

R1 Develop meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing across the curriculum

R2 Provide opportunities for pupils to influence what and how they learn

## **What happens next**

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

The majority of pupils start at the school with skills appropriate to their age and stage of development, with a minority below that which is expected, especially in language development. Most pupils make good progress over time across the range of different skills.

Most younger pupils in the reception class have strong fine motor skills for example using tweezers to pick up different objects when measuring non-standard units. Most listen well during activities. They speak clearly and many express their views and opinions with confidence. For example, during a whole class activity they explain the 'busy job' which they enjoyed most during the day. Many older pupils speak confidently when discussing the damage which has been inflicted upon the school's woodland area by vandals.

Across the school many pupils demonstrate a good understanding of familiar Welsh words and phrases and are developing confidence when using an increasingly complex range of vocabulary. Many demonstrate good pronunciation when speaking, for example, the younger pupils decide what they would like for lunch, note what day it is and what the weather is like today. They respond confidently to Welsh instructions and questions. Many older pupils enjoy language games where they use the future tense to ask their partner questions. They answer confidently, referring to where they will be going and what they will be doing.

Most younger pupils' reading skills are developing well. They show a good understanding of their letters and sounds and are building confidence when constructing simple words and phrases independently. Many Year 2 pupils read confidently and use a range of strategies to help them when facing new or challenging words. More able readers show excellent expression and alter their tone of voice when interpreting direct speech and exclamation marks in the text. They discuss their books maturely and explain what they think will happen as the story progresses.

Many Year 4 pupils read fluently and with good expression. Nearly all pupils are developing a love of reading and enjoy books on topics that interest them, such as animals from across the world. They refer to their favourite authors and whether they prefer fiction or non-fiction. Most Year 6 pupils read confidently. Many more able readers bring tension to the text as they read aloud and develop an awareness of the importance of reading beyond the text as they discuss different characters. They discuss the range of genres which appeal to them and refer to their previous reading such as when discussing a poem by a well-known author.

Many younger pupils write interesting descriptions about their visit to the local fire station at Aberystwyth. They usually include appropriate punctuation and the majority spell familiar words correctly. Many Year 2 pupils record their investigation about how different substances dissolve in water using an effective range of scientific vocabulary. Many Year 4 pupils produce effective leaflets persuading people not to harm their bodies through smoking.

Most older pupils write well in a range of contexts. They write highly detailed newspaper articles about the dangers of unhealthy eating, and engaging science fiction stories about time travel. They vary their sentence structure and add a good range of effects such as rhetorical questions. However, older pupils do not always produce extended writing in a wide enough range of genres.

Most younger pupils' mathematical skills are good. They create block graphs based on their data about their favourite song which they used to celebrate 'Dydd Miwsig Cymru.' Most Year 2 pupils have sound number skills. They apply their skills successfully, for example when planning a fair test about how far different objects from the shopping bag will roll when the bag breaks on a slope. Most Year 4 pupils calculate the area of compound shapes by counting square centimetres accurately. Many older pupils apply their numeracy skills confidently, for example when analysing the costs involved in making different products for the enterprise day at Christmas, considering the profits after deducting the production costs.

Most pupils of all ages and abilities use digital equipment with confidence to support their work. Most younger pupils combine pictures and writing to record their visit to the post office where they posted letters. They undertake research into how many meat-eaters, vegetarians, and vegans they have in their class. Once they have found the data they create graphs to show their results using particular software. Most older pupils use a range of digital technology effectively and with independence. They use a software package to create an effective presentation of their poems describing the red kite. They add a background and music to their presentation and upload it to the school's system.

Many pupils creative skills are developing well. Most pupils sing with very good awareness of pitch and tone and enjoy singing familiar songs in Welsh with their friends. Most younger pupils create very effective calendars designed in the style of Van Gogh's 'Starry night.' Many older pupils produce highly effective paintings which emulate the work of a range of local artists, reflecting different scenes within the locality. They relate this work to their interpretation of the seven wonders of the Aberystwyth area. For example, they produced effective paintings of the castle, the seafront, Constitution Hill, and Pendinas hill.

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

Nearly all pupils feel that the school is a happy place where they feel safe and well cared for. Most pupils behave very well in their classes and in the outside learning areas. The older pupils demonstrate great care for their younger peers and support them at break times and lunchtimes. They feel that the school is a happy family where pupils and adults learn together.

Most pupils show maturity in the way they take turns to listen and contribute to discussions. They collaborate well with their friends in groups for example when discussing symbols on a map in Year 4 and 5. Most pupils are always ready to learn and enthusiastic about their work. They are well-mannered and show respect to each other, staff and visitors. They understand the importance of developing resilience and speak enthusiastically about the 'be the bear' initiative and the impact it is having on their learning. Many demonstrate real enthusiasm towards their activities. Most

younger pupils show a very good level of independence and persevere very well with their activities and when it's time to tidy up in the class.

Many pupils explain the importance of the emotional support they receive at school, and know how to access help when they need it. They are confident to speak to teachers and support staff if something is worrying them. They know that the staff will ensure that they receive the support they need.

