



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

A report on

Ysgol Gymraeg y Cwm

**Jersey Road
Bonynmaen
SA1 7DL**

Date of inspection: February 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Gymraeg y Cwm

Name of provider	Ysgol Gymraeg y Cwm
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	128
Pupils of statutory school age	108
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	20
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 23.7%)</i>	17.9%
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 13.2%)</i>	25%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	21.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/05/2016
Start date of inspection	26/02/2024

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 homely, safe and inclusive community that promotes pupils' well-being very successfully. Nearly all pupils behave very well. They are polite and respectful towards others. They feel that staff support them well, listen to them and deal appropriately with any concerns they may have.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They listen well to teachers' instructions and concentrate diligently on their work during learning sessions. Very few have Welsh communication skills and social skills that correspond to, or are higher than, what is expected for their age and stage of development on entry to the school. However, most make sound progress in their learning from their starting points.

The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the rest of the teaching team work together enthusiastically to encourage pupils to speak Welsh and to be proud of their Welsh identity. They demonstrate high professional values and conduct which aim to ensure that pupils do their best on nearly all occasions.

The curriculum is broad and interesting for pupils and develops their literacy, numeracy and digital skills well and encourages them to enjoy learning. Although most pupils' mathematical skills develop well, there are very few opportunities for them to apply them to real-life situations within their themes. Although pupils learn about some of the effects of the Second World War on the people of Bonymaen, learning experiences that are designed specifically for them to learn about and appreciate the rich history and geography of their local area are limited.

On the whole, the school's self-evaluation procedures are appropriate and provide a fairly accurate picture of its strengths. However, they are not always incisive enough to enable leaders to identify exactly the specific areas that need improving.

There is a close relationship between the school and parents, Cylch Meithrin Meini Bach and other local schools. These relationships ensure that pupils start primary and secondary school as confident and happy as possible.

Recommendations

- R1 Refine self-evaluation procedures so that they are easy to implement and incisive enough to enable leaders to identify exactly the specific areas that need improving
- R2 Ensure that teachers provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in rich contexts across the curriculum
- R3 Ensure that teachers provide pupils with specific learning experiences to learn about and appreciate the rich history and geography of their local area

What happens next

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

Main findings

Learning

Very few pupils have Welsh communication skills and social skills that correspond to, or are higher than, what is expected for their age and stage of development on entry to the school. The remainder have skills that are lower than that. However, most, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) or from low-income households, make sound progress from their starting points in nearly all aspects of their work.

Considering their starting points, most pupils make sound progress in their literacy skills. Most listen attentively to each other and adults. Pupils' oral skills develop effectively and most begin to develop simple vocabulary quickly from a young age. By Year 2, a majority expand their vocabulary appropriately to talk about their work and their experiences. Many contribute confidently to 'chat' sessions and use appropriate language. The oral skills of most of the oldest pupils develop successfully in both languages. For example, Year 5 pupils create interesting oral presentations on video when submitting applications to join the various committees. At the top of the school, most pupils discuss their work intelligently and use correct language patterns.

On the whole, many pupils' reading skills develop suitably. The youngest pupils use an appropriate range of phonic strategies to read familiar and unfamiliar words correctly. Although it is a minority of Year 2 pupils that read fluently, many use their skills with increasing confidence and begin to explain the content of simple text. Many of the oldest pupils read intelligently in various contexts, and do so in both Welsh and English. They vary their tone of voice and use punctuation purposefully to demonstrate their understanding of text. At the top of the school, most develop their higher-order reading skills purposefully to gather information from different sources to create biographies of famous people, such as Louis Braille for example.

Most pupils develop their writing skills appropriately. The early writing skills of many of the youngest pupils develop well. By Year 2, they begin to write in an appropriate range of contexts, including creative genres. They also begin to write for different audiences by creating a poster to explain how to wash hands effectively, for example. Many of the oldest pupils build on their writing skills successfully and show a sound grasp of familiar spelling patterns, by using paragraphs and punctuation fairly accurately. They adapt the style and structure of different texts effectively. Pupils at the top of the school write extended pieces of text to an appropriate standard regularly. For example, they write pieces to compare the features of the poem 'Aberfan' by T. Llew Jones with the traditional story of 'The Pied Piper'.

