



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

A report on
Ysgol Yr Esgob
Lon-yr-ysgol
Caerwys
Mold
Flintshire
CH7 5AD

Date of inspection: February 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Yr Esgob

Ysgol Yr Esgob Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled Primary School is in Caerwys in Flintshire. There are 56 pupils on roll, between the ages of three and eleven years, including four part-time nursery pupils. The school has three mixed-age classes.

Around 11% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is lower than the Wales average of 19%. The school identifies that around 13% of pupils have additional learning needs. This figure is well below the Wales average of 21%. Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity and no pupils speak Welsh at home.

The school's most recent inspection took place in May 2011. The headteacher took up post in September 2012.

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

Most pupils at Ysgol Yr Esgob have outstanding levels of wellbeing and positive attitudes to learning. They are aware of their rights and responsibilities and have a very strong influence over matters that affect them both within the school and in the local community. This develops their self-esteem and confidence effectively and enables most pupils to make good progress over time in most areas of learning. Provision for the care support and guidance of pupils is outstanding. A carefully planned range of activities meets the needs of nearly all learners particularly well, helping them to be successful and enjoy all aspects of school life. The overall quality of teaching is good and provision to develop pupils' skills is effective. The headteacher has high expectations, provides exceptional leadership and works well with the school community to implement a highly effective vision for improvement. Consequently, school improvement processes have a positive impact on improving outcomes for pupils and ensuring their very high levels of wellbeing. A strong culture of teamwork enables staff to thrive within the school environment.

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

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that all pupils in the foundation phase have regular access to the full range of foundation phase learning experiences

R2 Share best practice more effectively across the school

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 the impact of its provision to develop pupils' self-esteem, confidence and voice on the life and work of the school, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils start school with skills slightly above those expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well by the end of key stage 2. Pupils with additional learning needs make very good progress from their individual starting points.

On entry, most pupils have good speaking skills. They talk confidently about their work, such as when explaining the features of castles. Most Year 2 and Year 3 pupils speak clearly, for example to describe things that are special to them. Most key stage 2 pupils listen respectfully to others. They speak confidently and use a good range of vocabulary. For example, they describe the importance of local features such as 'Bell House' when presenting their own version of the 'Caerwys Chronicles'.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop well as readers. They handle books confidently and have a secure understanding of the features of non-fiction and fiction books. They use a good range of strategies to decode words and correct themselves when they misread words. Pupils that are more able read fluently with good levels of expression and comprehension. In key stage 2, most pupils apply their reading skills well in lessons and use strategies such as skimming and scanning to identify key information from a text successfully.

Most pupils develop and apply their writing skills well as they move through the school. By Year 2, most pupils spell common words correctly and make sensible attempts at spelling words that are more challenging. They present their work neatly and use basic punctuation such as capital letters and full stops accurately. They apply their writing skills well in their topic work, for example to write information leaflets. In key stage 2, most pupils produce extended pieces of work for a broad range of purposes. They plan their writing well and re-draft their work appropriately, for example to improve vocabulary choices. They write equally well in English lessons and in topic work, for example when writing a balanced argument about the pros and cons of having a wind farm in the locality.

Across the school but particularly in key stage 2, standards of mathematics show notable recent improvement. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils develop a sound understanding of place value. They work confidently with number and use their mathematical and numerical skills successfully in their topic work. For example, pupils work out the costs for the Mad Hatter's tea party and measure distances on a map accurately using standard units of measure. By the end of key stage 2, most have good number skills and apply these well at standards that match their individual ability. They combine number operations effectively to solve multi-step problems. For example, pupils use their understanding of percentages successfully to calculate the profit a farmer might make from sales.

