



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gynradd Cynfran  
Dolwen Road  
Llysfaen  
Colwyn Bay  
Conwy  
LL29 8SS**

**Date of inspection: January 2018**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Gynradd Cynfran

Ysgol Gynradd Cynfran is in the village of Llysfaen on the outskirts of Colwyn Bay in Conwy local authority.

There are 180 full-time pupils on roll and a further 26 pupils attend the part-time nursery class either in the morning or the afternoon.

Around 18% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is close to the national average of 19%. The school identifies around 22% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is around the national average of 21%. Nearly all pupils are white British. A very few pupils speak Welsh at home, and English is the home language for most pupils.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2013 and the school was last inspected by Estyn in December 2010.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.  
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

## Summary

Ysgol Gynradd Cynfran has a caring and supportive ethos and a strong focus on developing pupils' skills. Most pupils develop their literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills effectively. They use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment confidently to support their learning. There are well-developed systems for supporting pupils with additional learning needs, and most of these pupils make appropriate progress in intervention groups. However, a few pupils in the school do not behave well enough. This means that too many pupils do not progress as well as they could in lessons.

There is a strong focus on personal and social education. Staff support pupils sensitively to learn fairness and respect, and about healthy lifestyles. Teachers work together well, track pupils' progress carefully and plan effectively to develop their skills in different contexts. School leaders work well in partnership with parents and carers, other schools and the local authority. However, leadership roles and responsibilities are not defined clearly enough to ensure that all aspects of school life are well managed.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Define roles and responsibilities clearly so that leaders understand and fulfil their roles effectively
- R2 Ensure that planning for improvement focuses purposefully on outcomes for pupils
- R3 Improve pupils' behaviour and engagement in their learning
- R4 Provide regular and meaningful opportunities for pupils to practise and embed their skills independently in the foundation phase indoors and outside
- R5 Address the safeguarding and wellbeing issues raised during the inspection

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

Many pupils make good progress in developing literacy, numeracy, ICT and Welsh skills from a starting point at or below the average for their age and stage of development. However, occasionally, pupils' progress in lessons is restricted. This is because they lose interest in the task, because the pace is too slow or because the activities do not match pupils' learning needs well enough. Although in general, more able pupils make good progress overall, their rate of progress is inconsistent because they are not always challenged sufficiently. Most pupils receiving additional support for basic skills make at least appropriate progress from their starting points in developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills.

Most pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well. For example, in nursery and reception, many pupils begin to follow instructions successfully, answer questions during group time confidently and enjoy joining in singing simple songs. However, they do not practise and develop their speech well enough independently. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils communicate with increasing confidence. They retell the story of the 'Enormous Crocodile' enthusiastically, speak clearly and use ordering words correctly, such as 'first' and 'then'. Most pupils build on these skills successfully in key stage 2 and communicate effectively for a variety of purposes, such as when they give their opinions about the work of the school council. However, a very few pupils do not always listen carefully enough in lessons.

By the end of key stage 2, many pupils develop into confident readers and use their phonic skills well. In nursery and reception, nearly all pupils enjoy stories and many begin to identify letters and simple words. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 read work they have written themselves confidently. By the end of key stage 2, many give their opinions about different types of texts, and talk about characters and plot with interest. They read fluently and with good expression.

Most pupils develop their writing skills effectively in the foundation phase. They form most letters correctly and present work well. They make steady progress in their use of basic punctuation, with more able pupils beginning to use speech marks and exclamation marks. By Year 6, most pupils write competently for a variety of purposes. They enjoy writing and their style engages the reader successfully, for example when writing mystery stories. Most pupils understand when to use full stops, commas and speech marks, and their spelling is good. However, a few pupils do not write neatly enough and sometimes make careless errors in their work. For example, they do not use capital letters accurately and they miss-spell frequently used words. Most pupils apply their literacy skills well in work across the curriculum.

In nursery and reception, most pupils make appropriate progress in developing their mathematical skills. By Year 2, most tackle their mathematics work enthusiastically. They develop good number skills and measure accurately in centimetres. They interpret information from simple block graphs successfully and more able pupils have a sound understanding of simple multiplication. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils develop a wide range of mathematical skills well. They use and apply these successfully, for example, to investigate the cost of making different sized

batches of biscuits using a variety of ingredients, They draw and interpret graphs accurately. For example, they use conversion graphs successfully to show miles as kilometres. Overall, they build on their skills progressively. However, occasionally more able pupils do not build on what they already know well enough and less able learners are not able to tackle the tasks set for them sufficiently independently for them to make effective progress.