The mathematical skills of most pupils develop strongly as they move through the school. They calculate confidently in line with their age and stage of development and apply their understanding of number confidently in various mathematical contexts, such as time, shape, money and measurement. In the reception class, most count objects confidently in the play areas, such as the number of frogs in a tub. By Year 2, most place numbers in the correct order and use a variety of methods to solve mathematical problems, such as simple fractions. By the time pupils reach the top of the school, most have a sound understanding of place value, which enables them to calculate confidently. They understand that the order of calculation is important when solving number problems that include operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. When they are given an opportunity to do so, most pupils apply their mathematical skills appropriately in activities in other areas of the curriculum. For example, they calculate and compare facts relating to the planets when studying the solar system.

The digital skills of a majority of pupils develop soundly. The youngest pupils log in to a range of digital platforms with increasing confidence to access their work. Their coding skills develop suitably as they give a programmable device directions to move along a path they have created to emulate a rocket's journey to reach the earth. The oldest pupils create effective animations, such as telling the story of the animals in the Chinese zodiac, for example. By doing so, they incorporate images and animations creatively to present information in a way that is attractive to the audience. Their grasp of a range of software is developing well.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are happy, polite and respectful towards each other and adults. They behave well in lessons, while moving around the school, and during leisure time. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school. They feel that staff support them well and know where to turn if they need help. They are confident that staff will listen to them and deal appropriately with any concerns they may have.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They listen well to teachers' instructions and concentrate diligently on their work during learning sessions. Most are enthusiastic learners who apply themselves confidently to new experiences. They work effectively with their peers and adults and support each other willingly.

Most pupils develop to become ambitious and skilful learners who are ready to learn, show resilience and persevere with their tasks. Nearly all, including those with ALN, are willing to assume leadership roles confidently and accept the responsibility involved with that enthusiastically. Members of the school council, for example, take pride in having contributed directly to revising the school rules by creating and introducing *Cod y Cwm*. Another example is the way in which the Criw Cymraeg encourage their peers to be proud to speak the language by creating *Ras yr Iaith* to reward the use of the Welsh language across the school.

Most pupils develop their understanding of how to make healthy choices in relation to their diet well. They talk intelligently about the importance of eating fruit and vegetables. For example, the Clwb Cŵl holds a workshop making fruit kebabs. Most pupils develop their physical skills well during lessons, break time and lunchtime and through sports sessions organised by the school. By taking part in digital lessons and

receiving advice from responsible adults such as the police, nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of how to stay safe online.

Many pupils contribute purposefully to what they learn. For example, they take advantage of the opportunity to share their interests and aspirations by contributing to mind maps at the beginning of termly themes. As a result, pupils' enthusiasm and participation in their learning are sound. Most value and respond positively to timely feedback from adults and their peers. Many older pupils have the confidence to assess their own work and respond to the efforts of their peers.

Most pupils develop as ethical and informed citizens who are aware of principles based on fairness and equality. Most demonstrate a sound awareness of children's rights and value and respect the contributions of others, by allowing them to take turns to speak and contribute purposefully to class discussions, for example.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school provides pupils with an interesting and stimulating curriculum, which captures their imagination and encourages them to enjoy learning. Members of the teaching team, namely the teachers and assistants, work together effectively to plan engaging themes that inspire nearly all pupils and ensure their commitment to their learning. They hold days such as *Bwrlwm Thema* at the beginning of each term to spark pupils' imagination and gather their ideas. As an additional stimulus for their themes, they also often provide pupils with opportunities to go on educational trips, such as to the fire station or one of the local supermarkets.