In the foundation phase, pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing well. Many use ICT for a suitable range of purposes, for example to produce graphs about their favourite attractions in Llandudno. By the end

of key stage 2, many have excellent ICT skills. They apply these skills consistently at school and when doing homework to support their learning across the curriculum. For example, pupils write codes to sequence the way that lights flash on a police car, create and interrogate databases about Fairtrade chocolate and present diaries as video logs through the medium of Welsh.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning Welsh. In the foundation phase, they participate enthusiastically in songs and respond well to questions, for example to identify different numbers in Welsh. In key stage 2, most pupils make strong progress in developing their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. They have a broad range of vocabulary and pronounce words well. They use the language confidently within Welsh sessions, for example when arranging to play 'pêl droed yn y parc' (football in the park) or when explaining what they have done over the weekend. Many use a suitable range of sentence patterns in the present, past and future tenses. They write with suitable levels of independence, for example to create dialogues and descriptive pieces about themselves and read these pieces of work fluently.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners who enjoy their time in school. They participate fully in lessons, sustain concentration purposefully and persevere well when they find tasks challenging. They make strong progress in learning to work with purpose and resilience. For example, foundation phase pupils show determination to succeed when building a chimney for a big bad wolf.

Pupils develop their independent learning skills successfully, particularly when they work on challenges in the foundation phase and undertake research related to their work about mountains in key stage 2. Pupils have a sound understanding of how well they have achieved in lessons through their regular involvement in self-assessment. Key stage 2 pupils talk knowledgeably about how the marking of their work helps them to develop their skills. Many use homework very successfully to support their learning.

The high standard of behaviour ensures a calm, purposeful environment. Nearly all pupils respect the views of others, work well as part of a group or with a partner, and enjoy sharing their thoughts and ideas with visitors.

Pupils contribute enthusiastically to their own learning. For example, foundation phase pupils participate in a weekly session to suggest ideas to include in the planning of challenges and present very sensible suggestions as to how these activities can support their topic work. Key stage 2 pupils submit their interesting ideas for science investigations through the digital platform. This gives them a particularly strong influence over what and how they learn and supports very high levels of engagement and participation in learning.

Nearly all pupils have a well-developed awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They understand how to stay safe, including when they use the internet. They know whom to approach if they are upset or have concerns. Most pupils take the opportunity to be physically active, for example when completing the daily mile and when engaging in enjoyable activities using equipment from the play shed. Many attend after school clubs that support a healthy lifestyle including netball, football and multi-skills for foundation phase pupils.

Pupils have an exceptionally strong voice in the school, particularly through their involvement in the school council, eco committee and in their roles as digital leaders. Pupils from all groups take their responsibilities very seriously and contribute highly effectively to the life of the school. The school council keeps other pupils fully informed of its work through presentations in assembly and class council meetings. It undertakes an extensive range of activities. For example, it has been involved in learning walks to look at the standard of Welsh and the different ways that pupils learn. The school council regularly uses discussion and questionnaires to seek the views of other pupils. It uses the information effectively to make improvements in the school. For example, following the introduction of play sheds, it sought views on the equipment available. It suggested that some equipment was removed and other, more popular items added. Current work involves the council in seeking the views of pupils on the new maths scheme. The recently established 'Cryw Cymraeg' has a positive impact on the amount Welsh spoken in lessons and around the school.

Key stage 2 pupils have an exceptionally well-developed awareness of fairness, equality and children's rights. They talk knowledgeably about the link between rights and responsibilities. Members of the school council have used the work on children's rights to update the behaviour policy and school rules.

As pupils move through the school, they develop an exceptionally clear understanding of the importance of supporting their community and the welfare of others. For example, key stage 2 pupils have recently written letters to support the town council governor in her bid for more play equipment for the village. They compose very well considered, balanced arguments for and against the proposed building of a windfarm on local land and they use a range of sources of evidence to compile an information leaflet for visitors to the local church. Pupils regularly raise considerable funds by participating in numerous charity events such as a sponsored walk, a Fairtrade coffee morning and selling items they have made in the local shop.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. All teachers set high expectations and challenge pupils of all abilities to achieve well and become confident learners. Teachers and support staff establish productive working relationships with pupils and there is a positive climate for learning across all classes. They use a suitable range of techniques to maintain pupils' interest, for example by regularly encouraging pupils to discuss aspects of their work in pairs and groups. Teachers ensure that nearly all lessons move at a brisk pace. They share clear objectives for their lessons with pupils to provide a clear focus for learning. Adults question pupils effectively to extend their learning and provide them with useful feedback during lessons. Teachers' written comments are specific, show pupils what they have done well and make suitable suggestions for improvement. Occasionally, adults lead the learning too much. In these instances, this limits pupils' opportunities to explain their answers or to make choices about how and what they learn.

