



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

A report on
Ysgol Pant Pastynog
Prion
LL16 4SG

Date of inspection: June 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Pant Pastynog

Ysgol Pant Pastynog serves the villages of Prion, Peniel, Saron, Nantglyn and the surrounding rural area in Denbighshire local authority. The school is under the voluntary control of the Church in Wales.

Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work, and English is introduced in key stage 2. There are 78 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 8 part-time nursery pupils.

The average proportion of pupils who have been eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 4%, which is significantly lower than the national percentage of 19%. Around 80% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. The school has identified around 13% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is lower than the national percentage of 21%.

The school was last inspected in November 2011, and the current headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2013.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when the school is of 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

The school is a very familial, caring and inclusive community, in which nearly all pupils show great pride in being a part of it.

The headteacher's innovative and robust leadership sets a clear strategic direction for developing the school. He has very high expectations and a vision that is based on providing education of the highest possible quality. One of the excellent features of the school is the way in which members of staff and governors work together particularly effectively.

Staff establish a very good working relationship with pupils, which fosters a supportive and stimulating learning environment for them, and ensures that they achieve well. Nearly all pupils' standards of wellbeing and attitudes to learning are extremely sound. Pupils take full advantage of the valuable opportunities that are provided for them to express their views and contribute towards important aspects of the school's work. As a result, nearly all pupils make sound and consistent progress, which is at least in line with what is expected.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' creative and independent writing skills in Welsh and English, where appropriate
- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum

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 pupils' contribution to the school's life and work, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, nearly all pupils make sound and consistent progress in their learning. They show a genuine interest in their tasks and work diligently for extended periods. Nearly all pupils who come from non-Welsh-speaking homes acquire very good Welsh communication skills quickly. Pupils with additional learning needs make excellent progress against their targets.

Pupils' oracy skills are a strength across the school. Nearly all pupils listen attentively, speak clearly and express their ideas very confidently. In the foundation phase, most discuss their work with adults and other pupils knowledgeably and enthusiastically, for example when recounting the story of the visit of the author, Bethan Gwanas, to the school. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils communicate clearly in both languages and provide answers, comments and express their views extremely maturely. They show pride in the Welsh language and choose to use the language to socialise at play time, in addition to in their lessons. At the top of the school, nearly all pupils attain a very high standard of bilingualism and change freely from one language to the other when discussing their work.

Nearly all pupils' reading skills are developing very successfully. By the end of the foundation phase, most read fluently and accurately, and strive maturely to build unfamiliar words. They read with clear expression and meaning. Most pupils in key stage 2 read intelligently and maturely in both languages. They use their reading skills effectively to gather relevant information from various books and texts, and from appropriate websites, to enrich their work across the curriculum. For example, recently they have searched for information about the Romans and life during the sixties for their theme work.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their writing skills effectively. By the end of the phase, they use adjectives to enrich their work skilfully, for example when writing a description of 'Elfed yr eliffant' (Elmer the elephant). They usually spell correctly and punctuate purposefully. At the beginning of key stage 2, most pupils convey information clearly for different purposes. They use a wide range of purposeful vocabulary to enrich their work in Welsh and English, for example when creating an information leaflet about Malala Yousafzai. However, pupils' independent creative skills across the school are limited.

Most pupils develop their numeracy skills soundly as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, most develop their number skills successfully in mathematics lessons. They use simple addition, subtraction, division and multiplication strategies well. They use equipment and standard and non-standard units of measurement skilfully in a variety of tasks. They collect, record and present data correctly, for example when producing a graph to record their favourite insects. Most pupils in key stage 2 show a sound understanding of numeracy terminology and apply their skills well when solving specific challenges, such as finding out how much water one family uses over a period of time. They have a thorough understanding of fractions, percentages and decimals. They gather information and produce clear graphs to compare the effect of exercise on the heart rate, for example, and analyse

their findings skilfully. However, pupils across the school do not develop their numeracy skills soundly enough across the curriculum.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing soundly across the school. In the foundation phase, most pupils use word-processing programmes purposefully, for example to create computerised pictures and write interesting corresponding descriptions. They follow instructions confidently to control an electronic toy effectively and use animation programs skilfully to create simple presentations about the shipwreck of the Titanic. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils create and interrogate data effectively to create multimedia presentations to reinforce their work, for example to show ways of staying safe online. Older pupils use their ICT skills confidently to collect data in the form of a spreadsheet to present their work in science, or to produce a purposeful short and interesting film based on the legend of Cantre'r Gwaelod.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils' standards of wellbeing and attitudes to learning are extremely sound, and the standard of their behaviour and self-discipline is very high. They are enthusiastic learners who work particularly effectively with their peers in groups and pairs, and show a high level of maturity and respect towards the views of others. They show enjoyment and pride in their work, and persevere with their tasks for extended periods.

