



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

A report on

**Ysgol y Wern
Llangrannog Road
Llanishen
Cardiff
CF14 5BL**

Date of inspection: January 2018

by

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

About Ysgol y Wern

Ysgol y Wern is situated in the area of Llanishen in the north of Cardiff. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 601 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 79 part-time nursery children.

Over a period of three years, slightly over 5% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national percentage of 19%. Twenty eight per cent (28%) of pupils speak Welsh at home and very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 21% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, but very few have a statement of special educational needs. The percentage of pupils with additional learning needs corresponds with the national percentage.

The headteacher was appointed to the post permanently in April 2002 and the school was last inspected in November 2009.

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

The headteacher's confident and robust leadership, in addition to her high expectations, has set a very strong strategic direction for the school. The headteacher has a clear vision that is based on providing wide-ranging experiences of a very high standard for all pupils. This enables them to achieve to the best of their ability in broad areas within a caring, supportive and Welsh environment. Importance is placed on respect and courtesy between pupils, and between children and adults.

Teachers and support staff realise the headteacher's vision successfully. They plan and deliver innovative and creative activities for pupils, and encourage them to improve their work continuously and aim for personal excellence. The activities that are provided give pupils excellent opportunities to integrate a range of skills completely naturally in real-life situations. As a result, nearly all pupils take pride in their school, enjoy attending each day, persevere with their tasks and make excellent progress during their time at the school.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that the improvement plan and written evaluations reflect the rigour and incisiveness of the procedures, and identify clearly their effect on pupils' high standards
- R2 Ensure that continuous provision at the top of the foundation phase always challenges pupils to make as much progress as they do in focus tasks

What happens next

The school will produce 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 its method of planning innovative learning experiences for pupils in key stage 2, based on real-life contexts and which encompass a range of skills, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

As a result of their linguistic background, most pupils have fairly low Welsh communication skills on entry to the school. A minority start with mathematical skills that are higher or close to those that are expected. During their time at the school, nearly all pupils make excellent progress in their oral, listening, reading, writing and numeracy skills. They apply these, in addition to their thinking skills and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, extremely successfully in a range of different creative and integrated activities. Pupils with additional learning needs make excellent progress against their targets.

In the foundation phase, pupils in the nursery class begin to speak Welsh at an early stage, considering their age and linguistic background. A minority speak in full sentences and discuss confidently, for example which animals need to live in water in a zoo. Many recognise numbers and count confidently how many legs the animals in the small world have.

By the end of the foundation phase, nearly all pupils have made excellent progress in their use of the Welsh language. They talk maturely about different topics, read clearly and correctly, and write extremely interesting extended pieces. Particular examples include a description of their favourite toy, a portrayal of Barti Ddu, and their creative work in producing e-books based on a visit from a local artist. Most punctuate confidently and complete editing tasks correctly in printed pieces.

Nearly all pupils develop their mathematics skills successfully and understand concepts such as place value, measure and shape. They use them confidently in a range of creative contexts, such as discovering symmetry in nature and printing patterns of symmetrical leaves on material following a learning session in the woods.

Nearly all pupils develop their ICT skills with increasing confidence across the foundation phase and use them sensibly to help them with their tasks. For example, pupils in Year 2 film each other reading a news bulletin to warn the public about a ferocious wolf that is roaming the streets.

As a result of innovative provision that is provided for pupils in key stage 2, nearly all pupils make excellent progress in all of their skills, including all aspects of literacy in Welsh and English. At the bottom of this key stage, most respond enthusiastically to an exciting prompt that is presented to them. For example, as a result of evidence that an alien has landed on the school grounds, pupils in Year 3 study an English newspaper article that records the event. They understand the purpose of the headline, the body of the story, and the importance of including quotes from eyewitnesses. They understand the concept of fake news and the importance of weighing up the reliability of what they read in newspapers.

