



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gynradd Wirfoddol Llanddarog  
Llanddarog  
Carmarthen  
Carmarthenshire  
SA32 8BJ**

**Date of inspection: October 2019**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Gynradd Wirfoddol Llanddarog

Ysgol Wirfoddol Llanddarog is situated on the outskirts of the town of Carmarthen in Carmarthenshire local authority. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 93 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including five full-time nursery age pupils. They are divided into four mixed-age classes.

Eighty-five per cent (85%) of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. The school has identified around 18% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is lower than the national percentage of 21%. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Over a three-year-period, around 0.9% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national percentage of 18%.

The current headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2012. The school was last inspected in February 2013. Since the beginning of the autumn term 2019, a teacher in charge has been running the school from day-to-day.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

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

Pupils' wellbeing and care are at the heart of Ysgol Wirfoddol Llanddarog's work. Staff place a strong emphasis on creating a caring and inclusive community in a happy environment. Most pupils have a high level of respect and tolerance towards others. On the whole, they have a positive attitude towards their learning and show obvious pride in the Welsh language and the history of the local area and further afield. However, teachers do not always have high enough expectations in terms of standards, particularly for more able pupils. As a result, not all pupils make effective progress.

Staff work together closely, but their strategic roles are not clear at present. Although staff identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement, self-evaluation procedures are not rigorous enough to identify or address important issues that are in need of improvement.

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

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Develop the role of leaders at all levels to ensure that there are rigorous enough procedures to address areas for improvement
- R2 Improve the use of the pupil progress-tracking system and establish robust procedures to support pupils with special educational needs
- R3 Raise teachers' expectations in order to provide an appropriate challenge for pupils and develop them as independent learners
- R4 Ensure regular opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum

## **What happens next**

The school will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

## Main findings

### **Standards: Adequate and needs improvement**

On entry to the school, many pupils have literacy and numeracy skills that are in line with, or above, what is expected for their age. During their time at the school, most make the expected progress. However, more able pupils do not make enough progress. A few pupils with special educational needs make suitable progress against their personal targets.

Across the school, most pupils have very strong oral skills. Many in the foundation stage have very robust Welsh language skills on entry to the school. They talk confidently to adults and each other and, by Year 2, they discuss their work in detail. They use mature vocabulary when discussing a visit by their peers' pets to the class or when role-playing as a veterinary surgeon. By Year 6, most pupils express their views clearly and accurately in both languages, for example when discussing the purpose of educational trips. Nearly all pupils show pride in speaking their natural Welsh language. However, only a minority of pupils listen carefully to classroom presentations.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their reading skills successfully. By Year 2, they read various books and discuss them confidently. Many discuss the characters in detail and use their phonic knowledge skilfully when reading challenging words. Many pupils in key stage 2 have effective reading skills in Welsh and English. By the end of the stage, most pupils read fluently and show a strong understanding of the text. They discuss the main points and make sensible predictions. Most are able to gather facts effectively and present them in different forms, for example how to survive the Blitz or about the poet, Hedd Wyn.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing purposefully. By the end of the foundation phase, most write independently for different purposes, for example when recalling the story of St Dwynwen and the adventures of a butterfly. In key stage 2, many pupils present their ideas effectively and show a sound grasp of spelling patterns, paragraphing and punctuation in both languages, in line with their age and ability. By Year 6, many write successfully in a range of genres across most areas of the curriculum, for example when writing a biography about the Welsh Children's Poet Laureate (Bardd Plant Cymru) or when presenting facts about Louis Braille. The standard of most pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is neat.

Many pupils understand mathematical concepts well. They follow instructions to extend their knowledge effectively during lessons. For example, foundation phase pupils develop number, shape, measurement and data-handling skills effectively. By Year 2, most recognise coins and are able to add the totals of various coins to the exact penny quickly. Many are able to keep scales balanced by comparing the weight of soft animals with non-standard units, such as bags of porridge oats. Many pupils in key stage 2 use number strategies, analyse the properties of shapes and solve simple algebra formulae correctly. They present their findings methodically in mathematical tasks. For example, they calculate the area of composite shapes and create a database on the flow velocity of the River Gwili. However, more able pupils' skills are hindered by the over-use of worksheets, and they rarely choose the most

suitable mathematical methods to complete new tasks independently. Only a minority of pupils apply their numeracy skills purposefully across the curriculum.

Many pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop gradually as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, many use an electronic tablet effectively when taking pictures and recording their stories. Most pupils in key stage 2 use the internet effectively to search for information and create multimedia presentations successfully, for example when presenting their work on Owain Glyndŵr. They collect data and present it suitably, and are beginning to use spreadsheets in order to present information about different cars. However, on the whole, pupils do not apply their ICT skills regularly enough across the curriculum. This limits their progress in this area.

