



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

A report on

**Ysgol Botwnnog
Botwnnog
Llŷn
Gwynedd
LL53 8PY**

Date of inspection: October 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Botwnnog

Ysgol Botwnnog is a bilingual school for pupils aged 11 to 16, which is maintained by Gwynedd local authority. The school is situated in the village of Botwnnog and serves a wide, rural area on the Llŷn Peninsula. It is an area that is designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty and its main industries are agriculture and tourism. There are 446 pupils on roll, compared with 419 at the time of the previous inspection in January 2014.

Eight point two per cent (8.2%) of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is significantly lower than the all-Wales average for secondary schools of 16.4%. Twelve point seven per cent (12.7%) of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is lower than the national percentage of 22.5%. One point three per cent (1.3%) of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is lower than the national figure of 2.2%.

Three quarters of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. However, 98% of pupils are fluent in Welsh, and Welsh is the main medium of teaching.

Very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and no pupils receive support to learn English as an additional language.

The headteacher was appointed in April 2015. In addition to the headteacher, the senior management team includes one deputy headteacher, who began in post in September 2019.

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 Botwnnog is a caring and close-knit community that plays a key part in its local community. Robust leadership has ensured a strong sense of pride and belonging among the school's pupils and staff. It has also led to high standards of wellbeing and high quality teaching.

Nearly all pupils behave excellently and many make valuable contributions to the school and the area through extra-curricular and charitable activities. Pupils' attitudes to learning are a notable strength. They are polite and courteous, and respect the contributions of their peers and teachers during lessons. Pupils have mature and polished social skills. During their time at the school, many pupils make sound progress in terms of their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Providing care and support of the highest quality and a rich range of learning experiences are at the heart of the school's work. Pupils benefit from comprehensive support, robust teaching and a variety of valuable experiences that broaden their horizons and make an important contribution to their Welsh identity.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Raise the expectations of teachers in a few instances to raise the standards of the most able pupils.
- R2 Improve the standard of pupils' skills, particularly their written expression and higher-order reading skills
- R3 Address the financial deficit

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite Ysgol Botwnnog to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the school's provision for wellbeing, care, support and guidance, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, many pupils make sound progress in their lessons and external examinations. They recall previous knowledge efficiently and apply their skills effectively.

Pupils' oral skills are a strength. Nearly all pupils listen attentively and respectfully to each other and their teachers. Many pupils speak articulately and confidently in Welsh. They use rich dialect and lively, idiomatic Welsh. Many are keen to contribute to class discussions, for example when studying and evaluating the work of John Piper in art and discussing the significance of the themes in the poem 'Walker's Wood' in Welsh lessons. Many use subject terminology skilfully when discussing complex subjects, such as gravity, wind resistance and terminal velocity. However, a few provide limited verbal responses and a few are reticent and unwilling to contribute to discussions.

Many read confidently in order to locate facts and gather information. They analyse literary and factual texts successfully, such as analysing sources about 'Merched Beca' (Rebecca's Daughters) and Owain Glyndŵr in history. A majority interpret and analyse literary texts sensitively. They use appropriate technical vocabulary and include purposeful quotes. A minority do so skilfully and show a mature and astute understanding of texts, such as when they compare love poems in their English lessons.

Many pupils write effectively and at length in various genres and for different purposes. They have rich and polished vocabulary and robust syntax, for example when describing their local area in the summer and winter: "The view from Llangwnadl is alluring when looking at the sea and the mountains in the distance. But during a storm, the ferocious breakers splash against the rocks." A minority of pupils produce very striking written work, for example when appreciating and comparing two contrasting pieces of music, such as a pop song and a classical piece, and when writing an original myth explaining the origins of the name of a place of interest on the Llŷn Peninsula. Careless spelling and grammatical errors litter the work of a minority of pupils. These pupils do not take enough responsibility to correct their work and ensuring that it is of the highest quality.

Many pupils have strong number skills and are able to apply them to various situations across the curriculum. For example, in science, they have the confidence to work with numbers in standard form when considering the diameter of stars, planets and galaxies and see the link between these numbers. Many pupils are able to draw graphs correctly and come to sensible conclusions, for example when looking at the relationship between the temperature of liquid and the time it takes for a substance to dissolve. A few pupils are uncertain with elementary number skills.

Many pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately to research and present information in a range of subjects across the curriculum. A minority use their advanced ICT skills skilfully, for example when discussing complex formulae in spreadsheets in mathematics and using composition software to create background music with a particular mood for a film.

