



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Ffordd Dyffryn  
Ffordd Dyffryn  
Llandudno  
Conwy  
LL30 2LZ**

**Date of inspection: January 2019**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Ffordd Dyffryn

Ysgol Ffordd Dyffryn is in Llandudno in Conwy local authority. The school serves the neighbouring area, but a few pupils come from other areas of the town. It provides education for 176 pupils from three to eleven years old, including 18 nursery children who attend in the afternoon only.

The three year average for pupils eligible for free school meals is around 44%. This figure is significantly higher than the Welsh average of 19%. The school has identified about 23% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is close to the average of 21% for primary schools in Wales.

The school hosts an on-site foundation phase resource base for pupils from across the local authority with social and emotional difficulties and a key stage 2 resource base for pupils across the county with autistic spectrum disorder. The home language of nearly all pupils is English.

The school's last inspection was in October 2012. The headteacher has been in post since September 2014.

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

This school cares passionately about the wellbeing of all pupils, and the inclusive nature of the school permeates all aspects of its work. All pupils feel valued, safe and listened to in Ysgol Ffordd Dyffryn. Behaviour is exemplary and there is an exceptionally caring and inclusive atmosphere that supports pupils' personal and emotional needs very well. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points.

The school benefits from extremely strong leadership. The headteacher has established a clear and robust vision for the school that puts the wellbeing and inclusion of all children at the heart of all that it does. Leaders share this vision successfully across the whole school community. Staff receive regular, relevant training and they all continually strive to improve and develop their leadership skills.

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

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Improve opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R2 Ensure that all teachers use effective assessment for learning strategies consistently well to help pupils to improve their work

## **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 how highly effective leadership enables staff at all levels to have a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and standards for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Over time, most pupils make good progress from their starting points and they achieve good standards in all aspects of their learning. Pupils who have additional learning needs, including those in the resource bases, make strong progress towards their individual targets.

In both key stages, nearly all pupils listen attentively to adults and to each other. They pay attention in class and show respect for each other when discussing their work or listening to one another's viewpoints. Nearly all pupils develop their speaking skills well and they express their opinions confidently and clearly from an early age. For example, pupils in the nursery class predict and discuss what happens to ice in cold and warm water. In the foundation phase, pupils respond appropriately to a range of instructions given in Welsh and ask and answer simple questions confidently. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils sustain a conversation in Welsh with support, extending their answers appropriately.

Nearly all pupils develop good reading skills. Most foundation phase pupils have a good knowledge of letter sounds and a sound understanding of punctuation that helps them to read with appropriate expression. Most key stage 2 pupils build well upon these skills. They read appropriate texts fluently and accurately. They infer meaning from texts and talk enthusiastically about favourite books and authors. Most pupils predict what may happen in a story and justify their thinking with well thought-out reasons. Many Year 6 pupils use dictionaries and thesauruses effectively to expand their vocabulary and improve their written work. Most pupils develop suitable reading skills in Welsh, reading simple texts with good understanding.

Most pupils' early writing skills develop successfully. In the lower foundation phase, many pupils use their phonic knowledge well to write simple and more complex words and sentences effectively. For example, when describing their dinosaur, a few use the word herbivore accurately. By the end of the foundation phase, more able pupils write interesting sentences independently. For example, they describe their Christmas holidays at length, using capital letters and full stops accurately, and using appropriate connectives.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use punctuation accurately and make plausible attempts at spelling more complex unfamiliar words. They write to a high standard across a range of genres and use paragraphs well to demarcate their work. More able pupils produce writing that is lively and engages the interest of the reader well. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils write short paragraphs about their friends in Welsh that contain suitable detail.

Nearly all pupils in both resource bases make good progress in improving their social and communication skills. For example, pupils in the key stage 2 base identify examples of symmetry in a leaf and choose appropriate vocabulary to describe the leaves.

In the lower foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in developing their mathematical skills. By the end of the foundation phase, they work enthusiastically on their tasks inside and outside the classroom. They develop good number skills and use them successfully to collect data, and create and interpret simple graphs, about their friends' favourite sea creature, for instance. They use their mathematical skills well across the curriculum where appropriate, for example when using a ruler to measure material accurately in centimetres to create a model of a boat.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils have a good understanding of the properties of numbers and mathematical concepts suitable for their age. Older pupils occasionally use their numeracy skills across the curriculum, for example when identifying Welsh rivers on a map of Wales or when creating a bar chart to show which bag is the strongest. However, pupils do not always achieve the same high standard in their numeracy tasks in other subjects as in their mathematics lessons.