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

Nearly all pupils show pride in their school and feel safe within its inclusive and familial ethos. They are happy to discuss any concerns with members of staff and are confident that they are listened to. They are polite and treat their peers, staff and visitors with respect.

Most pupils are caring towards each other and work and play together successfully. All Year 6 pupils take care of the foundation phase pupils by guiding them to the daily assembly and listening to them read on a weekly basis. They are enthusiastic learners that apply themselves confidently to new experiences, for example as they work together on plans to adapt the outdoor area. As a result, most respond positively to the ideas of others. Nearly all pupils understand how to behave well and most pupils listen attentively to each other in small groups. However, this is not as evident when listening to teachers' presentations in lessons.

Nearly all pupils' understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and enjoy taking part in physical education lessons and the weekly 'multisport' club. Pupils also promote the use of the fruit shop, take an interest in cooking sessions and eat healthily effectively. For example, through their theme, Year 3 and 4 pupils compare children's packed lunches during the Second World War with their healthy lunchboxes. Nearly all pupils, in line with their age, understand the importance of keeping themselves safe when using the internet.

Many pupils are beginning to contribute beneficially to their learning and suggest ideas for the termly themes confidently. Older pupils have the skills to improve their own work successfully and respond more regularly to teachers' comments on the 'way forward'.

Pupils take advantage of taking part in a number of activities in the local community, such as holding concerts and contributing to the village's agricultural show. As a result, pupils expand their knowledge and understanding of their local area intelligently and develop well as moral and conscientious citizens. Many pupils are involved in planning activities to raise money for local and national charities. For example, they contribute to a coffee morning for a well-known cancer charity, which strengthens their understanding of social issues well.

Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 play an active part in the school. The school has a number of councils, such as the eco council and the play, digital and children's rights ambassadors. They discuss their leadership roles confidently and give purposeful reasons for making decisions on behalf of others within the school community. By listening attentively to the pupil's voice, the eco council has planned and created a prayer garden and organised an annual fair trade week, which increases pupils' awareness of other people's needs successfully.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement**

The school promotes the Welsh language and Welshness very effectively. Through a number of curricular activities that are provided by all staff, they enrich pupils' knowledge and identity well. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to work with contemporary composers, poets and visit the local area and further afield. Nearly all members of staff promote pupils' use of the Welsh language and are active in enriching their language. This contributes effectively to pupils' fluent oral skills.

Teachers provide a wide range of learning experiences, which engage pupils' interest successfully. As a result, engaging themes, such as 'Cestyll a Dreigiau' (Castles and Dragons) and 'Gwingo ac Ymlusgo' (Creeping and Crawling), foster positive attitudes towards learning among pupils. The whole school has begun to play appropriately in line with the new curriculum for Wales. Teachers in key stage 2 provide opportunities for pupils to make specific choices about what they would like to learn. There are a number of effective opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across other areas of the curriculum. A good example of this is Year 5 pupils researching the dangers that plastic pose to local rivers, and Year 3 pupils comparing the life of an evacuee with their lives today through a hot seat activity. However, opportunities for pupils to use aspects of their numeracy skills in various subjects are limited. Teachers are beginning to implement the digital competence framework and provide suitable opportunities to enable pupils to use their ICT skills in various contexts.

The principles of the foundation phase have been embedded suitably. Staff plan a number of robust activities jointly in the indoor and outdoor learning areas. Recently, pupils have been given opportunities to contribute ideas for continuous activities, for example to create a building for farm animals. However, at times, staff over-direct activities and limit opportunities for pupils to work independently. On the whole, pupils do not receive activities that provide them with an appropriate challenge, which limits their progress as a result.

There is a sound relationship between staff and pupils across the school. Many teachers maintain an effective environment in their classes, in which most pupils are eager to learn. They provide a clear aim for the lesson and valuable opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills. Many teachers remind pupils of their previous learning successfully and, on the whole, lessons have a purposeful pace. Assistants provide appropriate support in order for pupils to complete their tasks and benefit from them successfully. However, most teachers do not ensure a purposeful challenge in order to stretch all pupils, particularly those who are more able. High expectations for pupils' behaviour at the beginning of lessons are also inconsistent across the school.

## **Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement**

Staff create a caring and supportive ethos for pupils within a safe environment.

Provision to develop pupils' creative skills is sound. Artistic activities are used valuably to expand pupils' cultural experiences effectively. For example, key stage 2 pupils have recently taken part in a successful project based on the poetry book, 'Geiriau Coll'. Pupils are given purposeful opportunities to emulate, listen to, and evaluate pieces of music and invite performers to the school. These experiences develop pupils' creative and expressive skills intelligently and improve their self-confidence soundly. There is a good variety of opportunities for pupils to perform in concerts in the village, compete in a book quiz and in the Urdd Eisteddfod.

