



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Carno
Carno
Newtown
Powys
SY17 5LE**

Date of inspection: November 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Carno

Ysgol Gynradd Carno is situated in the village of Carno, in Powys local authority. There are 43 pupils between 4 and 11 years old on roll. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes.

Over a three-year period, around 2% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals, which is much lower than the national average of 18%. Around half 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 2% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is much lower than the national percentage of 21%.

The school was last inspected in November 2009. In 2014, the school became part of a formal federation with Ysgol Gynradd Llanbrynmair and Ysgol Gynradd Glantwymyn under one headteacher and one governing body. The headteacher was appointed to the post in 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

The innovative leadership and full co-operation of staff ensure that an ethos of continuous improvement is an integral part of the school's make up. Leaders and staff have very high expectations to ensure the wellbeing and progress of all pupils, which develops them as ambitious, confident, knowledgeable and creative learners. Teachers plan regular, stimulating and interesting opportunities for pupils, which ensures that they apply themselves fully to their work and make progress that is far higher than expected. One of the school's exceptional strengths is the masterful way in which teachers weave literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills skilfully throughout the curriculum. This leads very successfully to realising excellent standards and provision.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that progress-tracking procedures are manageable and that teachers use them efficiently to extend learning
- R2 Broaden opportunities for pupils in the foundation phase to make regular choices about their 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 and the way in which the federation delivers an interesting curriculum to its pupils.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

On entry to the school, most pupils' communication skills and mathematical skills at least correspond with what is expected for their age. During their time at the school, most make sound progress from their starting points. Pupils from non-Welsh speaking homes acquire very good Welsh communication skills from an early age. Most pupils build on previous learning successfully and apply their thinking and problem-solving skills regularly and to a high level across a wide range of areas of learning. Pupils' sound creative skills are a strong feature and permeate through a wide range of their work.

Most pupils' speaking and listening skills are sound across the school. They listen attentively to adults and each other, and respond to instructions and questions confidently. From an early age, they speak maturely in various situations and use local dialect completely naturally. In the foundation phase, most pupils explain what they are doing in tasks clearly and confidently, for example when explaining the process of creating an animation of the story of Rama and Sita. Their communication skills are developed highly successfully in key stage 2. Most pupils in Years 3 and 4 are increasingly confident in persuading their peers while discussing the plans for their new school in Carno. By the end of the stage, nearly all pupils' translinguaging skills are robustly good. Most pupils develop to become ambitious, confident, knowledgeable and creative learners.

Most pupils have very sound reading skills. Most pupils in the foundation phase enjoy reading and respond confidently to a wide range of different texts. In key stage 2, most pupils read very intelligently and maturely in both languages. At the top of the school, nearly all pupils use their higher order reading skills independently to gather information from different sources. For example, they have researched the features of different areas and organisations in Wales in detail.

One of the school's notable strengths is the natural way in which pupils use their writing skills to a high standard in a wide range of subjects and contexts. Most pupils in the foundation phase make sound progress in their writing skills. They develop their ideas sensibly, vary sentences and punctuate their work correctly. More able pupils succeed in using a wider range of punctuation, similes and idioms naturally to enrich their work, for example in extended work based on the story 'lâr Fach yr Haf'. This is developed successfully across key stage 2 and, by the end of the stage, nearly all pupils write to a high standard in a variety of forms. Many create complex sentences successfully by using extensive vocabulary in English work to create effect, for example when writing a creative story and when responding to a wide range of creative images. The standard of handwriting is commendable and has a very positive effect on the presentation and appearance of nearly all pupils' work.

Pupils' numeracy skills are robustly good and they apply them regularly and to a high standard across the curriculum. In the foundation phase, most pupils have a sound understanding of place value, shape, measurement and time. They interpret data with increasing accuracy and present it in different forms, such as graphs or tables, for example when recording the results of the 'mile a day challenge'. In key stage 2,

nearly all pupils solve number problems confidently and apply what they have learned previously to new situations. A notable example of this is the way in which the stage's older pupils calculate how many ships are needed to transport four thousand passengers from the beaches of Dunkirk. In this task, a majority of more able pupils consider the speed of the boat as they calculate correctly the time taken to complete the voyage. Most pupils use data with increasing accuracy and present it in different forms when recording and comparing the average temperature and rainfall in three different countries.

Across the school, pupils make very effective use of the full range of ICT skills to support their work in areas of learning across the curriculum. Most use word processing programs, branch databases and graphics packages confidently and independently. In key stage 2, most pupils use ICT skilfully and independently in a variety of wider contexts. By the end of the stage, they create multimedia presentations of a high standard, many by using green screen.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, which means that they undertake their work enthusiastically and are keen to do their best. Most concentrate well and persevere to complete tasks successfully. They understand how to solve any difficulties that they face in their work by using the school's consistent method, namely "Meddwl, Mynegai, Mêts, Miss" ("Think, Index, Friends, Teacher"), which means that they need to follow that procedure before giving up. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to improve their own work by responding intelligently to the school's method of giving feedback, namely the 'pink for positive and green to grow' system, for example. Many pupils have good self-control as they recall and follow instructions correctly and start their work immediately. They are full of curiosity as they ask questions, for example to deepen their understanding of the life of owls.

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school as they feel safe and happy there, and the environment is caring and friendly. Pupils are confident that teachers respond promptly and appropriately to their concerns, when necessary. Most pupils understand the importance of drinking water and eating healthily, and the positive effect that regular physical exercise has on their fitness. Most pupils take full advantage of all sports activities that are available to them at the school and in extra-curricular clubs. Most pupils are aware of the importance of e-safety when using the internet.

