



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Tal-y-Bont
Ffordd Conwy
Tal Y Bont
Conwy
LL32 8QF**

Date of inspection: November 2017

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Tal-y-Bont

Ysgol Gynradd Tal-y-Bont is situated in the village of Tal-y-Bont, Conwy. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 26 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 3 part-time nursery age pupils. Pupils are divided into two mixed-age classes.

Approximately 3% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is much lower than the national percentage of 21%. A minority of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and there are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 22% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is similar to the national percentage.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2015 and the school was last inspected in July 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

Many pupils make sound progress in their learning during their time at the school. On the whole, their literacy and numeracy skills are developing appropriately, but aspects of their reading, communication and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are in need of improvement. Pupils are well behaved and show positive attitudes towards learning, and make valuable contributions to class activities.

The school is a caring and inclusive community that encourages its pupils to treat others with a high level of respect and tolerance. Staff work successfully with parents and provide a good range of rich extra-curricular activities that support learning successfully.

In a short period of time, leaders have ensured obvious improvements in terms of provision, standards and leadership. They share a purposeful vision for the school successfully, which supports an increasing culture of continuous improvement.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve provision in order to ensure that pupils develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills successfully in their work across the curriculum
- R2 Ensure that planning and teaching challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

On entry to the school, many pupils' basic skills correspond to what is expected, considering their linguistic background. Many make sound progress in their learning and foster appropriate independent learning skills. Pupils with additional learning needs make effective progress from their starting points.

In the foundation phase, most pupils listen attentively to adults and their peers, and make appropriate progress in their oral skills. Many develop an increasing range of vocabulary appropriately and use it suitably to communicate. However, they are not always confident enough to use the Welsh language to discuss their work with adults or to talk to peers in the classroom. In key stage 2, many pupils develop oral skills suitably in both languages. They convey themselves appropriately, although the accuracy of their language is not always polished enough.

Most pupils' reading skills in the foundation phase are developing well. They pronounce words correctly and use a variety of strategies when reading unfamiliar words. By the end of the phase, most develop as robust readers who read with accuracy and fluency. In key stage 2, many read intelligently and with increasing fluency. They gather information from different texts successfully and are able to discuss the content of their books fairly effectively. However, a minority of pupils do not read completely fluently and confidently in Welsh.

In the foundation phase, most pupils write a range of simple sentences fairly independently, and show a sound awareness of syntax and spell a majority of common words correctly. By Year 2, they punctuate correctly and write in a suitable range of topics for different audiences fairly correctly. A few pupils are beginning to use more challenging words to create effect, for example when using adjectives to describe the porridge's journey from their stories about the magic pot.

In key stage 2, many pupils build on their writing skills with increasing confidence in both languages. They write appropriately in a variety of forms and are able to organise their work successfully by using paragraphs and correct punctuation. Many pupils adapt the style and structure for different texts suitably, for example when creating a newspaper article based on the story of the 'Pied Piper' and when re-telling Welsh folk stories. They are beginning to use adjectives and similes suitably to enrich their written work. Most pupils are now developing their handwriting appropriately and show pride in the presentation of their work. However, many pupils do not have a firm grasp of spelling patterns and grammar, which hinders the quality of their work at times.

Most pupils in the foundation phase make appropriate progress in their numeracy skills and use them suitably in different contexts in the classroom. By Year 2, most develop a sound understanding of work on measurement, money, time and handling data, for example when recording data about their favourite fruits. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills to solve practical problems.

In key stage 2, many pupils have a sound understanding of number strategies. They are beginning to use their skills appropriately to solve everyday problems in their mathematics skills, and organise data successfully to record the results of scientific experiments, for example when creating a graph to show the results of weighing objects when researching the properties of rocks. The oldest pupils are beginning to apply their skills appropriately in order to solve challenging problems, for example when measuring the distance and travel time to Beddgelert. However, pupils are not given regular enough opportunities to use their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Pupils' ICT skills are developing well in the foundation phase. Most develop a range of skills very successfully to present information in various forms, including word processing and creating pictures to show the lifecycle of a frog.