There are numerous well established pupil voice groups at the school. They meet regularly to discuss a range of issues, making decisions which have a positive impact on their experience at school. For example, the school council were influential in lobbying to reinstate a popular school initiative which they felt supported their well-being successfully. The school council also introduced the 'Show Racism the Red Card' initiative, increasing awareness of children's rights and how to celebrate diversity. Across the school pupils use 'worry boxes' to communicate concerns to staff, who respond to these concerns promptly, impacting positively on pupils' well-being. Pupils have adapted the school's anti-bullying policy and have developed their own child-friendly anti-bullying code for the benefit of their fellow pupils. They encourage pupils to share their concerns if they feel anyone is being unfairly treated. The e-safety group provide good support for their peers and as a result nearly all pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe online.

Most pupils' wellbeing is supported effectively through a range of outdoor learning opportunities such as regular visits to the school's woodland area. They enjoy their weekly outdoor sessions, and learn to adhere to important safety guidelines. They benefit from undertaking different activities in an outdoor environment which they enjoy. Nearly all pupils understand the benefits of healthy eating and drinking and enjoy a good range of physical activity. There is a broad range of activities during the school day and after school such as orienteering, hockey and football. The pupil well-being group encourage their peers to lead healthy lives and use their budget wisely to purchase suitable resources for their peers to play with during break times.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school has developed an interesting curriculum based on the principles of the Curriculum for Wales. Teachers demonstrate good understanding of the curriculum and work together well to meet the needs of their pupils. Teachers plan activities that build logically on the pupils' prior experiences. Leaders and staff have developed purposeful approaches to ensure effective progression in pupils' skills and understanding. Staff in the early years assess the pupils' skills as they start at the school and monitor progress from their starting point. Every pupil's well-being and personal development receives close attention. The school provides a wealth of experiences designed to support pupils' knowledge and understanding of the local area in Aberystwyth and the vicinity. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are ably supported and encouraged to flourish as individuals. The school provides a range of opportunities which ensure equality of access for all. The outdoor areas support the pupils' learning well. For example, staff provide valuable real-world experiences and visits which develop pupils' awareness of the natural world.

The school values the diversity of their pupils and provides enriching opportunities for them to celebrate their own culture and traditions within a modern Welsh context.

Teachers and support staff work closely with parents and carers to ensure that pupils feel that their culture and traditions are respected and valued. This is a noteworthy feature of the school.

The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills through a range of engaging activities. In general, teachers ensure that activities are designed to provide a suitable level of challenge for pupils across the age and ability range. Teachers provide valuable opportunities for the pupils to share their ideas about the direction of their learning. As a result, most pupils remain engaged in their learning for extended periods. The 'busy jobs' allow younger pupils to develop resilience successfully. This approach is highly effective in developing their ability to work independently for extended periods and to consider whether they have succeeded in completing a task. For example, they show great enthusiasm as they investigate the best material to use for a knight's cloak. However, mainly in the older classes, there are not always sufficient opportunities for pupils to make decisions about the level of challenge involved in activities, or to choose how they would like to learn. As a result, a few mainly older pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.

Teachers use a good range of resources to stimulate discussion and provide authentic contexts for the pupils to develop their ideas leading to highly engaging examples of writing. For example, older pupils produce thoughtful and detailed persuasive letters to the local member of parliament expressing their concern about the impact of global warming on the environment. However, opportunities for the older pupils to develop their extended writing through a wide enough range of genres are not fully developed.

Teachers and pupils demonstrate a positive and supportive relationship during activities across the age and ability range. Teachers and support staff ask probing open-ended questions designed to make pupils think for themselves. In general, activities are well timed, engaging and interesting for the pupils. Teachers and support staff use the Welsh language consistently during all activities. The 'trochi' initiative is proving successful and pupils are enthusiastic towards the language. As a result, many pupils' understanding and confidence when speaking Welsh is developing well.

Teachers provide regular and useful verbal feedback for pupils, highlighting strengths and aspects for them to develop further. Written feedback is concise with an appropriate focus on highlighting successes and suggestions for improvement. Teachers provide effective opportunities for pupils to develop and agree their own success criteria for different tasks.

Leaders and staff have developed effective arrangements for monitoring pupil progress over time. Their approach includes appropriate assessment activity and considers each pupil's development in all aspects of their learning. Regular meetings are held where they consider the provision for every pupil and any adaptations which need to be made to support their progress.



## Care, support and guidance

The school is an inclusive community where all staff prioritise pupils' well-being. As a result, nearly all pupils across the school show empathy and kindness towards one another and feel calm and safe in a nurturing environment. The school's values are woven into all aspects of their provision.

Across the school, staff encourage pupils to celebrate and embrace their differences successfully. For example, younger pupils discuss their food preferences and show respect for others' views. The school celebrates its diversity effectively, such as through hosting international evenings, where parents and carers are invited to school to celebrate their cultural heritage. This provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to learn about elements such as traditional foods, music and dances specific to a particular culture. As a result, there is a strong feeling of inclusivity in the school. School staff support pupils who are learning English as an additional language effectively and, as a result, they make good progress across the curriculum from their individual starting points.

