



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gymuned Penisarwaun
Penisarwaun
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 3BW**

Date of inspection: October 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Gymuned Penisarwaun

Ysgol Gymuned Penisarwaun is situated in the village of Penisarwaun, in a rural area at the foot of Snowdon, approximately five miles from Caernarfon in Gwynedd local authority. Pupils come from the village and the surrounding rural area. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 60 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 5 nursery age pupils. The school has two mixed-age classes.

Over the last three years, around 3% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national percentage of 18%. Around 70% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. The school has identified around 25% of pupils as having special educational needs, which is higher than the national percentage of 21%.

The headteacher has been in post since April 2016. The school was last inspected in June 2013.

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

Staff create a welcoming and inclusive environment at the school, which nurtures a supportive and hard-working learning ethos for pupils. An excellent feature is the familial ethos, which ensures that pupils and staff care for each other naturally. As a result, pupils are happy to attend, behave very well and develop positive attitudes to learning. During their time there, most pupils develop as competent and confident bilingual learners, make sound progress and achieve well.

Teachers provide rich and interesting learning experiences for pupils, which meet most of their needs well. The school has a very strong Welsh ethos and there is a clear emphasis on providing a range of valuable experiences which reflect the nature and context of the school successfully. As a result, pupils show pride in their school and their language, and have a clear appreciation of the local area's culture and history.

The headteacher provides effective leadership which sets a clear strategic direction for the school. She receives strong support from dedicated staff, who work well together as a team. They show strong commitment to promoting continuous and sustainable improvements. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school and use their knowledge purposefully to challenge the school and hold it to account for standards.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Refine monitoring procedures so that they focus more incisively on the effect of priorities for improvement on pupils' outcomes
- R2 Provide more regular opportunities for pupils to make choices in relation to their learning and work more independently
- R3 Ensure that pupils are more aware of what they need to do to improve their own work
- R4 Improve the information and communication technology (ICT) skills of pupils in key stage 2 to handle data across the curriculum

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in their learning and achieve well.

Most pupils' speaking and listening skills are developing quickly in the foundation phase. By Year 2, they concentrate well and discuss their tasks with increasing confidence, by using broad and accurate vocabulary. They are keen to talk about their work and experiences, for example when discussing a dinosaur's visit to the class during the night. In key stage 2, nearly all pupils build well on this firm foundation. Most speak Welsh completely naturally and use rich language and purposeful vocabulary when discussing their work. They are able to express themselves maturely in Welsh and English, for example when discussing homeless people.

Most pupils enjoy reading and make good progress regularly. The youngest pupils recognise letters and sounds correctly and are beginning to recognise words confidently. By Year 2, most read meaningfully and with expression, and discuss the content of their books maturely. In key stage 2, many pupils read intelligently in both languages. By Year 6, they practise their higher-order reading skills regularly and maturely to gather information from different sources. A good example of this is how pupils gather information about the experiences of an evacuee during the Second World War.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing positively in the foundation phase. They use varied vocabulary and language increasingly. By Year 2, many are beginning to use extended writing by using sentences and suitable vocabulary to support their work, for example when writing a script for an imaginary character. Most pupils in key stage 2 develop their writing skills successfully and, by the end of the stage, they show a firm grasp of spelling patterns, paragraphing and punctuation in both languages. At the top of the school, many show a sound awareness of the features of a wide range of writing genres, for example when writing a letter to Lord Penrhyn to express their support to the local quarrymen. They use mature vocabulary in their writing, and use effects and similes successfully to enrich their work.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in their mathematical development. Most in the reception class count a set of dinosaurs and sort them correctly by size. By Year 2, most handle money correctly and develop a good understanding of measurement, time and data. They use their numeracy skills confidently to solve problems successfully, for example when measuring the time it takes for ice to melt. In key stage 2, most pupils build well on their previous learning and, by Year 6, they use a wide range of methods confidently to calculate mentally. They apply these methods successfully to solve problems, for example when discovering the cost of a visit to the cinema. They apply their reasoning and interrogation skills successfully in subjects across the curriculum, for example when experimenting with, and investigating, how quickly a parachute falls to the ground.

Most pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills purposefully to support their work across the curriculum. Foundation phase pupils use electronic tablets effectively, for example when tracking a dinosaur in the classroom. They use a simple database confidently to record which fruits they used to create a picture in the style of a famous artist. Most pupils in key stage 2 use their word-processing skills skilfully to present their work, for example when writing a newspaper article about a strike at the quarry. They use the internet effectively to search for information and create multimedia presentations successfully to present their findings, for example about the first landing on the moon. However, only a few pupils in key stage 2 develop a good understanding of how to handle data to enable them to follow specific lines of enquiry across the curriculum.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy the school's life and work, and feel completely safe within its caring, inclusive and supportive ethos. They know who to approach for advice if they are worried about anything and are confident that staff respond to any concerns they may have. Nearly all are aware of the importance of attending school regularly, and this is reflected clearly in their good and consistent attendance. Nearly all show great pride in their school and their community, take pride in the Welsh language and use it naturally when talking to each other.