In key stage 2, most pupils use their ICT skills appropriately to support their work in other subjects. They record and convey information suitably by using a word processor and apps, for example to create simple e-books for foundation phase pupils. However, as there are few opportunities for them to apply their skills in other areas, pupils do not build on their ICT skills in an effective and structured enough manner across key stage 2.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy attending the school each day and appreciate the additional opportunities that are available to them, for example the after-school gardening and cooking clubs. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and know whom to approach if anything is worrying them. Nearly all pupils treat their peers with respect and care, and they behave very well in lessons and around the school. The oldest pupils show particular care towards the youngest pupils on the playground and in the foundation phase's outdoor area. Nearly all pupils are very proud of their school and treat all staff and visitors with respect.

Most pupils show a positive attitude towards their work and have valuable ideas about what they would like to learn within the term's theme. They work well together in learning activities and persevere well with their tasks. They work well individually and in groups, and show pride in their work. Many pupils in key stage 2 talk about their work fairly confidently and show a sound understanding of the content. However, many pupils in the foundation phase do not have the confidence to discuss their work with visitors. However, many pupils across the school are aware of their personal targets and explain what they need to do to develop their work further.

Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and its effect on the body. They enjoy attending the cooking club in order to learn how to prepare healthy foods. Sports ambassadors undertake their work successfully and organise various playtime activities for all of the school's pupils. Nearly all pupils are happy with the opportunities to take part in sports, and many take advantage of opportunities to join after-school sports clubs. This has a positive effect on their personal and social skills, in addition to developing their confidence and fitness successfully. Nearly all pupils have sound knowledge of the rules of online safety.

Pupils are beginning to contribute appropriately to the work of the different committees that are available to them within the school. They are very proud of their role within the school council and the eco council. Although they are active in raising money for different charities, they have had little effect to date on the school's strategic decisions, and members of the school council are not wholly clear about their responsibilities within the committee. Most pupils develop as moral and knowledgeable citizens through their increasing awareness of cultures and beliefs around the world. They have a sound understanding of the wider world and how they can contribute towards helping others, for example by learning about the effect of fair trade on communities in other countries.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Across the school, there is an effective working relationship between staff and pupils, which supports learning robustly. Teachers provide an interesting and balanced curriculum that stimulates most pupils' interest and enthusiasm in learning. In general, teachers use a variety of suitable learning methods that encourage pupils to foster their independent learning skills appropriately. The use of beneficial success criteria for a range of different activities supports this robustly. However, tasks do not always challenge pupils, particularly those who are more able, effectively enough and there are very few opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy and ICT skills in other areas of the curriculum. The use of support staff to support learning on the classroom floor is not always effective enough. On the whole, the quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement.

In the foundation phase, pupils are given a range of beneficial and stimulating experiences that comply with the basic principles and nurture pupils' independence appropriately. The learning environment both inside and outside the classroom encourages pupils to investigate and use their knowledge and skills across areas of learning successfully; for example, stimulating activities in the 'wet area' reinforce language and numeracy skills robustly. However, expectations for nurturing and developing pupils' language are not always high enough. As a result, pupils are not given regular opportunities to use and practice Welsh in the classroom.

In general, pupils in key stage 2 are given beneficial opportunities to build on their knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts. Purposeful planning now ensures that pupils develop their literacy skills soundly through a range of themes and activities that build on previous learning effectively. This is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' outcomes. Purposeful presentations stimulate pupils and encourage them to begin to take responsibility for their own learning. By using effective questioning and referring to what pupils already know, staff extend their understanding and promote their thinking skills appropriately.

Teachers make purposeful use of a range of assessment for learning procedures across the school. As a result of the small numbers within the classes, teachers provide pupils with valuable and regular oral feedback. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers, which strengthens their ability to know how to improve their work more independently. In general, teachers' written feedback refers appropriately to what pupils do well and what needs to be improved. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to act on the feedback in order to improve specific elements of their work.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Teachers track pupils' progress effectively. They use this information purposefully in order to provide support for individuals and groups of pupils successfully. As a result, they provide them with specific support and guidance quickly. Individual education plans for pupils with additional learning needs are purposeful and useful. However, a few personal targets for pupils are not specific enough and staff do not always consider the effect of interventions on pupils' achievement effectively enough. The school works successfully with a variety of other agencies to provide staff with specialist support and guidance.