On the whole, teachers have adapted their plans appropriately to incorporate the main principles of Curriculum for Wales. They work with other local schools to develop their ideas and refine their plans. The wider principles of the curriculum are generally developing appropriately, nurturing pupils to be creative and enterprising learners and to persevere with their activities. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils develop their creative and physical skills effectively when planning a creative dance based on the story of the Red Dragon. The curriculum is broad and includes a suitable range of experiences for pupils to develop their skills in the different areas of learning and experience. However, apart from a few examples where themes refer to some of the effects of the Second World War on the people of Bonymaen, learning experiences that are planned specifically for pupils to learn about, and appreciate, the rich history and geography of their local area are limited.

Teachers plan purposefully to develop pupils' literacy and digital skills methodically and constructively. Although they also develop pupils' mathematical and numeracy skills successfully, opportunities for them to apply these in real-life situations within their themes are very limited.

All members of the teaching team work together effectively to forge an inclusive, supportive and hard-working relationship for pupils. The indoor learning environment is colourful and stimulating where all groups of pupils, including the most and least able, are able to learn productively. Displays are a combination of some that celebrate pupils' work and others that support their learning. The outdoor learning area is developing appropriately in the foundation learning department. For example, pupils in the reception class enjoy spending time in the outdoor area making a tart

from mud and stones in the mud kitchen on *Mercher Mwdlyd* (Welly Wednesdays). However, the outdoor learning areas have not been developed sufficiently in the older pupils' classes.

Nearly all members of the teaching team have high expectations in terms of pupils' commitment to their learning. They work together effectively and motivate and manage pupils' behaviour skilfully. They use praise and encouragement appropriately and this creates a hard-working learning environment. The teaching team provide them with effective constructive feedback and support, particularly verbally. This helps them to know how well they are doing and how to improve their efforts. Teachers share the objectives of tasks appropriately with pupils and the whole teaching team support learning successfully by leading suitable specific activities with individuals and groups of pupils.

Teachers assess the progress and development of individuals and specific groups purposefully. They identify those who are underachieving and those who are more able at an early stage and adapt provision as necessary. This ensures that most make sound progress in their learning.

Members of the teaching team work together enthusiastically and passionately to immerse pupils in the Welsh language and encourage them continuously to use the language purposefully. A majority are good language models and take advantage of specific opportunities to introduce new vocabulary and language patterns to pupils. They use question and response methods effectively to encourage pupils to extend their responses, where necessary. This enables a majority of pupils to make sound progress in acquiring the Welsh language and in using it with increasing confidence in different contexts. To promote their understanding of other languages, the school provides pupils at the top of the school with valuable experiences to learn French as part of the secondary school's cluster transition plan.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a homely and inclusive community that promotes pupils' well-being very successfully. Its arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. The supportive and friendly working relationship between members of the teaching team and pupils is an excellent feature. They ensure that pupils with ALN or emotional well-being needs receive effective support. This ensures that nearly all pupils engage well with their learning and enjoy the life and work of the school.

The school has appropriate processes to record pupils' progress and well-being, including those with ALN, and it implements these conscientiously. Staff identify pupils' needs at an early stage and provide them with purposeful and effective support as necessary. Under the effective guidance of the ALN co-ordinator, members of the teaching team support pupils successfully. They provide a range of purposeful support programmes for pupils which develop their literacy skills and their emotional well-being effectively. They have a productive working relationship with the parents of pupils with ALN and include them in the progress review process before setting further attainment targets for them. The welcome and sharing of feelings sessions during registration periods at the beginning of the day are effective in

ensuring that pupils are given time to discuss any concerns they may have before they begin their learning tasks.

The teaching team provides pupils with beneficial opportunities to feel that they belong to their community and the wider world. They provide them with valuable opportunities to take part in community activities, such as visits to a local residential home to entertain the elderly, for example. They also provide pupils with purposeful experiences to take part in competitions and performances. For example, the school choir visits the Swansea Festival occasionally and pupils compete in the Urdd eisteddfod annually. The school provides pupils with opportunities for them to develop their understanding of the importance of being conscientious and sensitive citizens. For example, staff encourage the oldest pupils to provide the youngest pupils with practical support during lunchtime.