Nearly all pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are welcoming, polite and very courteous when greeting each other, staff and visitors. Positive interaction and strong levels of co-operation between pupils of all ages, during work and play, are strong features of the school. They are caring towards each other and treat others with respect, in the dining hall and on the school playground.

Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They are hard-working and enthusiastic learners who work together in harmony and stay on task for extended periods. This contributes successfully towards the school's effective learning ethos and has a positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing. In the foundation phase, most pupils show a sound understanding of classroom organisations and move around the various areas confidently and independently. They are beginning to have an influence and share their ideas when organising a variety of activities in the learning areas. Most pupils in key stage 2 respond positively to the opportunities that they are given to influence what they would like to learn within the termly theme. However, their role in guiding their own learning, making decisions and being independent learners has not been developed in full. Only a minority of pupils in key stage 2 know how to improve their own work independently.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and understand the effect of exercise on their health. They participate enthusiastically in a range of physical activities and make regular use of the running track around the school. This has a positive effect on their wellbeing and fitness. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe on the internet, and visits from the community police officers reinforce this.

The pupil's voice is developing appropriately through the work of the school council. Members undertake their work enthusiastically through a variety of activities. By

doing so, they contribute appropriately to the school's life and work, for example by running the fruit shop and ensuring that a supply of water is available to drink during the day. Pupils respond enthusiastically when contributing to activities in the community and services at the church. They support charities, for example by raising money for a school in a poor area in Nepal following the earthquake. They take pride in their recent contribution to Save the Children's centenary celebration at the cathedral. This has a positive effect on their understanding of the needs of others in their community and the wider world.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Staff forge a close and close-knit working relationship with pupils, which fosters a positive and supportive learning environment. They know the pupils well and provide them with effective support as they work and interact with their peers. Respect between pupils and adults is an important feature of the school's work and has a positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Provision to develop the Welsh language and Welsh dimension is one of the school's strengths, and encourages nearly all pupils to make full use of the Welsh language in all aspects of their work. Staff take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' language, which contributes successfully towards their robust oracy skills. As a result, many older pupils have sound translanguaging skills and develop as competent and confident bilingual learners. There is a clear emphasis on developing a curriculum that is based on Wales and reflects the school's nature and context successfully. Good examples of this are pupils' work on the slate industry's effect on the area and their field work on the char in Llyn Padarn. This contributes effectively towards their understanding of their local area, history and culture. As a result, pupils take pride in their heritage and their Welshness.

Teachers provide an interesting curriculum that develops pupils' skills across all areas of learning effectively. Recently, foundation phase teachers have strengthened provision effectively to ensure that the principles of the foundation phase have been embedded. There is a clear emphasis on nurturing independence and developing pupils' skills across the areas of learning by providing practical and stimulating experiences. As a result, nearly all pupils complete their activities enthusiastically, and work and play happily with each other. Staff use the outdoor learning area appropriately to support learning. Key stage 2 teachers provide learning experiences that are based on interesting themes, which extends pupils' knowledge and understanding well and strengthens their commitment to their work effectively.

Teachers use various teaching methods effectively, which motivate pupils to learn. They also have good subject knowledge and use this knowledge skilfully to plan interesting learning experiences for their pupils, which meet most pupils' needs successfully. Purposeful co-operation between teachers and assistants provides beneficial support to enable pupils to complete their tasks and benefit from them. Overall, there is a good balance between experiences that are led by adults and opportunities for pupils to work independently. However, there is a tendency, at times, for teachers to over-direct activities, and this limits opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

Foundation phase teachers plan activities which ensure that pupils practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills regularly, for example when role-playing in the television studio in the continuous provision. This ignites their imagination and has a positive effect on developing their skills. Key stage 2 teachers plan purposefully to ensure valuable opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills regularly across the curriculum. A good example of this is pupils' work to create a healthy pizza. Overall, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills to gather and present information. However, opportunities for key stage 2 pupils to create databases and analyse evidence in order to follow specific lines of enquiry have not been developed effectively enough across the curriculum. The school has given careful consideration to the digital competence framework and is beginning to address gaps in its current provision.

Recently, the school has strengthened the use of assessment for learning strategies. Teachers provide pupils with purposeful oral feedback and encourage them to persevere and reflect further on how to improve their work. They intervene sensitively to support pupils at specific times during the lesson, for example to encourage them to check their progress against success criteria. However, opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work, and that of their peers, are limited.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring and familial community that promotes the importance of Welshness, courtesy and respect highly effectively. The supportive, close-knit relationship between pupils and staff is a strong feature of the school. This is reflected in nearly all pupils' good behaviour and politeness, and their positive attitudes towards learning and their school. Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Acts of collective worship ensure regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on the needs of others, such as homeless people. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to understand their rights. A good example of this is the opportunities for pupils to learn about the work of the Save the Children charity in Wales. As a result, most pupils become moral and knowledgeable individuals.