The staff know their pupils very well and have a firm understanding of pupils' needs and how to support their learning. There are strong well-established systems in place to identify pupils' needs when they start at school in the early years or transfer to the school at a later date. Staff ensure that where appropriate, pupils have a one-page profile, which details learners' interests and needs and how they can be best supported. This profile is shared with parents and contributes significantly to the strong relationship which exists between parents, carers and school staff. Additionally, where appropriate, staff and pupils complete a detailed home-school diary which is shared with parents, and supports individual pupils' progress well.

The school provides purposeful opportunities for all pupils to develop useful leadership skills by participating in a range of pupil voice groups. For example, the eco representatives raise awareness of issues relating to climate change by organising an assembly to share important messages with other pupils. The ICT club produced a video with valuable information regarding on-line safety that they have shared on the school's website.

The school provides strong support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), by carefully selecting interventions to support their progress and monitoring impact on a regular basis. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) provides highly effective leadership and works closely with a range of external agencies and local schools to ensure that provision is effective, and that pupils make good progress over time. Support for well-being is at the heart of the school's vision. Social and emotional support is provided individually through small group interventions. Pupils who attend these groups talk openly about the positive impact this support has on their confidence and ability to make progress at school. Parents also express their appreciation of the emotional support that the school provides.

The school has a long-standing partnership with the parish, for example the school's priest is a valuable member of the school's well-being team and visits the school weekly to help embed a range of moral and ethical issues, such as caring for our world. The school provides a range of interesting visits within the locality and further afield such as a visit to the local lifeboat station and Devil's Bridge. There is a strong

sense of community across the school. Furthermore, teachers provide very good opportunities to promote Welsh culture, for example by studying a topic on the seven Welsh Wonders and by working with local artists to create artwork inspired by the surrounding area. The school participates in a range of local and national competitions such as the Urdd Eisteddfod, which provides the pupils with valuable opportunities to enjoy competing and celebrating the Welsh language and culture.

The school monitors pupils' attendance robustly and liaises closely with parents and other agencies as necessary. There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders, teachers and support staff demonstrate a sound understanding of safeguarding and child protection procedures.

## **Leadership and management**

Leaders collaborate effectively with parents, staff and pupils to ensure a clear vision that accurately reflects the needs of the school's community. All contribute to promoting a purposeful ethos of inclusivity, care and nurture at Padarn Sant. This encompasses all the school's activities and creates an ethos of being a close-knit, happy learning community.

The headteacher sets high expectations for herself and her staff and high aspirations for pupils' progress and well-being. Arrangements to distribute roles and responsibilities across the school are effective. Leaders and staff understand and discharge their roles conscientiously and with commitment.

Leaders ensure that there are purposeful arrangements in place to address a range of national priorities. For example, the school is making suitable progress in designing a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects the local context and aligns with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales. Staff provide pupils with effective opportunities to contribute to the direction of their learning and pupils make useful suggestions about what they would like to learn in school. Leaders ensure that the school is making strong progress in implementing additional learning needs reform and, as a result, pupils with ALN are well supported and make good progress against their targets.

A range of first-hand evidence such as questionnaires, scrutiny of pupils' work and learning walks is used effectively by leaders to identify the school's strengths and areas of improvement. Leaders analyse these sources of evidence well and produce detailed action plans to address aspects identified as priorities. For example, leaders responded to outcomes of monitoring activities that highlighted pupils' Welsh oracy skills as an area for development. They initiated effective plans and as a result, many pupils now speak Welsh with increased confidence. The focus of a few monitoring activities, however, is too broad and, as a result, leaders do not always have sufficient understanding of the precise impact of teaching on pupil outcomes.

Professional learning supports school improvement well. All staff engage in relevant activities, including performance management, that are closely linked to the school's priorities for improvement. For example, they collaborate purposefully to design age-specific assessments that allow staff to identify the next steps in pupils' learning upon their arrival at school. Staff have benefitted from accessing activities to develop their Welsh language skills including the local authority's Welsh sabbatical scheme.

Leaders skilfully evaluate the impact of professional learning activities on outcomes. For example, following research-based enquiry projects, the school has made changes to the reading areas to promote pupils' enjoyment of books. Subsequently, leaders' have identified further adaptations that are required and have worked well with pupils to implement these changes.

Governors are very committed advocates of the school. They support the school effectively, for example when faced with a challenging budget settlement. They have a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths, areas for development and the progress the school is making. They know the school's community well and are regularly involved in school activities. For example, governors are present to meet and greet parents during parents' evening and they periodically sit with pupils at lunchtime to discuss important aspects of school life. Governors promote a strong safeguarding culture purposefully. As a result, most pupils feel safe at school and enjoy their time at Ysgol Padarn Sant. Governors and leaders manage the school's budgets carefully. They have a thorough knowledge of how the school utilises its allocation of the pupil development grant and the impact this has on pupil outcomes. For example, they evaluate the positive impact that targeted support has on pupils that are emotionally vulnerable. Governors make appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read 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 classes, including learning support groups 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 and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- 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 ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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