A majority of pupils develop their thinking skills effectively across the subjects. For example, in mathematics, they succeed in thinking and seeing the link between algebra and surd work when removing brackets or when discussing the demographic transition model in geography. However, a minority of pupils do not develop their independent thinking skills effectively enough due to a lack of opportunities in lessons to reason and deepen their understanding of new concepts.

Pupils' creative thinking skills are an excellent feature. They display their creativity across a wide range of activities within their lessons, for example, when preparing a prototype for their practical projects in technology and when creating sketches emulating the style of Peter Prendergast. Many pupils develop their physical skills effectively during physical education lessons and in popular sports clubs, for example when planning, practising and performing a 'tumble' in the gymnasium and adapting exercises on circuit stations in order to meet fitness targets.

Over the period from 2016 – 2018, pupils' performance at the end of key stage 4 has been varied. Overall, pupils make sound progress.

At the end of Year 11, nearly all pupils remain in education, training or employment.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Ysgol Botwnnog is a caring, close-knit and Welsh community in which all individuals are important. An excellent feature of this school is that nearly all pupils are welcoming and treat each other and adults with respect. They show mature and exceptional social skills.

Nearly all pupils behave excellently in lessons and around the school. Most feel safe at school and know who to approach if they need support. Nearly all pupils feel that the school deals effectively with any rare cases of bullying. They are polite and courteous and respect the contributions of their peers and teachers in lessons. They also have excellent social skills and are warm, civilised and friendly pupils.

Nearly all pupils' positive attitudes to learning is an exceptional feature. Nearly all arrive at their lessons punctually, settle quickly and turn to their work immediately. Most pupils stay on task throughout the lessons. All can be seen to be working effectively in pairs and groups and interact with each other maturely and sensibly, for example when discussing the causes and reasons for homelessness in English lessons.

Nearly all pupils show pride in the presentation of their work. Many respond intelligently to their teachers' targets in order to move learning forward, for example when re-drafting extended writing tasks in French. Most show obvious curiosity in their lessons. They take a genuine interest in their work and show perseverance and resilience when facing challenging work. Nearly all work confidently in a variety of ways, and many solve problems successfully when working in pairs, when they are given valuable opportunities to do so in lessons.

Many pupils have a sound understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise, and many participate in regular physical activities, for example in team sports, basketball and badminton.

Many pupils are prominent in undertaking leadership roles and responsibilities within the school and the wider community. For example, older pupils coach the younger pupils in various sports, and pupils of all ages conduct lively 'nosweithiau llawen' (social evenings) in the community. The school council is hard-working and is a purposeful voice for pupils. Many pupils develop as ethical individuals through various opportunities to raise money for charities, in particular the valuable activities that are organised annually by Year 11 pupils, in which thousands of pounds are raised.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Nearly all teachers succeed in forging suitable and supportive working relationships with their pupils. This creates a positive and stimulating environment for learning. Most teachers know their pupils very well. They succeed in managing pupils' behaviour without difficulty, and robust humour is a valuable feature of the relationship between them.

Many teachers have sound and up-to-date subject knowledge and, in the best cases, they use this knowledge skilfully to explain subject content and concepts clearly. They use rich and idiomatic language which has a positive effect on pupils' oral skills. They use a range of methods and resources that engage pupils' interest effectively. They plan tasks that build beneficially on each other and lead to sound progress. In music lessons, for example, pupils are given opportunities to practice the skill of arranging 'cerdd dant' by setting words and composing a counter melody.

An excellent feature of teachers' work is the way in which they develop the Welsh skills of latecomers to the school. Many teachers have an effective bilingual teaching methodology and use English discreetly to include pupils who are less confident in Welsh in the lesson fully. This means that nearly all pupils make sound progress in terms of their confidence to use the Welsh language.

In a minority of lessons, teaching has excellent features. Teachers have infectious enthusiasm towards their subjects, and teaching is inspiring. These teachers succeed in increasing the level of challenge skilfully and deepen pupils' understanding in small steps. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning greatly and make significant progress from their starting points. However, in a few lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough, particularly in terms of the most able pupils. Activities do not challenge pupils enough and they do not make the expected progress.

Many teachers ask questions that stimulate pupils to develop their responses and motivate them to come to their own conclusions, for example when trying to discover the implied meanings in literary works, such as in Welsh lessons when discussing the key themes in the poem 'Walker's Wood' by Myrddin ap Dafydd. These teachers are not satisfied with the first answer and they try to ensure that pupils justify their answers. However, a few teachers do not check pupils' understanding enough as lessons proceed. As a result, a few pupils do not have a sound grasp of key concepts.