Teachers provide regular opportunities to develop pupils' creative experiences by inviting local historians, poets and musicians to work with them. A good example of this is the visit of a local poet to prompt pupils to write an anthem for the school. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to take part in concerts in the local area, to record in a professional studio and conduct services in the community. A good example is this is ensuring an opportunity for all pupils to take part in a concert in Bangor cathedral, performing alongside professional musicians. This promotes pupils' creative and expressive skills effectively and contributes successfully towards increasing pupils' self-confidence and their ability to co-operate.

The school has appropriate procedures for tracking pupils' progress. This enables staff to identify pupils' additional learning needs at an early stage and provide for them effectively. Teachers work effectively with teaching assistants to provide them with purposeful help and support. Teachers create detailed individual education plans for all pupils with special educational needs. These plans are reviewed regularly in consultation with pupils and their parents, and adapted where necessary. Staff work effectively with external agencies and schools in the cluster to provide staff

with advice and guidance and to support specific pupils. This ensures that individuals receive beneficial care and guidance and that most make good progress from their starting points.

There is a robust relationship between the school and parents, which is based on its open-door policy. This ensures that parents are able to raise any concerns in a timely manner. For example, following recent feedback from parents, staff provide more physical activities for pupils, which has a positive effect on their health and wellbeing. Regular meetings are held for parents to discuss their children's progress and development, and to reinforce what they can do to support their children with their work.

The school benefits from significant contributions from the school's friends association, which enriches pupils' experiences, for example by purchasing ICT resources. The school takes pride in its strong links with the local community. These varied links strengthen pupils' sense of belonging to their community and develop their knowledge and understanding of their local area successfully.

Through the school council, there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to become involved in valuable decisions, which has a positive effect on aspects of the school's work. A good example of this is the council's work to promote the development of their peers' Welsh language skills. This has improved pupils' awareness of Welsh music, for example. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily and keeping fit. This has a positive effect on pupils' understanding of issues relating to their health and wellbeing. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides effective leadership, which ensures a clear strategic direction for the school and promotes a close-knit and inclusive community. She has a clear vision that is based on developing successful and confident learners within a happy and caring environment. Promoting the Welsh language and Welshness are her priorities and are at the heart of all of the school's work. The headteacher works successfully with staff, pupils, governors, parents and members of the wider community to implement this vision successfully.

Staff are dedicated, work together closely as a team and undertake their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. They show strong commitment to promoting continuous and sustainable improvements by coming together regularly to discuss progress and improvement objectives. This ensures that the school's day-to-day systems work well, place a clear focus on the work of all members of staff and contribute well towards ensuring continuous improvement.

Performance management arrangements are sound, and the headteacher promotes staff's professional development conscientiously by linking training priorities with the school's priorities for improvement. Joint training, and the willingness to plan interesting experiences jointly with schools in the cluster, provides valuable opportunities for staff to share ideas and develop professionally. This contributes effectively to improving teaching and learning, for example by improving provision for pupils in the foundation phase. It also helps successfully to reduce teachers' workload.

The school plans beneficially to meet local and national priorities. Staff plan purposefully to address recent developments in education, for example by responding to the digital competence framework and preparing for the new curriculum for Wales. A good example of this is the clear emphasis on developing a relevant curriculum for the school in its community. Across the school, there is a clear emphasis on promoting the Welsh language. This has a very positive effect on pupils' awareness of their heritage and standards of Welsh.

The school has suitable processes to evaluate its performance and plan for improvement. As a result, leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and most areas for improvement. The school responds enthusiastically to its priorities for improvement, and this is reflected in the way in which the school has implemented a successful plan to improve specific areas. The priority to improve provision in the foundation phase has led to enriching learning experiences and the level of challenge for pupils. The emphasis on developing numeracy across the school over the last year has raised standards successfully. On the whole, monitoring reports on teaching and learning are evaluative and identify areas to be developed further. However, comments do not always focus incisively enough on the effect of priorities for improvement on pupils' outcomes, in order to ensure that leaders address all areas for improvement.

The governing body is very supportive of the school's work. By working effectively with the headteacher, talking to pupils and discussing examples of pupils' work, governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use this knowledge well to make decisions when setting a strategic direction for the school's work. As a result, governors' strategic role as critical friends is developing successfully and enables them to challenge the school effectively about its performance.

Leaders manage resources effectively in order to provide varied and rich learning experiences for pupils. They allocate funding appropriately to support the school's priorities and monitor expenditure carefully. The school benefits from financial contributions from the school's friends association to purchase resources, such as ICT equipment, which succeeds in expanding opportunities to respond to the requirements of the digital competence framework.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

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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