A strong feature of the school's work is the strong relationship between parents and staff. Parents receive regular information about their children's achievement, in addition to their personal targets and attendance, through beneficial parents' evenings. The school also provides valuable and regular information for parents and carers through the website and social media.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development well by providing valuable opportunities to reflect and share their experiences in daily assemblies. Staff provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to join different clubs and to shoulder responsibilities for aspects of school life. A good example of this is the use of sports ambassadors, who arrange various activities for pupils during break time. The school has appropriate arrangements for eating and drinking healthily. Extra-curricular clubs, such as the cooking club and gardening club, promote the importance of eating and drinking healthily and keeping fit successfully. The use of visitors and different agencies ensures that pupils receive a range of useful information about issues relating to wellbeing and safeguarding. For example, a police officer visits the school regularly to teach pupils about how to stay safe on the internet.

A range of visits and activities are organised in order to develop pupils' awareness of Welsh history and culture, for example by visiting Conwy food festival, local historical buildings and taking part in Urdd activities. They are given valuable opportunities to develop their creative and artistic skills through a variety of beneficial activities. The school makes effective use of staff expertise in order to enrich the creative element through specific clubs and activities. For example, the learning assistant holds art lessons regularly for pupils in key stage 2, in addition to appropriate extra-curricular clubs.

The friendly and familial ethos within the school promotes a rich culture of respect, equality and fairness. This is reinforced through purposeful experiences, which include studies of other beliefs and cultures. The strong emphasis on providing equal opportunities for all pupils is an important part of the school's life and work. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to shoulder responsibilities and influence school life. However, the school council and eco council's arrangements and activities are not embedded fully in the school's life and work.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

In the short time since being appointed, the headteacher has worked successfully with the school's staff and governors to improve provision, standards and leadership across the school. She has succeeded in sharing a clear vision that is based on ensuring the best quality education for all children in line with their age, ability and interests. The school's staff work together robustly as a team and meet regularly to discuss provision, outcomes and pupils' wellbeing. They show a strong commitment to developing and promoting further improvements by implementing a number of purposeful strategies, such as improving pupils' writing skills.

The headteacher has worked effectively with the governing body in order to establish sound quality assurance procedures. As a result, clear progress can be seen in provision and outcomes across the school since she took up the post. Governors now have a sound understanding of the school's performance in comparison with similar schools, in addition to progress against the priorities for improvement. They receive beneficial information from the headteacher about the school's life and work, which reinforces this well. Members of the sub-committees are beginning to contribute appropriately to guiding the school's strategic direction by taking part in regular monitoring activities; for example, they conduct purposeful visits to scrutinise books and talk to pupils and staff. Over a period of instability in terms of staffing changes, members of the governing body have fulfilled their role as critical friends fairly effectively.

In general, the self-evaluation document is purposeful and provides an honest and accurate picture of the school. There is a close link between the self-evaluation report's outcomes and the priorities in the school development plan. This plan focuses firmly on improving standards and identifies staff responsibilities clearly. It includes sensible timescales and appropriate criteria to measure their effectiveness. Over the last two years, leaders have prioritised sensibly by placing a strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills.

The school has an appropriate number of qualified staff to deliver the curriculum. In general, leaders take appropriate advantage of staff expertise. For example, the learning assistant supports pupils' creative development successfully by teaching art regularly across the school. However, leaders do not always make the best use of staff in order to support groups of pupils on the classroom floor. There are effective performance management arrangements in place for staff, which set suitable objectives to develop teachers' skills further, and are based on the priorities in the development plan. As a result, staff are given appropriate opportunities to develop professionally in line with their own needs and those of the school.

The headteacher and governors manage expenditure effectively. Good use is made of the pupil development grant to improve provision for developing the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils who are eligible to receive it.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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

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