



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Glantwymyn
Cemmaes Road
Machynlleth
Powys
SY20 8LX**

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by

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

About Ysgol Glantwymyn

Ysgol Glantwymyn is situated in the village of Cemmaes Road, in Montgomeryshire in Powys local authority. There are 63 pupils between 4 and 11 years old on roll. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.

Over a three-year period, less than 1% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals, which is much lower than the Welsh average of 18%. Around 60% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and all pupils are from white British backgrounds. Welsh is the main medium of teaching and learning, and the aim is to ensure that all pupils are fluent in Welsh and English by the end of key stage 2.

The school has identified around 6% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is lower than the national percentage of 21%.

The school was last inspected in October 2014. Since 2014, the school has been part of a formal federation with Ysgol Gynradd Carno and Ysgol Gynradd Llanbryn-mair under one headteacher and one governing body. The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2016.

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 Gynradd Glantwymyn is an extremely diligent, happy and caring community in which nearly all pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils use the Welsh language completely naturally and spontaneously in lessons and during break times. They treat each other very respectfully and older pupils take great care of the younger pupils. Most pupils develop their skills successfully in a range of interesting contexts across the curriculum.

Teachers and support staff are very effective language models. They plan a range of rich and stimulating experiences for pupils. They share expertise within the school and across the schools in the federation skilfully, and monitor improvements in detail.

Leaders know the school very well. Self-evaluation structures are extremely robust and have become embedded, and all staff are included in making decisions about actions. As a result, leaders and staff have very sound ownership of what needs to be done to develop provision further.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that staff provide activities and challenges that respond to the specific needs of all pupils in the foundation phase
- R2 Ensure that progress-tracking procedures are manageable and that teachers use them efficiently to extend learning

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 to be disseminated on Estyn's website on its work in relation to planning for improvement across the federation.

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, most pupils' literacy and mathematical skills are at the expected level for their age. Most pupils make good progress over time.

Pupils' oral skills are a strength across the school. They use the Welsh language naturally in lessons and informal situations. Pupils who are unable to speak Welsh on entry to the school learn the language quickly. Most pupils discuss maturely and express an opinion confidently, for example when explaining how to create a broom for the witch. At the top of the school, most pupils explain their choices concisely and maturely, for example when discussing which material will be the best insulation.

From the outset, the youngest pupils come to recognise letters and read phrases and monosyllabic words confidently. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy discussing books and their preference for different stories, and express their opinions maturely. More confident readers in Years 1 and 2 read extended and challenging texts fluently. By the end of the phase, most read maturely and with good expression.

Most pupils in key stage 2 make sound progress in their reading. Most pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a real interest in their books. They discuss books maturely and express their preference for different authors. Most pupils in Years 5 and 6 gather information confidently. For example, they use a range of sources to share information with the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, about the Blitz in Swansea in 1941.

Pupils begin to write letters and monosyllabic words soon after they start in the reception class. They become increasingly independent in creating words and simple sentences, and use a good range of syntax correctly. By the end of Year 2, most have a sound grasp of punctuation and spelling. They create imaginative pieces, for example when writing a letter from the big bad wolf to mummy pig to apologise for blowing the house down.

Most pupils in key stage 2 write in a full range of forms to a good standard in Welsh and English. Most use adjectives and similes to enrich their work. They correct and re-draft their own work confidently. Most create imaginative pieces, for example when writing an original story about Prince Llywelyn in Years 3 and 4. Many pupils have good translanguaging skills, for example when creating an English portrayal of Blodeuwedd, describing her looks, clothing and personality.

Pupils in the foundation phase have sound mathematical skills. Most have a good understanding of number, shape and data, and develop their skills confidently in different contexts, for example when timing their partner counting spiders. They use co-ordinates confidently and work together successfully when solving problems. Most pupils in Year 2 read the scale on a thermometer successfully and recognise right angles in the school environment.

Most pupils in key stage 2 have sound mathematical skills. They apply their skills successfully, for example when scrutinising the increase in the Welsh population in

Years 3 and 4. By the top of the school, most use units of measurement correctly and in detail, for example when creating an outline of a castle and measuring the area and perimeter, and calculating how many slates will be needed for the roof.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are sound across the school. Foundation phase pupils log in to a learning platform independently, and save and find their work by using a password without fuss. They use word-processing and graphics packages successfully, for example when recreating the story of 'Wwsh ar y brws' (Room on the Broom).