The teaching team develops pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, cultural and social issues successfully within group sessions and in their theme work. For example, they give pupils in Years 4 and 5 an opportunity to reflect on values such as kindness after listening to the story of the 'Lion and the Mouse'. These important principles link well to the school's motto: "*Gwnewch y pethau bychain*" ("Take care of the small things"). Religion, values and ethics sessions engage the interest and curiosity of nearly all pupils well. Pupils are given regular opportunities to learn about and compare the customs of festivals such as Christmas, Diwali and Hannukah. This develops their understanding of a range of religions effectively.

Teachers increase pupils' awareness and understanding of issues relating to diversity and equality highly effectively. For example, they provide valuable opportunities for pupils to study the history of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. This helps them to understand the rights of others and promotes healthy attitudes towards celebrating diversity.

Through themes and educational visits, the teaching team develops pupils' understanding of Welsh identity, heritage and culture well. For example, staff plan valuable opportunities for them to visit historical locations, including Castell Henllys and the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea, and teach them about Welsh authors such as T. Llew Jones. However, opportunities that are provided for them to learn about the historical and cultural wealth of Bonymaen are limited.

Staff encourage pupils to contribute to various committees which provide them with regular opportunities to make important decisions that influence the school's work. For example, the eco committee has established the practice of recycling batteries and the healthy school committee has established a sticker campaign to encourage pupils to eat healthily.

The school's arrangements for monitoring attendance and punctuality are robust and have led to an increase in rates recently. Staff contact parents promptly to discuss any concerns they have in relation to punctuality or absence and use the local authority's attendance and welfare officer effectively, when necessary.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. This is based on its motto, 'Take care of the small things', which were some of St David's last words. She conveys this vision successfully to staff, pupils and parents by encouraging them to be committed to fostering qualities that will enrich their lives. She promotes values such as honesty, tolerance, fairness, respect, loyalty, perseverance and trust well. As a result, the school is a homely, familial and Welsh learning community for the area's children.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the rest of the teaching team work closely together as a team. They demonstrate high professional values and conduct which ensure that the school values learning and is a safe and homely haven for pupils. They foster a strong culture of safeguarding and monitor pupils' well-being and progress appropriately. Leaders manage the performance of members of the teaching team regularly to acknowledge their professional achievements and encourage them to improve any specific agreed areas that are in need of improvement.

The school has self-evaluation procedures which are, overall, appropriate and members of the teaching team, governors, pupils and parents contribute to them. These procedures are based on a range of sources of first-hand evidence. Although they provide a fairly accurate picture of the school's strengths, these procedures are not always incisive enough to enable leaders to identify exactly the specific aspects that need improving. However, the school's current priorities and procedures for improvement are generally suitable and are beginning to have a positive effect on provision, standards, and pupils' progress.

Leaders provide staff with a range of suitable professional learning activities. These are usually based on national and local priorities, along with their specific needs. These activities focus appropriately on maintaining and improving pupils' progress and well-being. The main focus recently has been on ensuring pupils' well-being and improving their literacy and numeracy. Leaders monitor the effect of professional learning activities on provision, teaching and, eventually, on pupils' progress and well-being.

Governors ensure that they provide a sensible balance of support and challenge to leaders. They visit the school regularly to hold discussions with staff and to learn about provision and standards. As a result, they have an appropriate understanding of the school's main strengths and areas for improvement. This supports them to contribute in an informed manner to specific discussions to set strategic priorities for the school and to fulfil their statutory roles. They manage the school's funding prudently. This includes the pupil development grant, which is used sensibly to promote learning and reduce the impact of poverty on pupils' educational attainment. They ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

The productive relationship between the school and parents ensures that they have effective communication processes to enable them to raise any issues that may affect their children's learning and well-being. The school has a highly effective partnership with Cylch Meithrin Meini Bach, which is located in one of the foundation learning classes. The co-operation between the school and the Cylch ensures that

children settle quickly on entry to the school and that there is effective progression in teaching and learning. The school also has productive links with other local schools. They work together effectively to develop different elements of the curriculum and to ensure that transition arrangements enable pupils to transfer smoothly to the secondary sector when the time comes.

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