Nearly all pupils are very well behaved. As they interact during lessons and playtime, nearly all pupils treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect. The older pupils' care of the school's younger pupils is a very prominent and positive feature.

Most older pupils, in turn, are keen and willing to shoulder responsibilities on the school's various councils. The 'Digital Wizards' and sports ambassadors are active in their roles in supporting their peers to improve their ICT skills and when organising activities, such as the 'mile a day' to improve the fitness of their peers. They evaluate the effectiveness of their activities by creating questionnaires to seek the views of their peers, which develops their confidence and understanding of the importance of taking responsibility and making decisions that affect themselves and others.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

The curriculum that is provided by the school is highly effective and creative, and develops pupils' skills across all areas of learning systematically and extremely successfully. These exciting activities ensure that pupils apply themselves fully to their work and make progress far beyond expectations in all of their skills. The curriculum is enriched very effectively through the frequent use of specialists, visitors and visits. For example, a visit was arranged by a theatre company to teach pupils about the life of a person during the Second World War in a very dramatic, lively and interesting way.

Teachers plan highly creatively, and there is a great emphasis on developing a wide range of pupils' skills consistently in all aspects of the curriculum. A very strong feature is the masterful way in which teachers weave opportunities to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills skilfully throughout the curriculum, particularly through creative activities such as the project on the theme of 'Elements'. During this project, pupils benefitted from especially good opportunities to create dance and pieces of art, and to write poetry based on the theme. 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. The staff's effective planning methods are preparing them thoroughly to introduce the new curriculum for Wales and develop pupils as ambitious, confident and knowledgeable individuals. This is good practice within the school.

Staff provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop various skills in very real situations, such as entrepreneurial activities, for example. These ambitious projects are completed successfully, such as 'Paned P'nawn Patagonaidd' (Patagonian Afternoon Tea), 'Her y Cardiau Nadolig' (the Christmas Card Challenge) and 'Lemonêd Ysgol Carno' (Ysgol Carno Lemonade). This enriches pupils' experiences and makes a valuable contribution to developing their entrepreneurial, literacy and numeracy skills.

Planning to develop pupils' scientific skills is very effective. There are regular opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of scientific elements through purposeful experiments, for example when discovering whether size and shape affects how quickly a spinner falls.

Rich opportunities to promote the Welsh language and Welshness are a core and natural part of all of the school's work. The school promotes the Welsh dimension wholly naturally through curricular activities, for example by providing numerous opportunities for pupils to study the work of Welsh artists, musicians and authors regularly.

Staff have a strong awareness of the principles of the foundation phase. They ensure that there is an effective balance between activities that are led by staff and others that provide opportunities for pupils to work independently in the learning areas. This promotes good independence among pupils, for example as they follow instructions to weigh dough before creating an owl for an exhibition based on the forest. However, staff do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to make free choices in relation to their learning.

They plan a wide and rich range of interesting learning experiences for pupils. This leads to highly successful teaching. By forging a very effective working relationship with pupils, staff create a supportive and stimulating learning environment, which ensures that all pupils are challenged successfully. The school's resources are used very effectively to enrich this. As a result, teaching engages pupils' interest and enthusiasm in their learning, and ensures that they apply themselves fully to their tasks. Teachers' presentations are interesting, practical and challenge most pupils very successfully. Teachers and assistants question skilfully to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, and challenge them to think and reason their responses at a high level. Staff model polished spoken language, which has a very positive effect on pupils' oral Welsh skills.

Teachers provide pupils with very effective oral and written feedback in order for them to understand how well they are achieving and what they need to improve. At the top of the school, the mature dialogue between teachers and pupils contributes successfully to informing the next steps in their learning. Pupils are given regular opportunities to reflect on their work and make improvements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a familial, welcoming and Welsh community of which all pupils are proud to be a part. The effective working relationship between pupils and teachers is an exceptional feature of the school's work. 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 purposeful 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, parents and teachers, which ensures that they take ownership of them. As a result, pupils achieve well in their literacy and numeracy skills, and make consistent progress over time.

The school has appropriate progress-tracking procedures, which are a means of providing teachers with useful information to identify the needs of individuals and specific groups of pupils, and help 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 provides very rich opportunities for pupils to gain self-confidence and expressive and creative ability. The effective use of artists and regular visitors to the school ensures that pupils are given opportunities to expand their imagination and contribute confidently to teamwork. Notable examples of this are the co-operation to create a 'rap' to promote the school's Welsh language charter, and the numerous, interesting activities that derived from the 'Elements' project.

Numerous and purposeful visits, such as a visit to the Tir Gwynt wind farm and the 'Celtic Place', ensure that pupils have a comprehensive understanding of their culture, the local community and the wider world. As a result, pupils develop as well-rounded members of their community and the world around them.

The school's inclusive ethos ensures that pupils are given rich opportunities to be members of various councils, to express their views and suggest ideas about the school's life and work. This element of the school's work is developing well and is reflected in the variety of colourful displays that show the pupils' lively activity in initiatives, such as raising money for local charities, among others.

The school has robust arrangements for promoting eating, drinking and living healthily. Regular opportunities for pupils to take part in various sports activities ensure that their physical development and fitness are developing well.

Staff promote pupils' spiritual and moral development well through whole-school assemblies that place an emphasis on values such as honesty, tolerance and respect towards fellow man. Pupils' understanding of children's rights are nurtured simply but effectively through 'Harri Hawliau' activities, which appear in different places around the school.

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 federation arrangement between Ysgol Carno, Ysgol Glantwymyn and Ysgol Llanbryn-mair. 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 towards 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.

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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).

© Crown Copyright 2019: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 24/01/2019