The school provides a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Teachers provide pupils with interesting contexts for learning through a well-planned series of topics and themes. For example, pupils learn about 'Knights and Castles' in Year 2 and the local history of Caerwys in key stage 2. These themes engage pupils well and motivate them to learn successfully. Within these topics, teachers plan successfully to incorporate the requirements of the

literacy and numeracy framework, ensuring that pupils have opportunities to apply their skills to a good standard in a valuable range of contexts. For example, pupils receive opportunities to record and interpret data using a variety of charts and graphs in their science and topic work. The school makes excellent provision to develop pupils ICT skills in key stage 2. This is evident in the opportunities pupils receive to use their digital skills to support, extend and present their learning across all areas of the curriculum. Staff offer a wide range of extra-curricular clubs including mad science, gardening and digital leaders. These develop pupils' skills and interests in a range of areas. An extensive range of interventions and support programmes meet the needs of individual pupils very well.

In the foundation phase, teachers plan an exciting range of activities to develop pupils' skills in both the indoor and outdoor areas such as the 'Forest School'. A noteworthy example is when they investigate how to 'save a little bit of winter' by insulating ice with various natural materials. Teachers have a good understanding of foundation phase pedagogy and overall, work well in accordance with these principles. For example, there is an appropriate balance between adult led activities and opportunities for independent pupil led work. However, a minority of foundation phase pupils do not always have regular access to the full range of foundation phase experiences. Occasionally, this limits their opportunities to learn independently.

In key stage 2, teachers provide valuable contexts for pupils to develop and apply their skills in real life situations. A valuable range of enrichment opportunities captures pupils' imagination successfully. For example, pupils enjoy and learn from visits to 'The Roman Experience' in Chester, and local castles. Regular visitors from the community also support the curriculum well. For example, pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically about a presentation they received on the history of chocolate.

Provision for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills is good. Teachers ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to speak, read and write in the Welsh language. The school successfully develops positive attitudes to learning Welsh amongst its pupils. For example, many pupils are extremely enthusiastic when presenting their Welsh language work through a digital learning platform. Most teachers and teaching assistants are good language role models. Teachers promote pupils' understanding of the culture, history and geography of Wales well. For example, they organise informative residential visits to Cardiff and plan topic work about Snowdonia.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school provides a highly supportive, caring environment where all pupils are valued and treated with respect. Arrangements to track pupils' progress are exemplary. The school uses this information particularly well to plan its provision. This enables nearly all pupils to achieve well.

Staff are effective in identifying pupils' additional learning needs at a very early stage. They use an extensive range of systems to support pupils and ensure that additional support is highly flexible and matched very closely to each pupil's needs. Staff work closely with a wide range of specialist agencies and undertake extensive training to enable them to provide outstanding support for learners. This effective provision ensures that pupils make very strong progress against their targets, with only a very few continuing to need additional support into key stage 2.

The school supports pupils' emotional development very successfully. This ensures that pupils have high levels of self-esteem and are ready to take full advantage of educational opportunities. These include regular opportunities to celebrate their achievements in weekly assemblies and the use of 'VIP of the week', when selected pupils bring in items that are important to them to show the others. In addition, the school uses many highly specialised programmes such as a counselling service and nurture time to support individuals.

The school has a strong partnership with parents. Highly effective communication through weekly newsletters and the school website provides parents with valuable information about developments and events and enables them to support their child at home. For example, teachers regularly invite parents into school to find out about their child's topics and approaches to teaching ICT, reading and mathematics. A group of parents and grandparents attend and benefit from weekly sessions to support them in learning Welsh while others provide valuable support to the school by working in its garden. Leaders work closely with parents to ensure high levels of pupils' attendance at school.

The school has the appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Staff encourage pupils to drink water throughout the day and to make healthy choices at snack and lunchtime. Staff ensure regular opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of sporting activities including many in the wider community, such as netball matches, tag rugby and girls' football. All pupils receive beneficial food hygiene workshops.