Across the school, most pupils contribute successfully to the activities they would like to learn at the beginning of every theme. They choose their targets independently and challenge their own learning in order to set a clear learning direction. As a result, nearly all pupils take good ownership of their learning and become increasingly aware of what they need to do to improve their own work.

Nearly all pupils take full advantage of the valuable opportunities that are provided for them to express their views and contribute to important aspects of the school's work. Members of the different committees lead very enthusiastically and show obvious pride in their contribution to several aspects of school life. The school council leads effectively when explaining children's rights to the rest of the pupils, and ensures that they understand that they have the right to be treated equally and as individuals. The sports ambassadors provide appropriate resources to enrich learning experiences successfully during break time. This makes a valuable contribution towards pupils' understanding of different aspects of their personal and social skills.

Pupils develop leadership skills very successfully and their contribution to community issues is excellent. The eco committee leads a project in partnership with Natural Resources Wales to collect and re-plant acorns to conserve forests. On the other hand, the digital champions present training sessions for members of the community on how to use ICT equipment.

Pupils support humanitarian activities regularly to raise money for a number of charities. This has a positive effect on their awareness of the needs of others in their community and the wider world.

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and appreciate that they receive high quality support from adults. They have the confidence to approach each other and any member of staff if they have any concerns. Older pupils show exceptional care for the younger pupils during break time. This is typical of the constructive and supportive relationship that exists across the school community. Nearly all pupils have a very sound understanding of the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit.

Pupils' attendance rates are consistently high. They have been above the mean in comparison with similar schools for the last five years. This reflects the fact that pupils enjoy attending school.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Across the school, staff establish a very good working relationship with pupils, which fosters a supportive and stimulating learning environment for them and ensures that they achieve well. Teachers use a rich range of successful learning methods to develop pupils' skills. They have high expectations of all pupils and their presentations and questions are of a very challenging and purposeful quality. This ensures that nearly all pupils apply themselves fully to their tasks, concentrate for extended periods and show clear motivation to succeed. Teachers and assistants work effectively as a team and take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' languages, which contributes successfully to their rich oracy skills. However, at times, they have a tendency to over-direct pupils.

Assessment for learning strategies have been established firmly throughout the school. Pupils are given constructive oral and written feedback in order for them to understand what they need to do in order to improve the standard of their work. Beneficial opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their own learning and that of their peers, and contribute effectively to the process of setting targets to improve their work. This element is one of the school's strengths and contributes well towards pupils' progress and achievement. The school provides an extensive range of rich learning experiences that meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities successfully. Through effective co-operation and setting clear guidance, teachers ensure that there are opportunities for all pupils to experience a range of stimulating activities. Cross-curricular themes expand pupils' knowledge and understanding and strengthen their commitment to their work very successfully. The 'Child's Voice' has been followed while planning the current theme of 'under the water' in the foundation phase, and the 'water' theme in key stage 2 has sparked great interest among pupils of the 'Royal Charter' disaster. This engages their commitment and interest well.

The principles of the foundation phase have been established firmly. Continuous access to the outdoor area ensures that all pupils benefit from stimulating activities, both indoors and outdoors. Effective focus tasks and continuous activities are provided, which include beneficial opportunities for pupils to investigate, role-play, build and practise their physical skills. Key stage 2 teachers build well on this foundation by encouraging pupils to apply their skills in challenging tasks. Beneficial opportunities are provided to develop pupils' literacy and ICT skills successfully across the curriculum, which ensures continuity and progression in their learning.

However, opportunities that are provided for them to develop their creative writing and numeracy skills are not as effective.

The school has a natural Welsh ethos and all staff create an extremely positive atmosphere, which promotes this skilfully and engages pupils' enthusiasm towards the language. Provision for the Welsh dimension is exciting and imaginative. Experiences such as business and enterprise week, World Book Day and visits from famous poets and authors raise pupils' awareness of Welsh traditions and celebrations well.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is a very familial, caring and inclusive community, in which nearly all pupils show great pride in being a part of it. The wellbeing of all pupils has a prominent place in the school's provision. Staff provide exceptional care, support and guidance for pupils and their families. There is a strong emphasis on celebrating diversity and treating others with respect and courtesy. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe at school and behave very well. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The school's staff nurture values such as honesty, fairness and justice highly successfully. As a result, nearly all pupils have a very positive understanding of their human rights and the importance of making sensible decisions for everyone's benefit.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is very effective. Teachers use progress-tracking procedures highly successfully to identify pupils who are in need of challenge or specific support quickly. Intervention programmes and support in the classrooms meet pupils' needs skilfully. The individual education plans of pupils with additional learning needs are purposeful and include quantitative targets to meet their needs. Plans are reviewed rigorously and regularly in consultation with pupils and their parents. The way in which the expertise of a member of staff from a nearby school is used is innovative and contributes very successfully towards ensuring provision of the highest standard for the most vulnerable pupils. As a result of these highly effective procedures, nearly all pupils with additional learning needs make excellent progress from their starting points.

