



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

A report on

Ysgol Bro Banw Community Primary School

**High Street
Ammanford
Carmarthenshire
SA18 2NS**

Date of inspection: January 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Bro Banw Community Primary School

Name of provider	Ysgol Bro Banw Community Primary School
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	487
Pupils of statutory school age	415
Number in nursery classes	17
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 23.7%)	33.7%
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 13.2%)	27.0%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	8.2%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	5.5%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/01/2016
Start date of inspection	29/01/2024
The school has seven specialist teaching classes for pupils from across the local authority. The school also has three Welsh-medium and 13 English-medium mainstream classes. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home.	

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

a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Ysgol Bro Banw provides a welcoming, nurturing and inclusive learning environment for pupils. Leaders and staff place the interests of the child at the centre of everything they do, which embodies their vision of 'Encouraging every child to shine'. They provide strong support for pupils who attend the English-medium, Welsh-medium and the specialist teaching provision classes. The innovative and exciting inquiry-based curriculum stimulates pupils' interests and enthusiasm for learning. Although many pupils start school with relatively weak skills, most make strong progress in their learning over time.

The headteacher provides excellent leadership, which is having a very positive impact on the work of the school. The strong team ethos across the school promotes a culture where staff are encouraged to take risks in their teaching and provide the best learning experiences for their pupils. Leaders and staff understand the needs of pupils, their families and the local community well. They provide excellent well-being support for all pupils and encourage parents, especially those that are new to the school, to become part of the school community through innovative projects. Leaders ensure a strong safeguarding culture at the school. They promote the importance of regular attendance and monitor all absences carefully. However, rates of pupils' attendance remain relatively low.

A notable strength of the school is the support staff provide to pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream and the specialist teaching provision classes. The team of additional learning needs co-ordinators (ALNCOs) provides particularly strong leadership to help staff implement a range of effective strategies and interventions to help pupils improve their skills, well-being and attitudes to learning. They work well with a range of partners and agencies to enhance the provision for pupils with ALN, especially those with more complex needs. This ensures that they make strong progress in their developmental stages and from their respective starting points.

Teachers plan rich learning experiences that provide a stimulating and highly engaging curriculum for pupils. This allows pupils to use a range of skills including their numeracy, literacy and thinking skills to solve real-life problems. In addition, the strong emphasis placed on developing pupils' awareness of their 'cynefin' or local area and of the history and heritage of Wales, supports pupils learning very effectively. Although most pupils attending the Welsh-medium classes do not speak the language at home, they make strong progress in their Welsh language skills during their time at the school. However, pupils' Welsh language skills in English medium classes are underdeveloped.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve attendance
- R2 Improve standards in Welsh in English-medium classes

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to developing a rich and exciting inquiry-based curriculum and how it supports pupils and their families through innovative community-based projects for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main evaluation

Learning

Many pupils start school with skills that are lower than would normally be expected for their stage of development. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who have English as an additional language (EAL), make strong progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. Nearly all pupils in the specialist teaching provisions make good progress towards their individual targets.

Most younger pupils listen attentively and follow simple instructions well. They interact effectively with adults and develop sound communication skills. By Year 6, most pupils speak skilfully and contribute effectively to class discussions, expressing their views clearly and maturely. Pupils with EAL use increasingly complex language with other pupils, for example to describe a recipe from Namibia as part of the work of the Waste Wizards.

Most nursery and reception pupils enjoy listening to stories and re-telling them to their friends and adults. They develop positive attitudes to reading and become familiar with the content of books, for example when recounting the story of the Three Little Pigs. Most pupils in Year 2 are confident readers who use their reading skills well to decode letter sounds and use emphasis well when reading to others. Many older pupils read confidently in various contexts, with pupils in the Welsh-medium class reading fluently in English and Welsh. They use their tone of voice and punctuation effectively to demonstrate their understanding well. Over time, pupils develop their higher order reading skills effectively, for example by using inference and prediction maturely when reading a range of fiction and non-fiction texts.

