



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

A report on

**Ysgol Porth y Felin
Ffordd Llanrwst
Conwy
LL32 8FZ**

Date of inspection: October 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Porth y Felin

Ysgol Porth y Felin voluntary controlled school is located in the historical town of Conwy. It is an English medium school but maintains a strong Welsh ethos. There are 334 pupils between the ages of 3 and 11 on roll, which includes 40 part time nursery pupils. Around 18.5% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is similar to the Welsh average of 19%. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home and very few come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school identifies around 27% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is slightly higher than the national average of 21%. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school has a resource provision for pupils with additional learning needs which also serves a few pupils from other local schools in the mornings. The headteacher was appointed in April 2018 and the school was last inspected in June 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

Ysgol Porth Y Felin is a happy, caring and hardworking community where pupils and staff collaborate well together. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points at the school and develop as confident and increasingly independent learners. Most have good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and apply these well. Nearly all pupils, regardless of ability, have a positive attitude to their learning, and show good perseverance. Most make strong progress with their Welsh language skills, with many older pupils developing into confident Welsh speakers. A strong feature of the school is the way the older pupils support and care for their younger peers through a range of well planned activities.

Teachers and staff plan a good range of engaging activities for the pupils and monitor their progress effectively. Through a wide range of self-evaluation procedures, leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They implement improvement plans and monitor progress successfully.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the planning to develop pupils' skills through active independent learning in the foundation phase, especially in the outdoor areas
- R2 Improve consistency in the planning of purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Many pupils start at the school with literacy and numeracy skills at the expected level for their age. During their time at the school most make good progress from their starting points.

Pupils with additional learning needs respond positively to their targets and nearly all make good progress towards the objectives outlined in their individual development plans. Across the age and ability range, most pupils recall prior learning with confidence and apply themselves diligently in lessons.

Pupils' speaking and listening skills are a strength across the school. From the outset nearly all pupils listen attentively and respond purposefully. Most express opinions clearly and answer questions thoughtfully. For example, most reception pupils enjoy explaining how they managed to build a bridge wide enough for the five ducks to pass below.

Many pupils make strong progress in developing their Welsh language skills. They show enthusiasm towards the language. The youngest pupils sing Welsh language songs and learn simple words and phrases effectively. Many pupils sustain their progress across key stage 2. At the end of key stage 2, many more able pupils can maintain an extended conversation with each other, with staff and with visitors. They read with confidence and expression and write effectively in familiar contexts.

Most pupils enjoy reading from an early age. In the foundation phase, most learn letters and sounds quickly and develop into independent readers. They enjoy books and love sharing them together, finding information to complete tasks, or learning new stories. Most key stage 2 pupils have strong reading skills. They read with confidence and give effective consideration to creating an impact when reading aloud. They enjoy discussing favourite authors and their favoured styles. Many have well developed higher-order reading skills, and can find information from a particular text to answer questions or develop a presentation. For example when researching a project about mount Everest.

Across the school, many pupils' writing is well developed. Foundation phase pupils enjoy mark-making and start writing from an early age. Many Year 2 pupils write effectively in a variety of genres, for example, when writing instructions on how to look after your pet dragon or when creating an imaginative story about the day the children visited the magical forest and snowy flower mountain. Most show good grasp of punctuation and spelling of familiar words.

Many key stage 2 pupils write confidently in a variety of genres. For example Year 3 and 4 pupils write an informative fact file about Thomas Telford who designed the Conwy suspension bridge. Many Year 5 and 6 pupils write a successful autobiography from the point of view of a Tudor merchant showing good understanding of the historical context.

Most pupils have well developed mathematical skills. Across the foundation phase most pupils have a strong understanding of the four rules of number. For example more able Year 2 pupils can add and subtract two digit numbers confidently. Most understand the properties of a variety of two and three dimensional shapes. Most handle data effectively and use it to produce accurate tally charts and bar graphs when investigating the colour of pupils' eyes in their class.

Most lower key stage 2 pupils use their numeracy skills to solve a range of problems and challenges. For example when investigating if taller people have bigger feet, and wider hand span. Most upper key stage 2 pupils have a firm grasp of fractions and decimals and make educated estimations based on prior learning. However, across the school, a few pupils do not write or solve mathematical problems as effectively in other contexts across the curriculum.

Across the school most pupils develop good skills in information and communication technology. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils send an email confidently and access a range of suitable software. Most pupils create pictures using a paint program, for example in their topic work on healthy living.

Most pupils in key stage 2 use suitable internet sites sensibly and confidently to select relevant information and use various presentation packages skilfully to communicate their findings. Many Year 3 and 4 pupils use technology well to control moving models made from plastic bricks. By Year 6, pupils understand the benefit of producing accurate graphs and pie charts to record the various costs of leisure activities for people in North Wales.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

The school is a happy, caring community and its ethos is effective in helping pupils develop their social and moral understanding. Nearly all pupils feel appreciated in a secure and caring environment and this, in turn, improves their self-confidence and supports their wellbeing. Pupils look after one another effectively. For example, the lunch time buddies provide sensitive support during lunch times and help the younger pupils eat independently. A strong feature of the school is the care shown by key stage 2 pupils towards their peers in the foundation phase, especially when they collaborate in joint activities such as baking apple pies together. Nearly all pupils understand how to keep themselves safe on the internet and in the wider community.