The school has a very strong partnership with parents. The school operates an open-door policy highly successfully and communicates very effectively with parents to ensure that they are aware of the school's events and work. Parents attend very useful open days, which ensure that they are able to support their children at home.

The school has effective procedures to encourage pupils to eat and drink healthily, and staff further their understanding of the importance of keeping fit successfully. Beneficial opportunities for pupils to take part in calming lessons and join in with 'dal i fynd' (keep going) sessions enrich their experiences very well. Visits from individuals, such as the police community support officer, raise pupils' awareness well of the dangers of substance abuse and smoking, in addition to the dangers of using the internet. As a result, nearly all pupils understand the importance of taking care of their health and staying safe online.

Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school's work by being members of various committees. These opportunities develop pupils' leadership skills exceptionally well and have an excellent influence on school life. For example, the work of the Welsh Language Charter ambassadors is excellent and contributes highly successfully towards the excellent standard of nearly all pupils' spoken language.

The school's provision to develop pupils' understanding of Welsh culture is exceptional. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to compete in eisteddfodau, work with authors such as Bethan Gwanas, and Welsh artists. The school organises a very good variety of visits for pupils, including the Urdd residential centre in Glan-Ilyn and the home of Hedd Wyn. As a result, pupils take pride in Welsh culture, history and heritage.

Pupils learn about the culture and history of other countries exceptionally well, for example by exchanging Christmas decorations with a number of foreign countries. They learn about the lives of refugees, such as Mo Farah, and the effect of war on the lives of people from Syria. As a result, nearly all pupils, from a young age, show intense empathy towards others, which contributes successfully to the school's caring ethos.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher's innovative and robust leadership sets a clear strategic direction for developing the school. He has very high expectations, and a vision that is based on providing education of the highest possible quality to ensure that all pupils achieve to the best of their ability. He conveys this vision very successfully to staff, pupils, parents and governors. As a result, everyone has a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the very high expectations of themselves, and of pupils' standards of achievement and wellbeing.

One of the strongest features of the school's leadership is the way in which responsibilities are distributed highly effectively among staff. This is a core part of its strategy and an effective means of developing staff, promoting very successful co-operation and sharing good practice. As a result, there are clear communication procedures between all staff. They work together highly effectively as a team and meet regularly to monitor and evaluate progress against the school's priorities. All staff have a strong commitment to professional learning, and promote continuous and sustainable improvements by participating fully in the rigorous performance management arrangements, which includes agreeing on challenging and relevant targets. A good example of this includes the effective way in which the school enriches provision for pupils by encouraging them to choose an appropriate level of challenge for themselves.

An excellent feature of the school's leadership is the gracious way in which the headteacher provides valuable opportunities for members of staff to lead initiatives that are based on specific aspects of the curriculum. The assessment for learning project with a network of other schools provides excellent opportunities for staff to research and reflect on the effect of different formative assessment techniques with pupils. This ensures understanding and consistency in provision. As a result, from a very early age, pupils know how to move their learning to the next step successfully.

Members of the governing body know the school very well. They are extremely knowledgeable about the school's performance in comparison with other schools, and use this information very effectively to set priorities and targets for improvement. The expertise of members of the governing body is used very purposefully to support and challenge the headteacher and staff thoroughly, when appropriately. They visit the school regularly, which gives them an excellent overview of the school's strengths and any areas for improvement.

The school has continuous and rigorous self-evaluation procedures, which focus clearly on pupils' outcomes. They are at the heart of all of the school's life and work, and promote an honest vision to raise standards and ensure excellent wellbeing for pupils. The school has a firm commitment to including pupils' contributions in all of its decisions, including their views on the content of their termly work, in addition to general procedures for the school's day-to-day work. The school's ability to plan to ensure improvement is excellent. Progress in pupils' attainment from their starting points is good evidence of this.

Resources are used very efficiently to enrich the curriculum and raise pupils' standards in all areas. Expenditure is linked appropriately to the priorities in the improvement plan and funding is monitored carefully in order to ensure its best use and provide high quality education. For example, the pupil development grant is used prudently to raise the standards of the very few pupils who are eligible to receive it. Clear progress can be seen in these pupils' reading skills.

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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