Staff ensure that pupils make strong progress in developing their personal, moral and social skills particularly through participating in specific events such as anti-bullying week and safer internet day. The school makes strong provision to help pupils understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens. For example, key stage 2 pupils participate in a successful project to challenge stereotyping.

Staff plan extensive opportunities to develop pupils' cultural awareness. For example, residential visits for key stage 2 pupils that include drama and weaving. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their own creative skills by working with local artists and producing work in the style of Kandinsky, for example. The school uses the creative arts successfully to improve pupils' standards in oracy and writing. For example, key stage 2 pupils use drama workshops to improve their narrative writing. Staff provide pupils with regular opportunities to be involved in performances both in school and for the wider community. All pupils take part in the high-quality Christmas production, which improves their confidence and self-esteem.

The inclusive and supportive ethos of the school, together with many aspects of the curriculum, provides pupils with extensive opportunities to develop their understanding of moral issues. These include developing a clear understanding of fair play, the importance of honesty and aspects of equality. Staff support pupils' spiritual development well through the whole school ethos and the inclusion of reflection time in each daily whole school assembly.

Staff support pupils well both academically and emotionally, to ensure their successful transfer to high school. The arrangements include pupil involvement in a structured programme to develop strong friendships. A joint residential visit with

Year 6 pupils from two nearby small schools enables pupils to extend their friendship group prior to transition.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher provides highly effective strategic leadership and sets exceptionally high expectations for the school's work. She works successfully with pupils, parents, staff and governors to develop a positive culture and team ethos. Together, the school community implements a highly effective vision for continuous school improvement. Over time, this has transformed the school from an underperforming organisation into a vibrant learning community. As a result, most pupils achieve good standards in their work and demonstrate excellent levels of wellbeing.

The school's self-evaluation processes are robust and comprehensive. They include a suitable range of activities such as lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils work. All staff, governors and pupils contribute effectively to self-evaluation activities. For example, pupils evaluate the impact of a recently introduced approach to teaching mathematics and governors monitor performance data rigorously to check that pupils make the progress they should. These processes ensure that key stakeholders have a strong understanding of the schools strengths and areas for improvement. The school uses information from self-evaluation activities successfully to identify the most important priorities for improvement, such as raising pupils' standards in mathematics.

School improvement processes are exemplary. Leaders develop and implement improvement plans containing challenging targets and a comprehensive range of actions to secure improvements. These include high quality professional learning experiences for staff. For example, a suite of highly specialised training courses for teaching assistants lead to early intervention and very high quality provision for pupils who require additional support. Staff at all levels have a notable impact on improving the school's provision, for example leadership of ICT ensures highly effective provision in key stage 2 and leadership of the 'Forest School' provision enables pupils to receive valuable learning experiences outdoors. Leadership to raise standards of pupils use of the Welsh language is successful. This effective distribution of leadership responsibilities enables the school to make consistently successful progress against key improvement goals. However, although the school has the expertise within the staff, leaders do not always take full advantage of opportunities to share best practice across all classes. This leads to variability in the quality of a very few aspects of provision.

Senior leaders challenge any instances of underperformance appropriately and use performance management processes well to support school improvement. The school uses its resources well. It deploys teachers and teaching assistants effectively to raise standards, for example to improve standards of writing in key stage 2. Leaders use available funds wisely. They allocate suitable funding for school improvement priorities. Leaders secure efficiency savings. For example, they work collaboratively with other schools to reduce the costs of resources and training for staff. The school uses grant funding from the pupil development grant appropriately to support disadvantaged learners to improve their skills.

Governors make a highly effective contribution to the life and work of the school. They use their skills particularly well to support and challenge the school, for example to evaluate provision for pupils' health and wellbeing. Governors visit the school regularly to gather pupils' views and to monitor the quality of leadership and provision. For example, governors conduct learning walks with pupils who are digital leaders to evaluate progress in raising standards of ICT. In particular, governors show a very strong understanding of pupil progress information. They use this knowledge effectively to challenge the school to improve outcomes for pupils.

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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