As their confidence develops, pupils apply all aspects of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills extremely skilfully across the curriculum by following various integrated projects that are based on real-life experiences. This is a particularly good feature of pupils' success at this school. A notable example of an integrated project at the top

of the school includes a study on weather and climate. Pupils collect data daily from the school's weather station, before interpreting it and presenting it to their peers in the form of a bulletin by using green screen technology. In follow-up tasks on the climate, they use their translanguaging and writing skills skilfully to gather information in one language and use it in the other to create a debate on a theme such as: "Cardiff has had a harsher winter than Gwynedd this year – discuss". Pupils use their oral skills very maturely to present an argument, before e-mailing pupils at a school in Gwynedd to continue the debate with others remotely.

Older pupils use their enterprise skills successfully. For example, they have produced a compact disc of songs, "Lleisiau'r Wern", to generate a profit for the school. They create and use spreadsheets confidently, write a letter to parents to market the compact disc and design an attractive cover. Another particular example of older pupils applying their skills skilfully is when planning a bus journey for tourists around Cardiff, and visiting particular places of their choosing. This means timing the journey, researching places of interest, calculating the cost of the journey and marketing it by using their literacy and ICT skills.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils take pride in their school and are proud to be a part of its community. They feel completely safe at the school and enjoy their learning experiences greatly. Standards of wellbeing and nearly all pupils' attitudes towards learning are exceptionally positive. This contributes very successfully to their educational development, in addition to most pupils' academic ambition.

Nearly all pupils are proud of their Welshness and the fact that they speak Welsh. Most use the Welsh language regularly with their peers and understand the advantage of using it in their daily lives. In addition to being proud of being pupils at Ysgol y Wern, they also realise that they are members of the multicultural community of the city of Cardiff and the wider world.

Nearly all pupils are extremely polite and treat each other and adults with a high level of respect. They greet each other, staff and visitors in a very friendly, natural and amiable manner. This is an excellent feature of the pupils' delightful attitude. It reflects the school's rich values successfully, and makes a significant contribution to the caring and homely ethos that permeates all aspects of its work.

Nearly all pupils treat each other and others with a very high level of care in lessons and during informal times. A good example of this is the particular way in which older pupils care for their younger peers during break time. Not only do they ensure that their younger peers are happy during break time, they also show them how to play successfully. Pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and are very aware of which foods they should eat. They take advantage of rich and varied experiences to keep fit regularly by taking part in physical activities during break time and after-school clubs. This contributes very well to developing their fitness and social skills.

One of the school's strengths is the mature way in which all pupils express their opinion on what they learn, which includes choosing themes. A notable example of this is the natural way in which older pupils have contributed towards guiding their

own learning to correspond with their interest in the history of the Second World War. Nearly all pupils have a rich awareness of their personal ability and how they can develop and improve their skills. They often choose the level of challenge that they wish to pursue in specific tasks and explain the reasons for doing so. Pupils of all abilities evaluate their efforts and improve their work with increasing independence following measured, effective and timely feedback by their teachers or peers.

Many pupils take positive advantage of the opportunity to contribute to the wide and purposeful range of children's committees within the school under the guidance of its parliament. They respond very positively to opportunities they are given to undertake leadership roles within the school and contribute very productively to its life and work. They shoulder responsibilities maturely, consider others' views sensibly and act for the benefit of their peers. This prepares them well to become conscientious citizens.

Nearly all pupils have a sound awareness of the importance of rules and values, such as the United Nations' Rights of the Child. This reflects all of the school's values and encourages pupils to reflect and be thankful for what they have, and to realise that not all children are as fortunate as they are.

The school's attendance rates are consistently high and place the school regularly in the top 25% in comparison with similar schools. This is an exceptional feature and reflects the fact that pupils enjoy attending the school.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

The quality of teaching is excellent. All teachers engage nearly all pupils' interest in all learning sessions and spark their imagination skilfully and completely naturally by using a creative and innovative way of planning the curriculum. Teachers consider pupils' ideas to plan a wide range of extremely rich projects, which are based on real-life experiences. These learning experiences enable pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding extremely successfully across the curriculum and in an integrated manner. For example, teachers at the top of the school plan interesting, high quality challenges based on a visual clip of an interview with a member of the community about the great snow in 1947. This stimulates pupils to write a diary that is full of empathy and sympathy.