Nearly all pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. Nursery and reception pupils use a range of applications to support the development of their language, number and fine motor skills. During the foundation phase, pupils begin to learn how to keep themselves safe online through instructions from adults and easy to understand, useful posters. In key stage 2, most pupils use a range of software and ICT equipment effectively to enhance their skills across the curriculum. For example, they use their knowledge of ancient princes to create playing cards using a database. They have a very good understanding of how ICT can support their learning and the importance of online safety.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent**

Pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school is exemplary. Nearly every pupil settles quickly in class and is ready, eager and excited to learn at the beginning of lessons. They sustain concentration successfully when working on individual and group tasks. Pupils from both resource bases share this positive attitude and integrate regularly and purposefully with their mainstream peers. This has an extremely positive effect on everyone's attitude towards inclusion and equality and is a notable strength of the school. Resource base pupils make good progress in expressing their emotions, developing their social skills and managing their own behaviour. This highly positive attitude to learning is the result of all pupils understanding the well-embedded, strong anti-bullying strategies introduced by staff and pupil representatives, along with the highly successful readiness-to-learn programme. Nearly all pupils work equally effectively in pairs, small groups and whole class situations.

Nearly all pupils take part enthusiastically in planning their termly topics. This results in pupils displaying a high level of interest and engagement in their work. They support each other's learning very effectively, such as in Year 4 when using their mathematical and co-operating skills to solve problems involving different challenges with a set of cubes. As a result, many pupils are confident, independent learners who challenge themselves and each other to achieve success.

Nearly all pupils are extremely polite and well-mannered, and interact very positively with their peers and with adults. This contributes to the very strong working relationships that exist between adults and pupils across the school. Nearly all pupils

welcome visitors to the school confidently and respectfully, and are eager to interact and portray their school positively. Nearly all pupils interact exceptionally well together at playtimes and lunchtimes, sharing the available spaces fairly.

Pupils feel safe and secure in school and are confident that staff address any problems promptly and fairly. Nearly all pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep safe online from an early age. For example, even the youngest pupils know that they should not share personal information, such as their passwords, with others.

Over time, pupils take on a highly effective range of leadership roles that successfully develop their leadership skills by being involved in the school's pupil representative groups. For example, increasing numbers of pupils are enjoying a healthier lifestyle by walking and cycling to school as a result of the eco committee's drive to promote these activities. Pupils use Welsh phrases purposefully during break times as a result of the 'Cryw Cymraeg' group encouraging all pupils to speak Welsh as they lead playground games.

Nearly all pupils have a mature understanding of the importance of healthy eating and know what they need to do in order to stay fit and healthy. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school, and have a strong voice in the direction of those groups, for example the gardening club and 'Workout Wednesday'. As a result, nearly all pupils that attend the clubs develop their fitness, confidence, self-esteem and social skills very well.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

All staff have very high expectations of pupils' standards and behaviour. They create a calm and respectful environment for learning. Teaching generally moves at a good pace. All teachers plan activities that engage most pupils well and provide a suitable level of challenge for pupils of all abilities.

Staff in both resource bases ensure that all pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum, with access to mainstream classes when appropriate. This enables these pupils to develop and apply their social, emotional and communication skills well in activities in the classrooms and in the outdoor learning environment. A good example of this is their activities in helping to maintain a community garden.

Many teachers give pupils purposeful oral feedback about how well they are doing during activities and provide useful reminders to keep their learning on track. This helps pupils to complete tasks successfully and to improve aspects of their work as they go along. Teachers use the recently-developed marking scheme consistently well to ensure a whole-school approach to providing quality feedback to pupils that allows them to move forward with their learning. They give clear written guidance on what is good in their pupils' work and what needs improving. Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to assess their own and each other's work. As a result, pupils of all ages talk knowledgeably about, what is good about their work and what needs improving. Teachers ensure that pupils in key stage 2 have a prominent role in deciding on the success criteria for literacy tasks. This heightens their interest in the tasks and engages them well in their learning. However, this is less well developed in other areas of the curriculum.

Nearly all staff use questioning techniques well to encourage pupils to think about and to extend their learning. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for groups of pupils and individuals across the ability range. A notable example of this is the 'Buzz' groups that offer opportunities for more able pupils to extend their understanding of literacy and numeracy through challenging tasks every week. In general, staff are good language models and have a positive impact on the accuracy and standards of pupils' language.

