



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gynradd Aberaeron  
Wellington Gardens  
Aberaeron  
Ceredigion  
SA46 0BQ**

**Date of inspection: April 2019**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Gynradd Aberaeron

Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Aberaeron is situated in the town of Aberaeron, in Ceredigion local authority. There are 224 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. The school has seven single-age classes, one mixed-age class and one part-time nursery class.

Over a three-year-period, around 9% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals, which is lower than the national percentage of 18%. Around 25% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 23% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is similar to the national percentage of 21%.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2015 and the school was last inspected in November 2011.

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

During their time at the school, most pupils acquire successful Welsh communication skills and make sound progress both orally and in their reading. Many write effectively, considering their starting points. Most pupils' English skills, during discussions, when presenting written work and when reading, are developing well.

Most pupils develop their use of their mathematical skills and numeracy concepts effectively across the curriculum. Their information and communication technology (ICT) skills show their confidence in this area and their ability to adapt their skills appropriately for different purposes.

Teachers and assistants are very hardworking and plan innovative and stimulating learning experiences for pupils. They include the pupil's voice very effectively when planning activities that stimulate an impressive and exciting curriculum. They care for their pupils very loyally, and provide them with extremely reliable support and guidance. As a result, nearly all pupils take great pride in their school.

The influential headteacher has a very sound understanding of the school's needs. She works very diligently with the robust senior management team and dedicated governors. As a result, they build commendably on the school's strengths and improve the areas for development wisely, through skilful and detailed quality improvement procedures.

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

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Ensure that teaching and planning challenge more able pupils to write at length to the best of their ability
- R2 Improve pupils' attendance and punctuality
- R3 Ensure that teachers intervene less in pupils' learning during activities

## **What happens next**

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to planning stimulating themes and adopting innovative prompts and events to have a rich influence on pupils' experiences and learning, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

On entry to the school, many pupils' Welsh communication skills are lower than the standard expected for their age. During their time at the school, most acquire successful Welsh communication skills and achieve soundly. Pupils with additional learning needs make purposeful progress against their personal targets.

Most pupils achieve well in developing their speaking and listening skills. They speak confidently and understand that listening attentively to others is an integral part of their learning. As a result, most speak confidently about their work and about the hustle and bustle surrounding the school's activities. For example, most foundation phase pupils explain clearly which instructions are important to follow to create attractive Easter cards. Most pupils in key stage 2 develop eloquent English oracy skills, particularly when discussing the atrocities in relation to the stories of Syrian refugees.

Most pupils develop purposeful reading skills. In the foundation phase, most read a wide range of Welsh texts clearly. They discuss the content of their books enthusiastically and build unfamiliar words carefully by using useful phonic strategies. They describe the events in a story effectively and explain skilfully the reasons for a specific action, such as footballers embracing each other after scoring a goal. Most pupils in key stage 2 read meaningfully and pronounce clearly in both languages. They enjoy reading fictional and factual books, and undertake research conscientiously on the internet, including the life of an evacuee during the Second World War. As a result, they use their higher order reading skills productively to gather extensive information from different sources.

Many pupils write appropriately for different purposes in a number of varied contexts. In the foundation phase, many create engaging and accurate pieces in Welsh. Good examples include a booklet on Jesus Christ's final days in Jerusalem and adventure stories about the magic forest. In key stage 2, many write meaningfully in both languages for a wide range of purposes. For example, they describe the horrendous life of a trapper in the coal mines thoughtfully and consider particle movements in solids, liquids and gasses intelligently. However, the extended writing of the most able pupils does not reflect their true abilities.