A particular feature of teaching is the exceptionally effective working relationship between pupils and staff. This reflects the respect and commitment towards continuous improvement among pupils and staff. All teachers have very high expectations of pupils and themselves, and they use a wide range of stimulating resources imaginatively to challenge all groups of pupils.

The school makes particularly effective use of relevant digital programs that stimulate pupils to learn in a contemporary way. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use geographical programs to observe extreme weather in New York. This enables them to weave a range of communication, numeracy and technological skills into their work completely naturally.

Rich opportunities to promote the Welsh language and Welshness are a completely core and natural part of all of the school's work. The local community is used inventively to develop pupils as independent, confident and ambitious learners, and

provides them with a wide range of innovative experiences that are based on the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales. A notable example of this is the detailed analysis that pupils made of the city's recent census to identify its various cultures. Pupils of all abilities create recipes from different cultures and cook food under the guidance of a famous Welsh chef. This develops their research, numeracy and creative skills extremely successfully.

Across the foundation phase, there is a good balance between tasks that are led by adults and others that are initiated by pupils. Very good consideration is given to pupils' views, which leads to perseverance and a high level of commitment. For example, Year 2 pupils initiated the project to work with a local artist to produce e-books to read at home with their parents. Forest school activities also provide rich and different opportunities for them to develop a range of skills outdoors, such as preparing food for the birds during the winter months and looking for symmetry in nature.

Teachers place a clear emphasis on nurturing pupils' independence from an early age by encouraging them to investigate, experiment and make independent decisions about what they would like to learn. Provision in the early years of the foundation phase, to enable pupils to apply their key skills within activities in the continuous and enhanced areas, is an exceptional feature. However, this practice is less consistent in Years 1 and 2. Planned challenges are not always ambitious enough to enable pupils to practice their skills to the same very high level as they do within some focus tasks.

Teachers provide pupils with stimulating and timely oral feedback, which enables them to improve their learning very successfully. They ask probing questions, which encourage pupils to extend their responses and deepen their understanding successfully. Teachers model rich oral and written language, and convey very high expectations by showing and discussing valuable examples.

Teachers encourage pupils to set their own success criteria, which are coherent, specific and provide them with a very high level of challenge. Teachers' concise and purposeful written comments support pupils' learning extremely successfully. Pupils respond sensibly to these comments by improving key parts of the work. Teachers provide useful opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers by promoting very effective discussions in pairs. As a result, nearly all pupils set their own personal targets successfully and independently, in line with their age and ability.

Teachers assess accurately and analyse outcomes effectively to guide their weekly plans, which are manageable and sustainable.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is a happy, active and inclusive community. The amiable way in which the staff model respect and courtesy is an excellent feature, and creates a caring and homely feeling that is reflected in the pupils' excellent behaviour. Staff promote pupils' awareness of the school's values very successfully. This practice is at the heart of their work and contributes effectively towards developing pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social skills very successfully. It enriches teaching and ensures

that pupils are happy in their work and persevere with their tasks. This nurtures independent learners who enjoy opportunities to think strategically about their work and aim to achieve to the best of their ability. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The school has manageable schemes of work that ensure that pupils develop a very sound awareness of Welsh culture and traditions, in addition to other countries. This focus is at the heart of the school's vision and has a very positive influence on nearly all pupils' sound understanding of their heritage in comparison with others. Teachers plan opportunities for them to understand the similarities and differences between themselves and others, and ensure that they understand the importance of not being prejudiced. For example, pupils in Year 4 appreciate the courage of Rosa Parkes as she fought for fairness in the United States of America during the sixties.

The school has robust and effective arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking, and staff encourage pupils to take part in the very wide range of exercise and sports activities that are provided for them regularly. As a result, nearly all pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and many use their knowledge of this to try to have a positive influence on the habits of family members.