Most pupils in key stage 2 use a good range of hardware and software to support their learning confidently. A notable example of this is the Year 5 and 6 work to use QR codes to show a digital animation about the artist, Kyffin Williams. They make mature choices about the most effective equipment to support their learning.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils behave very well in lessons and during break time. They are extremely polite and respectful towards their peers, staff and visitors. This is characteristic of the familial and supportive relationship that exists across the school community. Most pupils work together very effectively, and older pupils take exceptional care of their younger peers on the playground and when moving around the school. Nearly all pupils feel safe and confident that staff respond promptly to any concerns they may have. Nearly all pupils are proud of their Welsh culture and Welshness, and speak polished language completely naturally with their peers. They understand the advantage and value of being fully bilingual in their everyday lives. Through a rich range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, they participate fully in Welsh culture locally and more widely.

The work of members of the different committees is developing well. Pupil groups give a prominent voice to their peers and enable them to have a positive effect on school life and the wellbeing of their peers. Members of the school council, the eco council, the Criw Cymraeg and the healthy school committee fulfil their roles skilfully and make an obvious contribution to school life. Members of the Criw Cymraeg are very diligent, for example when organising the musician of the month, creating a fact file about Welsh musicians, and ensuring that Welsh music can be heard during break time. They support the youngest pupils by encouraging them to use the Welsh language while they play.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. Many take part in the activity to run a mile a day and participate in playground games that are organised by the older pupils. Pupils have a close relationship with community groups. For example, the eco council works closely with a group of local gardeners, Mach Maethlon. Members of the community visit the school regularly to develop the school garden and then cook and taste the food in cooking lessons. Many pupils develop entrepreneurship skills successfully by selling produce in the community.

The school's digital wizards remind their peers about the rules of the internet and, as a result, nearly all pupils have a sound awareness of the importance of staying safe online. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the problems that are caused by substance misuse, alcohol and tobacco, and anti-social behaviour.

Nearly all pupils enjoy the challenges they are given in the classroom, and concentrate and persevere very well with their tasks. Nearly all pupils work together effectively and lead discussions maturely and carefully to help to ensure that all individuals are given a fair chance. They develop as confident learners with the ability to work independently when they are given an opportunity to do so. Most pupils are aware of their individual targets to improve their skills and they are not afraid to make mistakes. Most are willing to suggest different ways to solve problems or improve their work. Nearly all pupils develop as knowledgeable and moral citizens.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Staff know the pupils very well and there is a highly constructive and supportive relationship between them across the school.

On the whole, teachers make regular and effective use of open-ended questions in order to encourage pupils to think independently. Teachers usually have high expectations of pupils and they plan most activities for them effectively.

Teachers share clear lesson objectives. They share specific criteria with pupils and encourage them to use them to evaluate their work individually or with peers. As a result, most pupils have a sound understanding of teachers' expectations in relation to specific tasks. Teachers and support staff help pupils purposefully with their work, and provide them with effective oral feedback to facilitate learning. The written feedback that is provided is of a good standard. As a result, most pupils have a sound grasp of what they need to do to develop their work further.

The school has an interesting curriculum that develops pupils' skills across all areas of learning effectively. Activities engage pupils' interest successfully. As a result, most pupils apply themselves fully to their activities and make effective progress in their skills. The curriculum is enriched very effectively by using experts, visitors and visits, for example a visit by a theatre company to learn about a person's life during the Second World War.

A strong feature of the school's work is the sensible way in which teachers weave literacy, numeracy and ICT skills throughout the curriculum. A very good example of this is the way in which it works with the other schools in the federation on a creative project called 'Yr Elfennau' (The Elements). During this project, pupils have been given exceptionally good opportunities to create dance, pieces of art and compose poetry. They have published the poems and artwork in a book and have used the dances as part of the book launch. This fosters pupils' respect and pride in their work highly effectively.

Teachers ensure beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop all of their skills through entrepreneurship activities. This work enables pupils to use their creative skills purposefully to create produce to be sold, in addition to their numeracy skills to calculate costs and profit, for example when creating plates and using a specific method to sell them.

Planning to develop pupils' scientific skills is very effective. There are regular opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of scientific elements, for example when discovering what stones are permeable and impermeable.

Rich opportunities to promote the Welsh language and Welshness are a core and natural part of all of the school's work. Teachers model language skilfully. This has a very positive effect on the accuracy and standard of pupils' language. The school promotes the Welsh dimension wholly naturally through curricular activities. For example, there are numerous opportunities for pupils to study the work of Welsh artists, musicians and authors regularly.

Teachers have a sound awareness of the principles of the foundation phase. Overall, they plan an appropriate balance between activities that are led by staff and opportunities for pupils to work independently in the learning areas, for example as they create a spell in the cauldron in the mud kitchen. However, staff do not always tailor activities and challenges effectively enough to respond to all pupils' needs.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a familial, welcoming and Welsh community of which all pupils are proud. The effective working relationship between pupils and teachers is an excellent feature of the school. This contributes well to pupils' positive attitudes towards their work and the school's inclusive ethos.