Morning assemblies, religious education lessons and weekly visits by the local vicar promote pupils' spiritual and moral development effectively. Opportunities for them to take part in services in the parish church enrich this further. Teachers teach pupils about Welsh culture well through a number of activities. For example, they visit nearby castles and a residential course is organised to Llangrannog, in order to ensure that their personal and social skills develop effectively. The school has provided training for pupils in key stage 2 to understand the needs of different pupils, which adds successfully to the inclusive ethos within the classes. The school's link with a family from Belarus, and an annual visit by them, encourages pupils to compare different cultures and understand issues in the wider world effectively.

The school has appropriate arrangements for eating and drinking healthily. Break time sports sessions by the sports ambassadors, physical education lessons and competitions between nearby schools encourage pupils to keep fit successfully.

There is a robust relationship between parents and the school. The open-door policy ensures effective communication between teachers and parents. Social media is used regularly to inform parents about key events and share the different activities of each class. Through termly open evenings, parents are given purposeful opportunities to visit the school to look at their children's books, which strengthens their understanding of what they learn at school.

The school uses suitable electronic procedures to track and monitor pupils' progress. Recently, teachers have begun to use information that derives from these procedures to influence provision. However, they do not use this information rigorously enough to target specific groups of pupils, such as those who are more able.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. All pupils have a relevant individual education plan. Parents are given a purposeful opportunity to contribute towards their children's targets in open evenings. However, the targets that are set are not always specific enough, and provision does not have enough of an effect on pupils' progress and attainment. As a result, the progress of many pupils with special educational needs is limited. The school provides purposeful multimedia and social sessions regularly. These activities enable pupils to talk about their feelings in small, supportive groups and help them to cope better with daily life.

There are valuable links with specialist agencies, such as the educational psychologist, the nurse and the police. Pupils are also given purposeful opportunities



to undertake leadership roles in the life and work of the school and the community. An effective example is the role of Year 6 pupils in organising and training other pupils for the school eisteddfod, which has a positive effect on their wellbeing. Pupils understand that they have a duty to reduce any risk in their lives, such as staying safe when crossing the road. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement**

In the few weeks since the headteacher's absence, the caring and sincere leadership of the teacher in charge has supported staff successfully in order to maintain the positive, whole-school ethos. The robust vision to create a homely and inclusive community is evident, and the emphasis on ensuring the wellbeing and Welshness of pupils has been embedded fully and is a natural part of the school's work. This vision is shared successfully by staff, governors, parents and pupils.

Governors are very supportive and show pride in the school. Through regular visits and learning walks, they have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and a number of areas for improvement. Recently, they have begun to act as effective critical friends. However, over time, the governing body has not contributed enough towards setting a strategic direction for the school.

All staff work well together as a team from day to day, and teachers fulfil their roles as curriculum leaders purposefully. The school's plans to develop teachers' skills link purposefully with performance management procedures. Useful training opportunities are provided to address the school's priorities and national priorities, such as incorporating the Welsh language charter and providing more opportunities for pupils to contribute towards what they would like to learn. However, staff's strategic responsibilities are not clear and they usually operate individually within their curriculum responsibility or key stage.

The school has suitable self-evaluation procedures, including lesson observations, scrutinising work and analysing data. During the last year, these procedures have enabled staff to identify the school's strengths and some areas for improvement successfully. However, monitoring procedures do not have enough of a focus on evaluating pupils' standards. As a result, leaders have not identified important areas for development, such as the inconsistency in the quality of teaching and the lack of challenge for more able pupils.

The school's improvement work is appropriate. For example, measurable improvement and progress over time can be seen in raising pupils' standards of literacy in Welsh and English. However, self-evaluation activities do not link clearly with the school's priorities for improvement. There is not enough emphasis on measuring the effectiveness of actions for improvement.

The headteacher and governors ensure that the budget and additional grants link closely with the school's priorities, and expenditure is analysed carefully. The school benefits from significant and regular contributions by the parent, staff and friends of the school association, for example in terms of the ability to provide computer resources and new reading books. The school uses the pupil development grant creatively to improve the literacy and numeracy skills and wellbeing of pupils who are

eligible to receive it. As a result, these pupils make sound progress from their starting points.

The school has enough resources to meet all pupils' needs. Staff make the best use of the building to create an appropriate learning environment. Recently, the outdoor learning area has begun to promote pupils' creativity and social skills effectively.

## 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](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:

Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court, Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://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: 16/12/2019