Teachers use local companies, musicians and artists to stimulate interesting projects that are based on pupils' real lives. The extremely rich provision of musical and creative activities enriches pupils' experiences exceptionally successfully. These contribute extensively towards nurturing their self-confidence, expressive skills and their ability to work well together as a team. These include choral activities, action songs and the school orchestra, among many others.

Teachers and staff respond intelligently to individuals' needs to ensure that nearly all pupils achieve to the best of their ability. The school has very robust progress-tracking procedures to enable staff to respond quickly to the needs of pupils of all abilities. The additional learning needs co-ordinator fulfils her role very skilfully, shares her expertise and supports the rest of the staff very successfully, particularly newly qualified teachers. As a result, nearly all pupils with additional learning needs make excellent progress towards their targets.

Staff always encourage good behaviour among pupils and have extremely robust and fair procedures for dealing with any incidents, where they occur. The school conducts particular sessions for parents to raise their awareness of the procedures that are used to encourage good behaviour. As a result, cases of genuine misbehaviour among pupils are an exception.

The school makes very effective use of the positive links with a range of specialist external agencies. For example, training was arranged on the restorative approach to enable staff to solve any issues relating to negative attitudes among pupils, and to help them deal with any emotional challenges or detrimental behaviour.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher's confident and robust leadership, in addition to her exceptionally high expectations, have set a very strong strategic direction for the school, particularly as pupil numbers have increased significantly over recent years. She has

a clear vision that is based on ensuring the best possible provision for all pupils. This enables them to achieve to the best of their ability in a caring, supportive and Welsh environment. The headteacher is innovative in undertaking projects and initiatives that are advantageous to pupils, while being confident enough to dismiss any outside pressure to take part in activities that are not beneficial to them. She promotes innovation continuously, and is fully committed to being a Lead Creative School, which shares good practice with other schools. This permeates naturally throughout all of the school's work and incorporates the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales skilfully and naturally.

The headteacher is supported skilfully by her deputy and other members of the senior management team. Jointly, they share the school's vision very successfully with all stakeholders. This reinforces the strong ethos of teamwork that exists in all aspects of the school's life. Leaders share responsibilities sensibly among the staff and encourage them to make decisions and lead specific areas. Regular meetings are held to discuss pupils' progress, which ensures that all teachers are accountable for the quality of provision and standards that are achieved in their classes. As a result, leaders identify their pupils' needs, and this leads to excellent standards and wellbeing across the school.

The headteacher's visible and regular presence around the school enables her to observe in detail what happens in each class, identify any important issues and act on them immediately. As a result, leaders have a thorough and up-to-date understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Information about provision and standards is shared effectively with the governors through reports and presentations from staff and pupils. Progress towards achieving the school's priorities is discussed, in addition to any other key activities. This enables governors to understand the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and to hold leaders to account for its performance, where necessary.

Monitoring procedures are very effective, include other leaders from among the staff, and place a clear focus on specific aspects of the priorities for improvement. This contributes successfully towards maintaining and improving the excellent teaching further. Leaders provide valuable opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice and any targets that derive from the monitoring procedure.

There is a clear link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation procedures and the improvement plans. The school identifies the correct areas for improvement and has a strong record of driving improvement and developing the school as a successful learning hub. For example, work to incorporate the restorative approach in their work has enabled staff to nurture pupils to control their emotions and behaviour very maturely. Although procedures for self-evaluation and planning for improvement are comprehensive and very successful, the improvement plan and written evaluations do not always reflect their rigour or incisiveness, or their extremely influential effect on pupils' high standards.

An excellent feature of the leadership is the rich opportunities that are allocated for staff to develop professionally. The assessment for learning project with a network of other schools provides manageable and exciting opportunities for staff to research and reflect on the effect of using different assessment techniques with pupils. They

cascade this information very successfully to the rest of the staff to ensure understanding and consistency in provision. As a result, from a very young age, pupils know how to move their learning to the next step.

Leaders prioritise the school's funding shrewdly against priorities for improvement. They make effective use of the pupil development grant, for example when ensuring that pupils who are eligible for free school meals receive the same experiences as others, for example when attending residential visits and musical instrument lessons.

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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