Most pupils have a strong understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and drinking water regularly. For example, pupils benefit from the strong focus on healthy lunch boxes and healthy snacks. Many pupils have positive attitudes towards physical education, and keeping fit. They value the work of the sports ambassadors in organising activities such as the tennis 'keepie uppie' competition, which many enjoy at break times. Many pupils enjoy participating in a wide range of lunch time and after school activities and clubs. Nearly all pupils feel safe and valued in school. They recognise that the school helps them to make informed sensible decisions and develop as individuals. They feel cared for and valued. They show care and respect towards each other, members of staff and visitors. Pupils speak confidently about whole school values. Most demonstrate mutual respect, show kindness towards their peers, and good perseverance during activities.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate a good standard of behaviour inside and outside of the classroom. Off-site visits are invariably followed up by providers' positive remarks, commenting on pupils' good behaviour, courtesy and willingness to tackle new experiences.

A positive learning ethos enables many pupils to become self-assured and independent learners. Nearly all pupils are aware of, and understand the significance of the school motto 'Believe, Respect, Succeed'. By using a variety of effective strategies, most pupils are equipped with some of the essential skills for learning. As a result, most realise the importance of persevering, and that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process. These skills have been disseminated to enthusiastic parents successfully by the pupils themselves during open evenings.

Nearly all pupils take ownership of the school rules which are discussed and agreed upon at the beginning of the school year. Nearly all try their utmost to comply with them, and as a result, the school is a hardworking and inclusive community.

Most pupils work effectively with their peers in pairs and groups. Most respect and challenge each other's opinions. Many have a good understanding of what they do well and what they need to do in order to improve their work.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers set high standards for behaviour and the quality of work. Mutual respect among staff and between pupils and adults is an important feature of most classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to do their best and to persevere in a calm, hardworking atmosphere. Teachers make valuable use of support staff across the school. Staff support the learning effectively and as a result most pupils make good progress in lessons. They are sensitive to the needs of pupils and their interactions reflect the high-value they place on nurturing pupils' wellbeing. This approach develops most pupils' confidence successfully.

Most teachers have high expectations and ensure a good pace to their lessons. They set clear learning objectives and use a range of resources well to engage the pupils' interests. In the best examples, teachers set challenging real life scenarios that allow pupils to use their knowledge and skills to solve problems. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils plan a school lunch that costs no more than £1 to produce.

In the lower foundation phase, staff and pupils plan a valuable range of learning activities together, which develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in the classroom and outdoors. Staff encourage pupils to make choices about what and how they learn. They then design activities that take account of their choices and develop their independent learning skills effectively. In Year 1 and 2, most teachers plan whole class literacy and numeracy activities well. However, planning to develop and improve pupils' skills through active independent learning experiences is less well developed, especially in the outdoor classroom.

Teachers are beginning to plan to implement of the digital competence framework sensibly. This enables pupils to use their ICT skills to enhance their learning in meaningful contexts. In the best examples, teachers plan exciting activities and

challenges. An example includes Year 3 and 4 pupils producing movies on Conwy to share with pupils in Pittsburgh. However, planning purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not consistent across the school. As a result, some activities are not challenging enough.

The school takes part in stimulating activities that support and enhance the curriculum well. For example, teachers and Year 5 and 6 pupils plan a field trip to Moel Wnion and use local volunteers to enrich the curriculum by teaching the pupils useful mountaineering skills. Teachers provide increased opportunities for pupils to influence and make choices about what and how they would like to learn. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 use their science, technology and numeracy skills effectively to build a boat as part of their topic on seas and oceans.

Teachers use questioning techniques purposefully to help pupils understand new concepts and to develop their knowledge and skills. Verbal feedback focuses well on how pupils can improve their work and teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to respond in order to make good progress in their learning. As a result, many pupils show good resilience and perseverance to improve specific aspects of their work. Staff provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to assess and reflect on their own performance and that of others. This allows pupils to know what they have done well and to understand what they need to do to improve further.

Nearly all teachers and teaching assistants use Welsh regularly and they provide good role models for pupils in the use of the language, which contributes successfully towards their speaking and listening skills. There is a strong Welsh ethos and the provision encourages pupils to make full use of the Welsh language in all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils develop as competent and confident bilingual learners.

The school makes good provision for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales. Pupils study and work with Welsh artists and staff ensure that pupils are given an opportunity to listen to contemporary Welsh music. The school celebrates Welsh traditions well, for example through taking part regularly in the Urdd Eisteddfod and annual St David's Day celebrations.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The quality of care and guidance provided by the school is consistently good. Nearly all pupils understand and adhere to the school's motto – Believe, Respect, Succeed. An inclusive, positive ethos is apparent throughout the school and enables nearly all pupils to flourish and develop self-confidence and to take pride in their achievements.