Many pupils' writing skills develop consistently well over time. The youngest pupils develop secure fine motor skills that prepare them for early writing. Across the Foundation Learning classes, many pupils write descriptive and interesting pieces with increasing accuracy and use language for effect, for example when using story maps to recount the story of the local folk tale, 'Twrch Trwyth'. As they move through the school, most learn to vary their vocabulary and sentence patterns when writing. Many older pupils write to a good standard in a range of contexts, using nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs effectively to enhance their work.

In general, pupils have positive attitudes towards learning about Wales and the Welsh language. Most younger pupils in the English-medium classes make appropriate progress in using incidental Welsh, particularly during morning welcome sessions. They respond suitably to familiar prompts and questions and join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes. As pupils move through the school, a majority use a limited range of vocabulary and understand basic words and phrases in class and during Welsh lessons. However, overall, pupils in the English-medium classes do not make enough progress in learning to understand and speak Welsh.

Most pupils make strong progress in developing their numeracy skills and enjoy applying this to solve real life problems. For example, Year 2 pupils take measurements of caterpillars that they have found in the school garden over several weeks and then draw them to scale as part of their work on life cycles. Younger pupils engage enthusiastically in practical activities that support the development of their mathematical vocabulary and number skills. A notable feature of the school is the ability of most older pupils to use their numeracy skills very effectively in a range of contexts, often discussing their methods with increasing sophistication, for example when calculating the cost of electricity and labour for their enterprise project.

Most pupils develop good digital skills and use them across the curriculum successfully. Younger pupils use a range of apps well across the curriculum, including creating databases to measure mushrooms of different height and weight. In addition, Year 3 pupils demonstrate sound coding skills using micro-bits to support their 'Devil and the Giant' work. Older pupils use their digital skills with increasing competence, for example by creating a spreadsheet to record and present information about the effects of immigration on Wales.

Most pupils develop their creative skills successfully. Younger pupils enjoy painting and using the outdoor stage and the puppet theatre, for example to act out the story of the Giant and the Beanstalk. Older pupils create simple dance sequences successfully to represent the flooding of Capel Celyn and to interpret the drowning of Tryweryn in 1955.

Across the school, most pupils develop their physical skills well through a wide range of purposeful experiences. The youngest pupils are enthusiastic about physical activities in the outdoor area, including cycling and exercise sessions. Older pupils develop their physical skills well by taking part in a range of physical activities and after-school sports clubs, which has a positive effect on their well-being and attitudes towards keeping fit. Pupils in the specialist teaching provision enjoy the regular movement breaks that form part of their school day. For example, pupils in Dosbarth Glas dance and follow songs that consolidate their understanding of the parts of the body.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are proud of their school and develop a strong sense of belonging. They value the positive working relationships they develop with staff, who provide them with encouragement, direction and support. Most pupils thrive in the school's nurturing environment and feel safe there. They know who to talk to for help and support when they need it and are confident that they will be listened to and

respected. They feel cared for and value daily well-being check-ins to discuss their emotions and attitudes to learning.

Most pupils behave well around the school and are extremely courteous and welcoming to adults and visitors. They show care and consideration for each other and collaborate effectively, showing respect for the contributions of other pupils in class. Most have a firm sense of right and wrong and understand the importance of supporting children's rights. The inclusive, friendly and nurturing ethos of the school is reflected in pupils' attitudes towards each other, particularly when welcoming new pupils to the school. For example, new pupils with English as an additional language, support each other well through the 'Waste Wizards' group where they learn about each other's culture, language and traditions.

Most pupils have a secure understanding of eating healthily, staying hydrated and taking regular exercise. For example, Year 4 pupils are taking part in a project with a local food supplier to make their own healthy snack to sample and distribute to their peers and the wider community. Nearly all pupils enjoy using the outdoor areas to support their learning and well-being, for example by taking responsibility for feeding and caring for their animals on the Foundation Learning site. Younger pupils stay active at breaktimes by riding their bikes and pupils in the specialist teaching provision classes take part regularly in movement breaks throughout the day.