Teachers identify pupils' needs at an early stage and provide suitable provision for them. All pupils with additional learning needs have an individual development plan, which includes relevant information and suitable and measurable targets. These plans are reviewed effectively with pupils, teachers and parents. As a result, pupils take ownership of them, which encourages them to achieve well in their literacy and numeracy skills and make consistent progress over time.

The school has appropriate progress-tracking procedures that are a means of providing useful information for teachers to identify the needs of individuals and specific groups of pupils, and support them to provide appropriately for them. However, teachers do not always use the data that derives from these procedures astutely enough. Rather, they rely too much on their opinions to help them to set targets and tailor activities for specific groups of pupils.

The school is a friendly and familial community that promotes the importance of good behaviour, courtesy and commitment from pupils. There is a strong emphasis on providing equal opportunities for all pupils and promoting diversity and fairness. The school has established an effective system for caring for pupils during playtime, by giving older pupils responsibility for caring and playing with the younger pupils. The school has good arrangements for eating and drinking healthily.

The school conducts effective collective worship sessions regularly, and promotes pupils' understanding of equality and diversity, and nurtures their spiritual and moral skills successfully. Provision for personal and social education is strong and, as a result, most pupils develop a sound understanding of children's rights, safety, personal health and mental wellbeing.

The school celebrates pupils' progress effectively by displaying their best work throughout the school, and by sharing and celebrating their success. This ignites pupils' pride in their work. Staff develop pupils' creative skills well through projects, such as the recent one on 'The Elements' that was arranged by a local theatre company, to develop pupils' drama, art and dance skills.

The school organises regular opportunities for pupils to compete successfully in local and national eisteddfodau and perform in concerts in their local area during the year. Pupils benefit greatly from educational visits and welcoming visitors to the school. All valuable experiences that are given to pupils contribute very positively towards preparing them to be confident, independent and mature citizens.

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

Leadership and management: Excellent

The innovative leadership of the headteacher, assistant headteachers and governors, alongside the strong co-operation of staff, means that there are obvious benefits to the federal arrangement between Ysgol Carno, Ysgol Glantwymyn and Ysgol Llanbrynmair. As a result, an ethos of continuous improvement is an integral part of the schools' work, which leads to standards and provision that are at least good and have obvious features of excellence across the whole federation. Through clear leadership and management structures and transparent staff responsibilities, everyone within the federation works diligently to achieve a shared vision. This is based on raising standards and ensuring educational provision of the highest standard for the schools' pupils. Sharing staff expertise, good practice and resources are effective features of the federation. A notable example of this is the work that leaders have done in order to strengthen the leadership role of the schools' subject co-ordinators. Co-ordinators now play a core part in contributing to self-evaluating provision and leading improvements in their areas of responsibility across the schools in the federation. By doing so, leaders ensure that the curriculum and provision for skills are extremely interesting and support all pupils to make good progress consistently.

Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the quality of provision and standards. By visiting the schools regularly to scrutinise quality and receiving detailed progress reports from the headteacher, they identify the schools' strengths and areas for improvement thoroughly. The curriculum sub-committee is an effective forum for evaluating the effectiveness of provision and holds the school to account for its performance successfully.

Procedures for self-evaluation and planning for improvement are excellent. The self-evaluation reports are honest documents that identify the schools' strengths and areas for improvement in detail. They include probing comments that derive from robust techniques for gathering evidence. As a result, the self-evaluation procedure creates valid and credible evaluations of the quality of provision, standards and the effect of leadership.

Through careful consideration, which includes input from members of the senior management team and staff, leaders use the outcomes of the self-evaluation

procedure very effectively to set sensible priorities within a coherent improvement plan. There is a manageable number of priorities, and financial resources and staff time are earmarked sensibly in order to achieve them successfully. The way in which leaders ensure that these priorities are achieved is excellent. They commit staff performance targets to achieving priorities skilfully, which gives them very effective opportunities to identify their contribution to the improvement process. This promotes staff ownership and accountability for producing ideas on how to address the priorities effectively. The headteacher and senior management team's 'impact reports' identify clearly the progress made towards achieving the priorities very effectively. This ensures that leaders and staff are aware of the rate of progress regularly, and adapt improvement plans where necessary. As a result, the schools have a successful history of improving their provision and raising standards in nearly all priorities over a number of years.

The schools' budgets are managed effectively and specific grants, such as the pupil development grant, meet pupils' needs appropriately, for example to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Leaders manage their resources, including human resources, skilfully, which means that they are able to achieve more together as a federation than they could as individual schools. The way in which the schools are preparing for the new curriculum and providing broad experiences for pupils, and maintaining and improving outcomes and provision for the Welsh language, are recent and successful examples of this.

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.

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