All staff understand the principles of the foundation phase well. They teach new skills, knowledge and understanding effectively and provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn through hands-on experiences. Foundation phase staff provide a well-planned indoor and outdoor learning environment, ensuring that pupils have purposeful opportunities to use the attractive learning environment to practise and develop their skills. For example, pupils build a fire station in the outside area and measure its dimensions in standard or non-standard units, depending on their age and ability.

All teachers plan thoughtful topics, which engage the interests of nearly all pupils. In key stage 2, they provide a curriculum that ensures appropriate coverage of all subjects over time. They plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, digital competency and Welsh skills to a good standard across these subjects. However, the planning and delivery of numeracy skills are less well developed. Teachers adopt a flexible approach to planning that takes good account of pupils' questions and suggestions. Pupils suggest ideas for activities at the beginning of term, and they reflect on their learning and suggest further learning opportunities during weekly reflection time. This means that they develop a strong sense of connection to their classroom activities that aids most pupils to learn productively and enjoy their learning.

The school is beginning to develop a contemporary theme-based curriculum that addresses the four core purposes of the new curriculum well. For example, all classes make use of the sailing boat that the school has acquired in order to stimulate their learning. The theme encompasses all aspects of the curriculum, and pupils talk enthusiastically about their new project.

Teachers ensure that pupils learn about the culture and heritage of Wales meaningfully, for example through the school eisteddfod, studying the works of famous Welsh artists, research on Welsh princes and visits to Glan Llyn and Cardiff. All adults use the Welsh language with the pupils regularly during the school day, which ensures that nearly all pupils have a good understanding and a positive attitude towards the language. They have a good understanding of the benefits of being bilingual and view Welsh as a living, useful language.

### **Care, support and guidance: Excellent**

The school provides an exceptionally caring and inclusive atmosphere in which all staff help pupils to feel safe and secure in their learning environment. Staff treat pupils equally and support their personal and emotional needs very well, which leads very successfully to a well-embedded ethos where all pupils know they are valued and that their contributions make a difference. The school's support and guidance for all pupils promote their wellbeing exceptionally well, and ensure that they have



excellent opportunities to thrive in their academic, social, moral and emotional development. All staff members work conscientiously to support pupils' learning. They are highly effective in implementing and sharing a wide range of appropriate intervention programmes that enable pupils to make very strong and consistent progress. Notable examples are the particularly effective social and emotional support sessions provided by well-trained staff from within the school and from outside agencies.

One of the strengths of the school is its highly effective systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress. Senior leaders, teachers and teaching assistants monitor the progress of all groups of pupils rigorously, including pupils who are more able and those with additional learning needs, both academic and social. The school has devised highly responsive systems to address pupils' needs quickly. Staff use a range of valuable information to set achievable targets for all pupils. They review these targets regularly and, where progress is below that expected, they provide further interventions successfully. As a result, nearly all pupils who receive additional support make good progress.

The school has very strong links with a range of specialist services and outside agencies, such as the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Outreach Service and inclusion teachers to secure additional, timely resources to support pupils with a range of needs. These arrangements ensure that targeted pupils make strong progress in relation to their abilities. Senior leaders engage regularly and purposefully with the local university to use contemporary research methods to influence classroom practice throughout the school. A notable example of this is the work carried out by school staff and researchers during the 'Readiness to Learn Programme'. Analysis of resource base data every half term, shows that nearly all pupils have improved their emotional and social skills over time, reduced unacceptable behaviours, and can focus on their own behaviour in a more positive manner. The school shares its best practice with all staff so that the highly effective strategies influence all learners. The school also shares its good practice in regional consortia conferences, catchment area schools and further afield.

The school has very strong relationships with parents. The school's weekly newsletter provides parents with current and detailed information of the school's activities. The school informs parents extensively about their children's progress. This includes detailed progress reports and regular parents' evenings, as well as offering weekly drop-in sessions, one-to-one behavioural sessions and specific information sessions to help parents to support their children's learning at home. A notable example of this is arranging for the 'Jobs Bus' to visit the school in order for parents to receive practical support on gaining employment. This has a positive impact on pupils' aspirations and parents' abilities to support them better.

The staff offer many useful opportunities to promote pupils' social and moral development through different pupil representative groups. For example, there are active autism ambassadors, anti-bullying teams and ICT ambassadors in the school. These have a very strong impact on pupils' ability to work together and improves their respect for each other's views in an inclusive and caring environment. The school's broad and balanced curriculum, assemblies, and extra-curricular visits support pupils' spiritual and cultural development well. For example, different groups of pupils lead regular celebration assemblies which promote pupils' work and

behaviour, and attitudes to learning, as well as celebrating achievements within and outside of school. The school also provides opportunities for all pupils to perform for parents such as during whole school productions or Harvest and St David's Day services.