Many teachers provide useful written feedback, which is based on clear success criteria and provides pupils with firm steps for improvement. In the best cases, this

feedback encourages pupils to reflect on, and improve, their work. However, in a few cases, comments are too superficial and teachers do not ensure that pupils improve their work. A few teachers do not give enough attention to correcting spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors consistently enough and, as a result, pupils repeat the same mistakes.

One of the school's strengths is the stimulating and purposeful curriculum which provides very positive experiences for pupils. An attractive variety of academic and occupational courses meets pupils' interests and abilities effectively; for example, there are agricultural and digital media courses. The school responds flexibly to pupils' aspirations when considering the courses that are provided. This means that pupils commit enthusiastically to the opportunities that are provided. The school works effectively with a local college and other providers in order to broaden the options for pupils in key stage 4.

The school organises an attractive programme of experiences that enrich the curriculum, for example cultural visits, enterprise activities, debating competitions and a story narration competition, 'Gwobr y Cyfarwydd'.

There are valuable extra-curricular opportunities to extend the experiences of the most able pupils, such as a science competition and mathematics masterclasses that are organised by the local university. There is also excellent provision for more vulnerable pupils, whereby a period of work experience is organised in a local restaurant, and through effective co-operation with the National Trust.

Departments plan interesting and creative learning programmes that cover the school's local area, in the first instance, before turning to Wales and further afield. This contributes towards creating ethical and informed citizens of Wales and the world. For example, in Welsh lessons, they explain the origins of place names in the Llŷn Peninsula in the context of Welsh mythology. The school has valuable arrangements to promote the area's culture through activities such as clog dancing workshops, contributing to the community newspaper, eisteddfodau and 'nosweithiau llawen'. This has a very positive effect on pupils' commitment to, and interest in, their work.

The school works beneficially with its partner primary schools to ensure support for pupils as they transition to the secondary school. However, provision for purposeful planning to develop pupils' skills as they transition from primary school to secondary school is limited.

The school has a comprehensive programme of purposeful interventions in order to support pupils who have weak skills to reach their personal targets. The school groups pupils effectively in order to ensure suitable provision and support.

The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across the curriculum. Provision to develop numeracy is sound in the relevant subjects. However, provision to develop pupils' literacy skills in subjects other than Welsh and English does not ensure that they extend their higher-order reading skills and writing skills sufficiently. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their basic ICT skills, including the use of desktop publishing and collecting and analysing data to create graphs. There are a few rich opportunities to develop advanced ICT skills,

including the use of complex formulae and computer-aided design. However, on the whole, the school does not have a strategic enough overview of skills development across the curriculum.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

An exceptional feature of Ysgol Botwnnog is the way in which everyone who is part of this close-knit, caring community is committed fully to supporting all pupils to develop as well-rounded citizens. This basic aim leads to supportive, comprehensive provision of the highest quality for all.

The school has rigorous and consistent systems to track pupils' progress and behaviour. By working effectively with parents and the welfare officer, attendance rates are consistently high. An exceptionally effective tool that helps leaders to raise pupils' standards of achievement is the procedure for tracking and monitoring progress. It provides highly detailed and useful information for pupils and teachers. As a result, the school identifies pupils who need support well, and provides support that is tailored personally to individual pupils. By using the information that is available to them and their knowledge of each pupil, the school provides a range of purposeful interventions and support arrangements for pupils. A robust feature is the methods used by many teachers to tailor their lessons for individuals, in order to ensure that pupils make swift progress in their skills and knowledge for external examinations.

The school also provides highly effective support for pupils who suffer with mental health problems and their self-image. Through 'Gweithgor Iechyd Meddwl Botwnnog (GIMBOT)' (Botwnnog Mental Health Working Group), the 'siop siarad' (talking shop), 'Yr Hafan' and 'Y Gymorthfa', vulnerable pupils have specific places that they can go to receive very sensitive and valuable support from staff.

Support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs is a strong feature. Arrangements for identifying these pupils are sound. Comprehensive information is shared appropriately with staff and, as a result, these pupils are supported very well. Suitable and appealing alternative arrangements are made for pupils who are unable to cope with the requirements of the full curriculum.

The school works successfully with a wide range of support agencies to reinforce the support work that takes place in the school. As a result of this specific link with a number of external agencies such as Trac, the school nurse, a youth officer and the school police officer, the school is caring and inclusive.

The school's success in developing pupils' personal attributes can be seen clearly in most pupils' positive attitudes towards their work, their peers and adults. There is successful provision to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is done through school assemblies, guest speakers and a comprehensive personal and social education programme.