Across the school, pupils use ICT resources confidently and skilfully. For example, foundation phase pupils use the keyboard competently to write emails. They select the appropriate address and include picture attachments successfully. In key stage 2, most pupils use their ICT skills confidently and to a high level. For example, they create simple games for each other and understand how to use spreadsheets to record data as well as writing blogs regularly in English and in Welsh. Across the school, most pupils understand how to work safely online.

Throughout the school day, most pupils include simple Welsh words and phrases into their daily language, including greetings and asking for snacks. They understand and respond appropriately to instructions given in Welsh. Most pupils write in Welsh regularly for a variety of purposes across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils present simple information about Botswana in Welsh. Most pupils read their work back with suitable understanding, pronunciation and fluency.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement**

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of choosing healthy food and drinks and respond well to encouragement to eat fruit at snack times. They enjoy the fresh air, make the most of opportunities to run around at break times and are enthusiastic about sports activities such as their swimming lessons.

Many pupils behave well in and around the school. They greet visitors courteously and enjoy interacting and working with their peers. Many pupils develop a suitable understanding of right and wrong, manage their emotions appropriately and relate positively towards one another. However, a few pupils do not behave well enough towards staff and other pupils, and do not show a good enough understanding of how to treat one another kindly and with respect.

Many pupils take on simple responsibilities in the school with pride and enthusiasm, such as in their roles as helpwr heddiw and school monitors. They develop their confidence and resilience appropriately and this helps them to develop their sense of belonging to the school community. In school council and eco-committee meetings, pupils take part in helpful discussions about issues such as the United Nations Rights of the Child. However, these groups tend to be led by adults. Not all members are democratically elected and they do not decide who should take on the lead roles or contribute to making any meaningful decisions.

Through the work of the eco-committee, many pupils develop a worthwhile awareness of sustainability, and actively encourage others to conserve water and electricity, and reduce food waste at lunchtimes. Most pupils are developing a suitable understanding of equality and fairness through the school's well-developed personal and social education programme.

Many pupils are eager to learn and they engage well with new ideas and experiences. For example, older pupils talk with excitement about their science experiment to create rain. However, in general, too many pupils become distracted, lose interest in their work and do not behave well enough in lessons. This is often because of the limited opportunities for them to lead their own learning in the foundation phase or to work at a suitable pace across the school. As a result, a minority do not concentrate well enough and they struggle to persevere to complete tasks. Many pupils work purposefully as a whole class or in small groups with support from adults. However, their independent learning skills are less well developed. This means that many pupils tend to rely too much on adults to help them with their work.

Most pupils arrive at school in good time. However, a very few pupils tend to arrive late and this slows the pace of learning at the start of the school day.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement**

Overall, teaching is adequate and in need of improvement. Across the school, teachers and teaching assistants develop effective working relationships with most pupils. They provide good language role models in Welsh and English, which helps pupils develop their communication skills effectively. Most teachers use questioning techniques well to gauge pupils' understanding and help them develop their thinking skills. They use a worthwhile range of strategies to support pupils' personal and social development increasingly effectively. Nearly all teachers focus successfully on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills. However, they do not always plan carefully enough to enable pupils to develop their skills independently and creatively.

In the foundation phase, teachers and teaching assistants lead focused tasks purposefully to help pupils learn new skills and concepts. However, they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to follow their own interests or practise and consolidate their learning by exploring and experimenting freely in a well-planned and resourced learning environment. In key stage 2, teachers are beginning to encourage pupils to try out different strategies for themselves when they have difficulties with their work, but this is at a very early stage of development. In general, pupils do not develop their resilience and independence well enough. The organisation of the timetable means that a few sessions are too long and the pace of learning is not brisk enough. This means that a few pupils become restless and distracted in lessons.

During lessons, many staff encourage pupils by praising their contributions and ideas. In the best instances, they provide meaningful verbal feedback to support pupils' learning as they work, such as by correcting any mis-conceptions. Teachers have a consistent approach to providing appropriate written feedback that helps pupils to understand what they do well, but it does not always help pupils to improve their work. Overall, developing pupils' understanding of how to assess their own work and the work of others is at an early stage of development.