Across the school, most pupils have strong, positive attitudes to learning. They engage positively with the broad range of exciting and stimulating learning experiences that the school offers. Most settle quickly and develop confidence and resilience when persevering with their work or play. They are developing well as capable and aspirational learners, talking enthusiastically about school life and their work with understanding and maturity. For example, they use their thinking and numeracy skills well when discussing their ideas and strategies to establish their enterprise within the given budget. Most collaborate successfully in groups and in pairs, and many make positive contributions to class discussions.

Many pupils explain confidently about the importance of inclusion and diversity at their school. They are very aware of local and worldwide issues and understand the importance of looking after one other and helping those in need. Most older pupils understand the contribution they can make to their community and participate in a range of purposeful enterprising activities. For example, they grow vegetables in the school garden to contribute to the school's 'Bwyd i Bawb' initiative.

In general, pupils develop their leadership roles appropriately through a range of pupil voice groups that contribute well to the life of the school. They use their knowledge and skills enthusiastically to support others, for example the 'Tech Team' group help their peers to solve ICT problems. Although pupils who are members of these worthwhile pupil voice groups contribute well to their work, they do not always involve fully their peers when making decisions.

Nearly all pupils understand that they need to be careful and know how to keep themselves safe online. Most pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities to promote their physical and mental well-being, such as the range of sporting clubs, the choir, the creative dance club and classes for Welsh learners.

Pupils are aware of the importance of attending school regularly and respond well to the weekly reward for the class with the most improved attendance. Although pupils' attendance has increased slightly over the past two years, it is still lower than pre-pandemic attendance levels.

Teaching and learning experiences

A notable strength of the school is the wealth of rich learning experiences on offer for pupils. Leaders and staff have worked effectively together to plan and deliver a bespoke, innovative and highly stimulating curriculum. Teachers are skilful in ensuring an effective balance of direct teaching and inquiry-based learning. As a result, the curriculum provides a comprehensive range of authentic learning experiences for all pupils.

Nearly all teachers plan extensive opportunities for pupils to contribute to their own learning, such as when discussing their ideas at the beginning and during inquiry cycles or units of learning. As a result, most pupils have high levels of enthusiasm for and interest in all aspects of their work. The variety of rich inquiry-based experiences helps pupils develop and apply their numeracy, literacy and thinking skills to solve real-life problems successfully. For example, Year 6 pupils apply their numeracy skills maturely to calculate tax contributions paid by different occupations and then suggest interesting ideas on how the Government could spend the revenue. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils in English medium classes to develop their use of spoken Welsh.

Teachers plan outstanding inquiry-based learning to strengthen community links, enhance pupils' understanding of the world of work and help them to develop entrepreneurial skills highly effectively. For example, Year 3 pupils collaborated with the town council to find a solution to the problem of chewing gum around the school locality, and how they can banish single use plastic bags. As part of this work, pupils developed alternative products that are eco-friendly and used their skills well to launch their own interesting businesses. The use of visitors and partnerships with local businesses supports this work very effectively and helps to raise pupils' aspirations for their future careers.

Most teachers use the principles of foundation learning well to plan a good range of enjoyable, hands-on learning and play experiences for younger pupils. The consistent use of real-life authentic experiences helps to engage pupils in their learning and develop their skills and knowledge effectively. For example, most Year 1 pupils apply their numeracy skills confidently to construct a house for the three little pigs, measuring a range of natural materials using a ruler and standard measurements correctly.

An excellent feature of the school's curriculum is the strong emphasis placed on developing pupils' awareness of their '*cynefin*' or local area and of the history and heritage of Wales. For example, Nursery pupils use maps confidently to visit Ammanford to recognise its distinctive natural and human features. Year 5 pupils apply their digital skills effectively to create interesting animations about the story of Taliesin and Year 4 pupils, along with their peers in the Welsh medium class, develop their writing skills successfully to create detailed online travel reviews following a trip on the Brecon Mountain Railway.