The school's arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily are suitable, and the school canteen provides appropriate options. Curriculum subjects, such as physical education, science and food technology contribute suitably to this, and there is a valuable range of sports. The school also works closely with sports clubs across north Wales in order to expand the opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of sports. The school offers an appealing selection of healthy foods.

The school uses a range of successful strategies to communicate effectively with parents. Occasionally, the school provides beneficial meetings to focus on a specific aspect, such as online safety. Parents praise the way in which the school responds promptly and takes effective action in relation to their concerns. Reports for parents on pupils' progress are appropriate.

Pupils undertake their leadership roles effectively and play a full part in the life of the school and the community. For example, pupils organise various activities in order to raise money to contribute towards placing a defibrillator in the village and in the school. The school's personal and social education programme and Welsh Baccalaureate lessons play a key part in developing pupils' exceptional social skills. This provision also prepares them successfully for the world of work and adult life. The school promotes pupils' creativity skilfully by providing opportunities for everyone to contribute in various ways to the school show and the school eisteddfod.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher is a sincere and energetic leader who is well respected within the school community. He has a clear vision to develop individuals who are well-rounded citizens in a caring and Welsh community in which every pupil counts. He is supported strongly by the deputy headteacher, who has the same vision and has had a very positive effect on the school's wellbeing procedures. The management team has high expectations of everyone in the school, and the headteacher's vision is shared successfully with governors, parents, staff and pupils. There is a purposeful ethos of teamwork among the staff. Over the last three years, strong leadership at all levels has led to clear successes in important areas of the school's work. This includes fostering very positive attitudes to work among pupils, improving the quality of teaching and assessment, and sound progress in pupils' standards at the end of key stage 4.

Managers' roles and responsibilities at all levels are defined clearly and distributed fairly, and lines of accountability are clear. Managers understand fully what is expected of them, and they set ambitious targets for themselves and those that they manage. Progress is reviewed against these targets regularly through a beneficial programme of regular meetings, which focus purposefully on the school's priorities for improvement. Discussions in these meetings focus clearly on raising pupils' standards and issues that relate to teaching and learning. They lead to useful actions that are monitored appropriately in subsequent meetings. The school works closely with other schools and colleges to enrich the school's provision and pupils' experiences.

A healthy culture of joint professional learning is developing within the school. Teachers benefit from a range of valuable activities, such as participating in sessions to share good practice within the school and regionally. A broad programme of internal training courses is provided, which responds meaningfully to school and departmental priorities for improvement. Based on training to develop pupils' oral and thinking skills, the Welsh department makes very effective use of talking partners in its lessons. In the school, for example, teachers are given beneficial opportunities

to work in pairs in order to share and enrich their experience of teaching. Based on these activities, teachers' confidence in experimenting with new teaching methods has been very successful. However, there are not firm enough arrangements to monitor the effect of training on improving the quality of teaching.

The school's performance management arrangements are appropriate, and training is provided that responds suitably to individual teachers' targets. These arrangements have a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing, the standards that they achieve and the quality of teaching within the school.

The school has an effective governing body with a sound understanding of its role as a critical friend. Members of the body provide the school with enthusiastic support, but are also willing to challenge, where necessary. They have a full understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement, and they play a leading role in the school's improvement processes.

The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are effective. Over the last three years, the effect of these improvement processes is clear, in order to ensure that, on the whole, pupils make sound progress in terms of their knowledge, understanding and skills. Internal and external data is analysed very thoroughly by managers at all levels. They identify strengths to be shared, in addition to areas for improvement. The school has a calendar of useful quality assurance activities. Beneficial use is made of the information that is gathered from these activities, which include lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and seeking the views of parents, pupils and staff. As a result, many managers have a sound understanding of strengths and areas for improvement, and there are purposeful plans to address them at school and departmental level. However, a few middle leaders have not been as effective in improving the quality of teaching in order to raise standards. The school's self-evaluation processes also do not focus enough on evaluating the standard of pupils' skills or the quality of teaching according to its effect. In a few areas, such as planning skills development, the school does not have a strategic enough overview.

The headteacher and governors manage resources and expenditure carefully. Provision is monitored in detail in order to ensure the best possible value for money, and there is a close link between the school's priorities for improvement and financial decisions. Over the last three years, the school has succeeded in raising and maintaining standards in many aspects of school life, while reducing the size of the deficit significantly. The school currently has a small financial deficit, which is licensed by the local education authority. The school uses grants beneficially to support provision for the school's most vulnerable 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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