Most pupils' numeracy skills are sound. They apply their mathematical knowledge effectively to familiar and unfamiliar situations across the curriculum. A good example is the way in which most pupils in the foundation phase measure exactly how many goods they need to make a nest out of dough. Most pupils in key stage 2 have a strong understanding of how to use data with increasing accuracy and present it in various forms. Most understand the need to use different graphs to convey scientific information effectively. For example, they create a detailed line graph after comparing the temperature in Lampeter at specific times during the day. They also use co-ordinates in four quadrants confidently to create a house and an advent calendar, and sort acute angles, right angles and obtuse angles correctly by estimating their degrees. As a result, most pupils in key stage 2 complete tasks and apply their extended numeracy skills successfully.

Most pupils in the foundation phase use ICT equipment confidently. They use a green screen and microphones highly successfully when creating a stimulating film about supporting a lifeboat on the local coastline. They also program electronic devices well to move to a specific square on a grid. Most pupils in key stage 2 show sound ICT skills, apply them well and select the most effective methods to present their work. For example, they use databases purposefully to gather information about members of the class, such as their eye colour. They interrogate and organise information well to discover specific patterns in data. Most pupils also use passwords purposefully to access learning websites to complete their work safely, either in the classroom or at home.

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

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school, within its homely and familial ethos. They enjoy all activities and nearly all pupils behave excellently in lessons and around the building. Nearly all pupils feel that they have very close relationships with staff. The school's 'ideas box' and the different leadership groups provide valuable opportunities for pupils to express their views and aspirations. This reinforces their assurance that adults respond purposefully to their ideas and concerns.

Nearly all pupils across the school have very positive attitudes to learning. They listen attentively to teachers' instructions and concentrate well on their work during lessons. They are enthusiastic learners who apply themselves confidently to new experiences, such as planning an imaginary foreign holiday for a 'rock star'. Most are very willing to discuss their work with their peers, and successful co-operation is a strong feature in all classes. As a result, most pupils respect the contributions of others and respond positively to their ideas.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and keep fit by taking part in regular exercise activities. They use their physical skills successfully in extra-curricular activities, such as football, netball and the 'Clwb Adar' ('Bird Club'). As a result, they have a sound understanding of the importance of maintaining high levels of fitness for their physical wellbeing.

Nearly all pupils, in line with their age, understand the importance of online safety and outline effectively the dangers that can arise as a result of unsuitable use of the internet. The digital wizards play a key role in supporting this.

Most pupils contribute very beneficially to their learning. They provide extremely valuable ideas to be included in the termly and weekly themes, and understand that their voices are important in improving their learning. As a result, they expand their knowledge and understanding successfully, such as taking advantage of opportunities to learn about the recent disaster in Mozambique.

Most pupils are tolerant of, and sensitive to, the needs and feelings of other pupils, who are similar to, or different from, themselves. As a result, they have a sound awareness of fairness and the importance of equal opportunities. For example, they understand that different beliefs have specific rights and traditions, such as Syrian Muslims and Christians at Easter.

Nearly all pupils are conscientious and take their responsibilities seriously. For example, members of the school council, the eco committee, the healthy schools council and the digital leaders undertake their responsibilities intensively. As a result, they have a sound understanding of their leadership roles within the school. They take great pride in their roles as they have been chosen by being elected by their peers. They discuss their leadership roles confidently and provide purposeful reasons for making agreed decisions on behalf of their peers. For example, the healthy schools council has organised a walking bus to the school during the summer term due to traffic and parking issues near the school.

Nearly all pupils are developing as moral and conscientious citizens. They understand the importance of sustainability and take pride in visits to the school by the elderly. This raises pupils' awareness of social issues and strengthens their understanding of other people's needs very effectively.

Nearly all pupils are happy to attend school and express their praise for the creative activities that are available to them and the friendly ethos. Most pupils arrive punctually. However, a very few are late frequently and pupils' attendance is low in comparison with that of similar schools over time.

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

Teachers plan an innovative and stimulating curriculum that engages pupils' interest very successfully. They provide a thrilling range of exciting and vibrant learning experiences, which spark pupils' imagination and learning particularly effectively. Excellent experiences include calling the emergency services after a historic airplane appeared on the school field, discovering a 'Tardis' near the building and publishing a book of the pupils' creative writing.