Teachers plan engaging activities that successfully develop pupils' understanding of diversity and attitudes towards people from different backgrounds living in Wales, and the wider world. For example, older pupils write thoughtful arguments for and against welcoming refugees to Wales and outline the opportunities they bring to their school.

All staff have highly effective working relationships with pupils and treat them with kindness and respect. This fosters a positive and supportive environment for learning within the school community. They provide excellent support for pupils with additional needs in the mainstream and specialist teaching provision classes. Nearly all teachers ensure that their lessons have an effective pace and encourage pupils to work together to complete tasks and solve problems. Teachers and learning support assistants use questioning skilfully to extend pupils' understanding and thinking.

All staff ensure that classroom environments are vibrant and well-organised spaces that support pupils to engage positively in lessons and celebrate their learning appropriately. They set high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour and ensure that learning and play experiences build successfully on previous learning. This is a strong feature of the teaching as it ensures that pupils use their previous knowledge and thinking skills effectively in their learning. Most teachers provide pupils with constructive feedback to help them to improve their work. They create valuable opportunities for pupils to work together and to reflect successfully on their learning. Across the school, nearly all teachers use information from observations and assessments to plan the next steps in pupils' learning effectively and thoroughly.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a highly inclusive, caring and compassionate community where the well-being of everyone is a priority for leaders and staff. Pupils have equal access to nearly all aspects of school life and provide exemplary care, support and guidance for all pupils, particularly for those with ALN. Staff provide a wide range of effective strategies and interventions to help pupils improve their skills, well-being and attitudes to learning. For example, leaders have established a school-based nurture class to help pupils acquire the necessary skills and attributes to re-integrate successfully into mainstream classes.

Leaders, teachers and support staff in the specialist teaching provision classes work extremely effectively with a range of partners and agencies, including input from educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. This enhances their comprehensive understanding of pupils' requirements and complex needs. As a result, staff provide early and appropriate support for pupils, leading to very strong progress in pupils' development and from their starting points.

The team of additional learning needs co-ordinators (ALNCOs) use their extensive knowledge effectively to provide staff across the school with high quality professional training. For example, they write beneficial one-page profiles and development plans in partnership with pupils, parents and external partners, which focus well on the exact needs of the pupils. Rigorous and robust systems are in place to help identify and monitor pupils in need of additional support in mainstream classes to ensure they make strong progress in relation to their starting points.

A notable feature of the school's provision is the exceptional arrangements to support pupils' social, moral, and cultural development. Teachers ensure that pupils influence what and how they learn, as well as encouraging them to discuss a range of important current issues. For example, older pupils studied the book 'The boy who sits at the back of the class' to influence discussion on the topic of immigration and to consider the moral issues around the recent protests in Llanelli. In addition, the school provides extensive support for pupils and families with EAL and those who are new to the school through a wide range of outstanding initiatives. For example, the school café encourages new parents and pupils to cook collaboratively, improve their language skills and develop new friendships. This is having a considerable impact on their well-being and helps to develop strong relationships with the school from the outset.

The school provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills through a range of pupil voice groups. In addition, initiatives like the 'Bwyd i Bawb' project helps to foster their understanding of local and global issues, including inequality and food poverty. For example, the family project officer has worked successfully with local partners to help the school to establish a 'pay as you feel' shop. This helps pupils and their families to become food literate and to reduce the impact of poverty on pupils' attainment and well-being. The school also provides a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, including chess, dance, rugby, coding and animation, which are available to all pupils. Staff track who attends these clubs to ensure there are no barriers for pupils who wish to attend.

Through effective collective worship and various curriculum activities, the school provides pupils with strong opportunities to develop their understanding of moral issues and spiritual and religious awareness. Staff place a strong emphasis on the rights of the child and promote them successfully through daily routines and displays. As a result, most pupils, especially those in the rights respecting pupil voice group, have a good understanding of this very important work.