Teachers plan an appropriate range of experiences built around topics that pupils enjoy, such as 'Toys' and 'Space' in the foundation phase and 'Science Fiction' and 'The Arctic' in key stage 2. They consult pupils about what they would like to learn in

these topics, beginning to involve them suitably in their learning. However, learning experiences in lessons do not always stimulate and challenge all pupils well enough to engage them fully. The school provides worthwhile opportunities to enrich pupils' learning experiences through visits to places of interest. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed a recent visit to a nearby National Trust property where they collected materials to make hedgehog homes. In the foundation phase, teachers plan purposefully to develop pupils' skills through regular focused tasks. These include appropriate opportunities to learn actively, such as learning about half and quarter turns using a programmable toy. However, teachers do not plan well enough to develop the full range of pupils' skills effectively through the enhanced and continuous learning provision indoors and outside.

The school has strong systems in place to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills systematically. Planning takes good account of the literacy and numeracy framework and provides a suitable range of experiences to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum. For example, in Year 6, pupils convert imperial measures to metric measure while studying war time rationing. Teachers take good account of pupils' interests to choose the context for developing aspects of their work. For example, boys particularly enjoy writing tasks such as preparing newspaper reports about an alien crash landing on Liverpool football pitch. The school is preparing well to implement the digital competency framework by working in partnership with the local high school, which is a pioneer school. They have developed a detailed range of activities that are embedded effectively into their curriculum. As a result, pupils develop their ICT skills particularly well and have a sound understanding of how to stay safe online.

There is a strong commitment to developing pupils' Welsh language skills. Most teachers use Welsh regularly throughout the school day, for example to greet pupils and give out instructions. They plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their vocabulary and practise their Welsh writing skills across the curriculum. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture of Wales through their topics, although they do not always understand the advantages of learning Welsh and becoming bilingual.

### **Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement**

The school has a rigorous approach to tracking and monitoring pupils' progress, attendance and wellbeing. Teachers collect assessment information regularly and leaders analyse this rigorously to monitor all pupils' progress. This means that teachers can identify pupils' individual needs effectively and provide additional support to improve pupils' basic skills or help more able pupils progress further. The school has a range of useful intervention groups that provide meaningful support, including focused teaching in small groups that benefits pupils' basic literacy skills.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is co-ordinated effectively. The school works closely with a wide range of external agencies, including the speech and language and social inclusion services, to support the challenging needs of individual pupils particularly well. The school participates actively in cluster work led by the nearby secondary school to access relevant training and work towards implementing reforms for pupils with additional learning needs. As part of this work, the school has recently introduced worthwhile one page profiles for pupils with



additional learning needs. Leaders share these effectively with all school staff, including canteen staff, making them aware of individual pupils' emotional, behavioural and learning needs. This helps them to respond appropriately and sensitively to pupils. The approach contributes well to the school's inclusive and purposeful focus on supporting individual pupils' wellbeing. The additional learning needs co-ordinator works closely with the local authority's curriculum inclusion teacher to monitor and assess progress effectively. There are strong systems in place for preparing and reviewing individual plans to meet specific needs.

The school communicates effectively with parents. It shares information regularly through its attractive website, which Year 6 pupils help to maintain. Teachers and leaders encourage parents to share any concerns at an early stage through their 'open door' policy. For example, the headteacher offers a regular 'pop in for a paned' session, which provides a regular point of contact. There are many opportunities for parents to involve themselves in school life. For example, the school invites parents and carers to share school dinners with their children to celebrate special occasions such as Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day. This makes them feel welcome in the school and helps to create a sense of community. There is a useful parental code of conduct policy on the website and the school has recently reviewed its complaints procedure to provide clear guidelines for parents to follow if they need to.

The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about eating healthily and keeping active. For example, with support from a governor, pupils run a fruit tuck shop. Teachers encourage pupils to exercise during break and lunch times as well as before school. There are special initiatives to support this, such as opportunities to bring their bikes and scooters to school on "Mechanical Monday" and "Wheelie Wednesday".

The school has identified the need to improve pupils' behaviour and is working to address this. For example, it encourages pupils to consider what is right and wrong, and how to interact positively with one another through focused teaching in social skills groups and its new approach to collective worship. Through activities such as anti-bullying week, teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe and respect one another. The school has recently provided training for all staff to support them further in meeting the needs of more challenging pupils. However, these initiatives are relatively new and have not yet improved pupils' behaviour notably.