Teachers plan exceptional opportunities to learn about the history of the local area and Welsh culture. They make excellent use of visits to inspire pupils' learning. Examples include educational visits to the harbour to see ships setting out to sea and trips to Aberystwyth castle and the Welsh Folk Museum. They also organise interesting visitors to enrich pupils' experiences, including local authors, clog dancers to conduct workshops and a show to raise pupils' awareness of the life of an evacuee during the Second World War. As a result, pupils develop a strong understanding of their heritage and Welshness.

All teachers plan excellent themes, which promote learning purposefully and support pupils' understanding successfully. They include pupils' ideas skilfully when planning engaging lessons. This maintains their interest and motivation to succeed effectively. The principles of the foundation phase have been embedded firmly, and the outdoor areas are used well to enrich pupils' learning experiences purposefully. For example, they hold an Easter egg hunt to target pupils' numeracy skills well, and search for insects to improve their knowledge of nature.

Provision to develop literacy and numeracy skills is detailed and purposeful, and has a robust effect on pupils' learning. For example, teachers set challenges to estimate the cost of following the Welsh rugby team during the Six Nations and motivate pupils' to write scripts for radio programmes. However, there is not enough challenge for the most able pupils in order to develop their extended writing skills across the curriculum.

Teachers provide interesting opportunities for pupils to apply their digital skills across the curriculum. In the foundation phase, they provide sensible opportunities for pupils to record and assess their work on electronic tablets. In key stage 2, there are engaging opportunities for pupils to use the internet to gather historical information about characters, such as Aneurin Bevan, and create databases on their favourite film characters.

Teachers use a variety of teaching methods, which have a positive effect on pupils' standards. The supportive working relationship, which is evident in all classes, nurtures respect and courtesy, and creates an ethos in which pupils can learn productively. Teachers and the conscientious assistants identify individuals' needs very well and encourage them to do their best at all times. Their teaching targets the next steps in pupils' learning effectively, including those with additional learning needs. As a result, most make good progress against their personal targets. However, at times, teachers and assistants over-direct teaching, which hinders pupils' learning, particularly those who are most able.

Teachers assess pupils' work and contributions effectively, both orally and in writing, and use assessment for learning procedures sensibly. They provide good opportunities for pupils to assess their own work, which strengthens their understanding of how to improve their work. Teachers also share learning objectives and success criteria with pupils regularly. However, there is too much emphasis on recording these on paper, which has a detrimental effect on how promptly pupils begin tasks and their learning.

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

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care and wellbeing are very strong and highly effective. The school is an inclusive, happy and homely community in which there is a strong emphasis on providing all individuals with purposeful support. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe and take pride in their school. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Teachers promote the culture of Wales and the local area very purposefully. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to perform in concerts, compete in eisteddfodau and appreciate art, such as a picture of a remote local chapel. Stimulating experiences promote pupils' understanding of the area's culture and Welsh traditions very effectively. There are also successful opportunities for pupils to expand their creative skills by working with artists on inventive projects. A notable example is a striking and colourful mural in the school hall, in memory of a member of staff. These and similar experiences develop pupils' creative and expressive skills purposefully, and improve their self-confidence and motivation to work together.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development successfully. Staff encourage them to live sensible lives and contribute to society as responsible citizens who are willing to undertake duties and help others. As a result, they visit a home for the elderly and support charities regularly.

A number of active committees promote the pupil's voice intelligently and encourage pupils to shoulder responsibilities and make sensible decisions for the benefit of their community. A positive example is the effect of the 'Welsh Language Charter Group',



which promotes the Welsh language in the school and the local community. Its work is very visible, such as organising a procession through the town to celebrate our patron saint's day in order to raise residents' awareness of the school's key role in the community.

Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are detailed and thorough. Findings are used effectively to target individuals' needs purposefully. Provision for pupils who are in need of support is skilful and has a very positive effect on their progress. Individual education plans are purposeful and include challenging targets in order for pupils to progress well in their learning. Plans are reviewed regularly with pupils, teachers and parents, under the guidance of the conscientious co-ordinator. As a result, most pupils achieve well from their starting points.

Provision to promote pupils' understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily is effective. Staff encourage pupils to keep fit very successfully. For example, they provide regular physical education lessons and a stimulating variety of extra-curricular activities, which include a cross-country club and dancing club.

There is a robust relationship between parents and the school. The open-door policy ensures very effective communication between them. Social media are used successfully to inform them about key activities and events. Nearly all parents appreciate the frequent communication and feel that the school is very willing to listen to their views. This commitment on the school's part encourages parents to play an active and valuable part in school life.

The school works successfully with external agencies, such as social services and the police. This has a positive effect on pupils' ability to stay safe online and understand that they have a duty to reduce any risk in their lives, such as wearing a seatbelt in their cars. The headteacher and welfare officer work together diligently to try to improve pupils' attendance. However, attendance does not compare favourably with that of similar schools over time.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The influential headteacher has established a clear vision for the school, which is based on broadening pupils' horizons and aspirations purposefully. The headteacher is supported very effectively by a robust senior management team and dedicated governors. As a result, they implement a system that distributes responsibilities intelligently among staff in a happy, caring and supportive environment.

Leaders address local and national priorities purposefully. The re-structuring of themes and their use of stimulating prompts to develop the new curriculum for Wales are excellent. For example, they act wisely on pupils' ideas to extend their creativity when discussing local legends and the town's coastal history. The strong focus on using and developing the Welsh language also enriches and expands pupils' language skilfully, in formal and informal situations.

Rigorous and up-to-date self-evaluation procedures are in place. There is a skilful link between the findings of evaluation procedures and the priorities in the school improvement plan. Leaders respond to priorities skilfully and target areas for improvement sensibly, to measure progress and identify aspects that need further

attention. There is a detailed timetable for lesson observations, learning walks and scrutinising pupils' work, which leads highly effectively to valuable monitoring reports. As a result, quality improvement procedures build an authentic, honest and reliable picture of the school.

Leaders allocate responsibilities in order to address the priorities in the improvement plan successfully. Regular discussions and meetings between staff create an effective network of communication and, as a result, staff have a sound understanding of the areas that are in need of development. As a result, they have a robust focus on how to improve provision and pupils' outcomes to support improvements for the future. A robust feature of this procedure is the action on the school council's recommendations to create a 'Hafan Hapus' (Happy Haven) on the school playground, to support pupils who are anxious and lack confidence.

Governors have strong knowledge of the school's performance. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively and discuss the school's current and long-term intentions eloquently. For example, they are knowledgeable when explaining the purpose of the comprehensive training and additional support that are available to improve staff teaching in the classroom.

Governors, alongside the headteacher, monitor expenditure and the effectiveness of resources in detail. This includes incisive use of reserves and additional grants to support inclusive provision across the school. As a result, they provide skilful leadership and set key challenges for the school as critical friends.

The effective staff development plan links directly with performance management procedures. This has a significant effect on staff's skills and expertise, for example in order to refine their digital competence and focus on the importance of early interventions to improve pupils' skills. As a result, they share their expertise with their colleagues purposefully, and training has a positive effect on pupils' outcomes.

Leaders make the best use of the school's staff, accommodation and grounds. This includes resources in the foundation phase's outdoor area, which enrich pupils' experiences successfully to develop their skills further.

Leaders ensure that the budget and additional grants to enrich the curriculum and improve pupils' outcomes are used skilfully. A successful example of this is the effective use of the school's surplus to employ additional staff to support in the classrooms. The school monitors this meaningfully by focusing carefully on the effect of provision on pupils' standards. The pupil development grant is used sensibly to improve provision and raise the standards of pupils who are eligible to receive it. As a result, expenditure links purposefully with the priorities in the improvement plans.

## 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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