Staff carry out a worthwhile range of assessment and tracking procedures that carefully and accurately identify pupils' needs. As a result, staff develop and implement effective programmes to inform teaching and planning, which are successfully tailored to suit pupils' learning. Teaching assistants have detailed information about pupils' targets and support learners conscientiously. Pupils' emotional needs are addressed sensitively in a number of beneficial ways, including through nurture activities. These valuable sessions, held regularly, are housed in a creative, warm and welcoming area and have a strong impact on pupils' self-esteem. Staff work well with a range of specialist services and use their expertise to train other staff effectively. For example, all staff and key stage 2 pupils have recently

received worthwhile training on developing deeper understanding of different learning needs. As a result, most pupils have an increased awareness of the challenges their peers face, and the importance of showing empathy and understanding. Detailed displays re-inforce this work effectively.

The head teacher has fostered strong working relationships and communication with parents through a variety of different strategies. For example, the school uses social media to provide parents with regular reminders and updates of meetings and activities scheduled on the school calendar. Parents receive booklets to inform them about different school policies. For example, a leaflet on 'amazing attendance'; that was well received by a number of parents, was sent out at the beginning of the school year to emphasise the importance of regular attendance.

The provision for spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is effective. The pupils visit the local church to take part in services. For example, the local minister conducted a service on baptism with the pupils at the forefront, as part of developing the broad curriculum. Pupils' horizons are broadened through visits by people from different cultures. This enables nearly all pupils to foster links with different countries and cultures to celebrate similarities and differences and to develop tolerance, empathy and understanding. For example, the pupils learnt about Japanese culture from their friends from Japan, who visited to experience a day in a Welsh school. Pupils take great delight in activities such as comparing Conwy castle with a castle in Japan.

The school actively encourages pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles and makes appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. For example, parents have received leaflets on how to create healthy lunch boxes and the 'BOBs' Club' promotes healthy foods such as fruit salad for foundation phase pupils.

Staff provide valuable opportunities for many older pupils to develop entrepreneurial skills. An effective example is the £5 challenge which involves pupils designing a profit making activity to build on their initial investment. The school council and its sub-groups make a valuable contribution toward developing the pupils' moral and social values, and make suggestions for school improvements. For example, the school council has played a key role in the school's Fair Trade status. Group members actively take responsibility and are well supported by their peers.

Leaders monitor pupils' attendance successfully and this has had a strong effect on whole school attendance.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The head teacher provides a clear strategic direction and his vision for the school is based on developing pupils' attainment and wellbeing. The vision is shared effectively with all pupils, staff, governors and parents. The school has an effective staffing structure with clearly defined roles that reflect the current needs of the school. All members of staff contribute effectively to developing the school as a learning organisation.

The head teacher distributes leadership well and the grouping of staff in teams lead to a positive culture of sharing good practice. All staff take a lead role in addressing priorities outlined in the school development plan. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities well. They conduct effective termly meetings and sub committees, and are linked according to their strengths to specific curriculum areas. For example, governors responsible for literacy or well-being foster useful links with the relevant school staff to monitor the development of their areas of responsibility. As a result most governors have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are very supportive of the school and contribute successfully to the self-evaluation process through book scrutiny, taking part in learning walks and through interviews with curriculum leaders.

Self-evaluation activity is purposefully planned across the academic year and senior leaders draw on a range of first-hand evidence, for example from pupil, staff and parent questionnaires. They play a prominent role in self-evaluation, for example, the numeracy and literacy curriculum leaders monitor the quality of provision through an effective range of first hand evidence such as the scrutiny of planning and pupils work.

Leaders have an accurate picture of the school, and the self-evaluation report effectively identifies strengths and areas for development. The school development plan includes a comprehensive range of priorities that reflect the current needs of the school well. The document successfully identifies milestones for review, and specific costing and monitoring responsibilities.

Nearly all staff take part in a wide range of purposeful professional learning activities that have a beneficial impact on current practice and focus on enhancing provision for pupils. Nearly all staff benefit from useful collaborative working within the school and with other schools in the cluster and beyond, such as the more able and talented school to school project. The school has effective procedures for the performance management of teaching and support staff. These procedures are directly linked to school priorities and successfully address the personal development needs of the staff.

Leaders and governors monitor the budget effectively and ensure that the school secures value for money. They make prudent decisions to ensure that financial planning conforms to regulations and meets the needs of the school. Leaders allocate resources effectively to support current school priorities and strategies, for example, to provide a wider range of ICT equipment. The school is sufficiently staffed and the head teacher deploys staff effectively to ensure the needs of pupils are met. For example, the effective use of staff specialism to develop curricular areas such as physical education. The school has a detailed spending plan for the pupil development grant that effectively outlines areas where the grant is used. For example, to provide purposeful interventions for specific groups of pupils with lower basic skills. Pupil progress is tracked effectively and as a result most pupils eligible for free school meals make good progress.

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.

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

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