Pupils have regular, worthwhile opportunities to learn about the needs and rights of others through studying topics such as 'water' and learning about different countries and cultures in their lessons. The school's fair trade council organises whole school events and raises money to purchase basic learning tools for children in Malawi. This helps pupils to understand how they can contribute meaningfully to the global community.

There is a strong focus on providing opportunities for pupils to take on a few general responsibilities within the school, and this helps them develop their confidence and self-esteem. However, the school's arrangements to encourage pupils to participate in meaningful decision making at a school level are less well developed.

The school deals efficiently with many aspects of child protection and safeguarding. However, the school's safeguarding procedures do not fully meet requirements and give some cause for concern. This was brought to the attention of the governing body during the inspection.

### **Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement**

The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction for the school, with a strong focus on raising standards and improving provision. Leaders work closely with staff, set high expectations for pupils' learning and promote professional values successfully. Staff at all levels work well together as a close, committed and supportive team. Staff with leadership roles support work on many school priorities purposefully, such as working towards developing an effective approach to behaviour management and moving forward with digital learning in the school. However, not all aspects of their leadership roles and responsibilities are defined clearly enough for leaders to understand fully what is expected of them. This limits progress with important aspects of the school's work, such as establishing good quality foundation phase provision.

Well established partnership working has had a positive impact on many aspects of school life, particularly in supporting children entering school from the local playgroup and ensuring that pupils move confidently to the next stage of their education. Close working with other schools has been particularly effective in developing the provision for ICT. Leaders seek advice readily from advisory officers and act promptly on their recommendations, for example by refining aspects of their assessment procedures. The school addresses national and local priorities well. For example, it ensures that pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills purposefully across the curriculum.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties and support the school well with important matters, such as developing effective policies and procedures to deal with issues, including complaints. They are developing a suitable understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and contribute appropriately to monitoring progress with the school's priorities for improvement.

Leaders act purposefully to secure improvements and this has led particularly to raising standards in Welsh and developing specific aspects of the provision for pupils' wellbeing. The process of self-evaluation is well established. In reviewing aspects of the school's work, leaders seek the views of teaching staff, governors, parents and pupils. The self-evaluation report is concise and evaluative. The school analyses assessment information carefully. Leaders collate a significant amount of first-hand evidence from lesson observations and monitoring pupils' work. However, this is not fully effective in informing the self-evaluation process. As a result, the self-evaluation report does not reflect all areas that the school needs to develop accurately. For example, it does not highlight the shortcomings in foundation phase provision clearly enough.

The school improvement plan is based on a suitable number of main priorities. Most areas for improvement are linked to the outcomes of self-evaluation. The improvement plan is suitably detailed and includes clear timescales, costs and resources. However, the school does not always identify the most appropriate

actions to help them move forward. Success criteria in the plan are not linked sufficiently well to pupils' standards and this limits the school's ability to monitor progress rigorously.

Leaders ensure that the professional development of staff is given a high priority and all staff engage regularly in training opportunities. This is particularly effective in developing the school's approach to digital learning and its support for pupils with additional learning needs. The school has well-established links with other schools and colleges that provide worthwhile opportunities for professional development, such as close working with the local university to support access to the graduate training programme for teaching assistants. Teachers' performance management targets support school improvement priorities successfully, but they do not provide sufficient support for teachers' personal development.

The headteacher and governors manage the budget rigorously. They allocate resources to improvement priorities effectively. The school uses its specific grants efficiently to support pupils eligible for free school meals appropriately. Leaders make good use of the experience and expertise of teaching and support staff. This is particularly evident in the strong provision for teaching Welsh and highly effective support for pupils with individual needs. Inside the building, good quality displays celebrate pupils' achievements and provide a valuable focus for teaching and learning. In general, the wide range of good quality resources supports the delivery of the curriculum well, particularly for developing pupils' ICT skills. However, resources in foundation phase classrooms are not organised well enough to support pupils' independent learning. Teachers use the extensive outdoor areas, including a forest area, adventure play section and a wildlife area appropriately to support pupils' physical development and provide interesting contexts for their learning. All foundation phase classes have access to an outdoor area, but, these are not planned well enough to support independent learning or pupils' skills development effectively.

## 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))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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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Publication date: 26/03/2018