The school has effective arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. For example, pupils help to run a tuck shop, which encourages pupils to make healthy decisions around food and drink. Staff provide a wide variety of regular physical activities, including after school clubs that help pupils to become fit and active. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management: Excellent**

The headteacher's skilful leadership has steered a highly effective improvement journey with the wellbeing of all pupils and staff at the heart of the process. She has established a clear ethos for the school, which is communicated successfully to all stakeholders. She is ably supported by a conscientious and committed deputy and a strong senior leadership team. All staff share their high expectations and professional values and, together, they have developed into a highly successful team that promotes and supports the school's inclusive learning culture purposefully. Senior leaders have established useful policies that impact very positively on everyday routines, such as the foundation phase resource base staff's calming room policy. This policy outlines clearly how to use calming strategies with all pupils, and, alongside the highly effective pupil-led anti-bullying policy, has helped to decrease tensions and improve behaviour with a minority of pupils throughout the school.

School leaders make highly effective use of first-hand information, including lesson observations and listening to learners to evaluate current performance. Staff use the school's comprehensive tracking systems diligently to ensure all pupils make good progress. They identify strengths and areas for development accurately to inform improvement planning. Lead teachers for areas of learning work collaboratively with senior leaders to create clear and concise improvement plans that are resourced appropriately and monitored effectively to bring about improvement. For example, developing a creative curriculum focusing on pupils' readiness for learning and the four purposes of the new curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' engagement and self-confidence in learning. Staff in both resource bases make effective use of a range of external specialists and resources to enhance provision for the pupils. For example, working in partnership with staff to implement a block building, technology-based programme successfully improves pupils' ability to work together, communicate more effectively and develop their imaginative and creative skills.

The provision of opportunities for professional learning for staff is an outstanding feature of the school. The headteacher is building the leadership capacity of staff at all levels successfully. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities and highly trained support staff lead a wide range of very effective intervention programmes, such as interventions to aid pupils in understanding and controlling their own emotions, and nurture support. Staff share excellent practice at all levels within the school and also to support teachers and leaders at other schools to improve performance. Effective arrangements are in place for managing staff performance, which is suitably linked to school priorities, relevant training and support.

Staff in both resource bases receive effective training to enhance their knowledge and understanding of how to meet the needs of their pupils. A particular strength is partnership between the resource bases and a local university and special school to identify effective strategies that improve the emotional and social skills of pupils. This supports the pupils effectively to improve their behaviour, engage well with learning and make good progress during their time at the school.

The governing body is very supportive of the school's work. Many are regular visitors to school and have a good understanding of the day-to-day routines and challenges. They have a very secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and use information from a variety of activities, such as learning walks and data analysis, to challenge leaders suitably.

Senior leaders are developing the roles of pupils as leaders successfully. For example, the Criw Cymraeg make a purposeful contribution to promoting the school's Welsh ethos and encouraging the use of Welsh outside the classroom, and school ambassadors have improved the play environment based on the United Nations Rights of the Child to relax and play.

The school focuses very well on national priorities such as the introduction of the digital competency framework and reducing the adverse effect of poverty on pupils' standards and wellbeing. All teachers ensure that curriculum planning encompasses the four purposes and areas of learning and experiences, through creative projects such as the innovative boat project with links to a local sailing club. The headteacher's involvement as an associate on the newly formed National Academy for educational leadership ensures that the school is well informed and acts on current national developments. The clear focus on developing the Welsh language charter is also having a positive effect on pupils' use of the Welsh language in formal and informal situations around the school.

Leaders manage the school budget very well and that ensure the school is appropriately staffed and well-resourced to meet the needs of all learners, including those who attend the two highly effective resource bases. Leaders are also very successful in securing additional funding through grants. For example, the school has received grant funding to further develop the foundation phase outdoor areas and to acquire a mini bus to access learning opportunities off campus for groups of pupils. School leaders also make highly effective use of the pupil development grant to support pupils' progress and wellbeing. Leaders tailor the use of this grant purposefully for the individual needs of pupils, for example, to provide nurture support for vulnerable pupils and to ensure high quality family engagement opportunities. Leaders and staff make very good use of all available space inside and out to support pupils' learning and wellbeing and have created a stimulating learning environment where teachers want to teach and pupils want to learn.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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

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

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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