Leaders work well with the family inclusion officer to establish a range of appropriate procedures to monitor, track and support pupil attendance, which is beginning to have a positive impact on attendance rates. They have a good understanding of why a few pupils are consistently not attending school, and work well with them and their families to help them improve their attendance. However, attendance rates remain below pre-Covid levels and the gap between FSM and Non-FSM pupils remains too high.

All staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and use a wide range of appropriate strategies to ensure that they know what is expected of them. The school has a strong, effective and well-established safeguarding culture. Leaders provide beneficial training and support to all staff on safeguarding, which helps them to recognise and record issues appropriately. They work effectively with a range of agencies to provide essential support to pupils and families.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides highly effective, supportive and compassionate leadership, which has a positive impact on the lives of pupils and their families. He has developed a strong team ethos, which ensures that all staff collaborate

successfully to ensure that the school's vision of 'Encouraging every child to shine' is at the heart of its work. This purposeful vision, which has been created by leaders, staff, pupils and other stakeholders, focuses successfully on providing a strong sense of working together for the benefit of all pupils. Leaders communicate this vision effectively, which ensures that everyone in the school community focuses firmly on achieving the same aims and strategic objectives.

The headteacher and other school leaders value the work of all staff and support their well-being extremely well. They encourage staff to be innovative, take risks and base their teaching and support on effective, research-based practice. This is having a positive impact on the implementation of Curriculum for Wales, the ALNET Act and improving pedagogy.

Leaders and staff are committed to building and maintaining effective working relationships with pupils and parents from the start of their time at the school. They understand the needs of pupils, their families and the local community very well, and work extremely effectively together to support their needs. As a result, the school provides a welcoming, inclusive and happy learning environment for all pupils and their families. Pupils are very proud of their school and make strong progress in their learning and well-being.

Members of the governing body have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities and contribute very effectively to the school's strategic priorities. The chair of governors ensures that the governing body makes full use of members' skills, knowledge and experience across a range of areas. Governors undertake purposeful monitoring activities in partnership with school leaders, including joint learning walks, book scrutiny and listening to learners. This ensures that they have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and this allows them to support and challenge leaders robustly. Governors ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and support leaders to manage resources in line with the school's priorities. The governing body has agreed a suitable plan with the local authority to address the deficit accrued this year. Although school buildings on all three school sites pose many challenges, school leaders and staff make every effort to use the available resources as well as possible.

Leaders use a useful range of self-evaluation tools to identify strengths and areas for improvement well. Purposeful monitoring processes ensure that leaders, staff and members of the governing body are all involved in evaluating the school's work. For example, staff work in triads to observe and evaluate the quality of each other's teaching. In addition, members of the governing body join leaders in evaluating aspects of the provision including the use of enabling adults in the specialist teaching provision classes. These processes help to promote constructive dialogue and coaching between all stakeholders as well as identifying what is working well and what could be 'even better if'. Leaders use performance management processes appropriately to support staff to help identify purposeful personal professional development opportunities along with departmental or whole school priorities for improvement.

The school has identified a suitable range of improvement priorities, that focus very well on teaching and learning, pupils' well-being and leadership. The school's

effective self-evaluation and improvement planning processes ensures that leaders have improved many important aspects of the school's work over the last few years. For example, they have worked extremely well with staff to introduce a highly innovative and exciting curriculum that engages pupils highly effectively in their learning.

The school uses the pupil development grant very well to ensure that rich learning experiences, along with literacy and numeracy support helps vulnerable pupils to make strong progress. The headteacher, leaders and staff are passionate about supporting vulnerable learners and their families. They have developed a purposeful 'Poverty proofing Statement' which outlines a comprehensive range of innovative projects and initiatives to help reduce the impact of poverty on pupils' education and well-being. For example, all pupils receive subsidised travel for educational visits, recycling school uniforms and supporting families through the 'Bwyd i bawb' initiative.

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)

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:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

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