



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

A report on

**Ysgol T. Gwynn Jones
Llanlian Road
Old Colwyn
Colwyn Bay
Conwy
LL29 9UA**

Date of inspection: November 2019

by

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

About Ysgol T. Gwynn Jones

Ysgol T. Gwynn Jones is an infant school in Colwyn Bay in Conwy local authority. There are 219 pupils on roll aged from three to seven years, including 48 who attend part-time in the nursery. The school organises its pupils into six single-age classes, plus the nursery.

Around 23% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average of 18%. The school identifies about 22% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is close to the national average of 21%. A very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background or have English as an additional language. A few pupils speak Welsh at home. The local authority looks after a very few pupils at the school.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2012. The school's previous inspection was in May 2014.

The school is currently working with the Welsh Government and other schools to take forward developments relating to education reform in Wales.

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 T Gwynn Jones is a vibrant infant school that provides a caring learning environment for its pupils. Nearly all pupils participate enthusiastically in learning activities and enjoy attending school. Most make strong progress in all areas of the foundation phase curriculum and demonstrate high levels of wellbeing. For example, pupils work and play together kindly and successfully.

Teachers and leaders have created a stimulating curriculum that pupils find engaging. They ensure that pupils have rich opportunities to learn outdoors. They focus well on developing the whole child and recognise the importance of developing pupils' physical skills. For example, they develop pupils' body control effectively through activities such as dancing, gymnastics, sawing and hammering.

The headteacher's vision provides purposeful direction for the school community. Leaders and teachers recognise the importance of working towards improvement priorities as a team. They develop staff skills and knowledge, and engage with other schools and national bodies to ensure that this happens effectively. Leaders value the input of stakeholders, such as parents and the governing body. These groups make a valuable contribution to school life.

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 Focus self-evaluation activities more closely on monitoring the quality and impact of new initiatives
- R2 Improve arrangement for pupils who require support in Reception and Year 1
- R3 Improve opportunities for pupils to approach tasks independently and creatively

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

When they start school, many pupils' skills and understanding are at, or below, those expected for their age. As they progress through the foundation phase, many make strong progress and achieve well. Many pupils with special educational needs make effective progress towards meeting their personal objectives. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals generally achieve as well as other pupils, and a few exceed expectations for their age.

By Year 2, many pupils develop effective communication skills. They listen attentively to adults and their classmates, responding to questions well. Many share their ideas and personal experiences skilfully. For example, pupils in Year 1 explain carefully how they constructed a shelter for animals to use as a winter home. Many use an extended vocabulary accurately. For example, pupils in the Reception class discuss the lives of animals, using words such as 'habitat' and 'nocturnal' correctly.

Early on in the foundation phase, many pupils develop a useful understanding of letters and sounds. Nearly all pupils listen attentively when adults read, and recall the main characters and events in stories well. For example, pupils in Year 2 listen to an autumn story and respond in detail to teachers' questions in English and Welsh. By the end of the phase, nearly all pupils have very positive attitudes to reading. Many use a suitable range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words, including a good knowledge of letters and sounds.

In the Nursery, many pupils develop their early mark-making skills effectively. For example, they begin to hold coloured pencils correctly and colour in letter shapes carefully. By Year 2, many pupils write well in a broad range of styles, such as when writing their weekly news and when writing letters to tell others how to be ecologically friendly. Most pupils use their literacy skills well across the curriculum, for example when predicting and then explaining what will happen when ice warms.

Most pupils make a positive start to developing their understanding of the Welsh language and use these skills well throughout the phase. In the Reception classes, pupils respond effectively to the regular use of Welsh. For example, they give detailed responses when asked what the weather is like. By Year 2, many pupils use a broad range of simple language patterns well. For example, they greet and question others confidently, asking how they are that day. A majority of older pupils are beginning to develop a simple understanding of how to explain what they have been doing using the past tense, for example by telling others where they have been.

Most pupils develop their mathematical skills well. In the nursery, many are beginning to transfer mathematical skills to play activities confidently, for example when counting stars into a box. By Year 2, many pupils count reliably in 2s, 5s and 10s. They use coins correctly when paying for items and giving change in the home corner. Many gather and record data effectively, for example when constructing tally charts of class responses to questions about superheroes. Most pupils use their numeracy skills well across the curriculum in their day-to-day, independent learning activities. For example, they use their understanding of Venn diagrams effectively to sort insects by different criteria in their science work.

By Year 2, many pupils use word-processing purposefully to support their curriculum work. For example, they write letters about improvements they would like to see in Old Colwyn. They understand well how to programme a simple robot to move along a given course. Many use tablet computers confidently to scan work on the walls, which allows them to see pupils narrating what they have done. They log in to programmes confidently, and access and complete the work that their teacher has put in their 'to do' file.

Many pupils develop important skills, such as problem solving, thinking and physical skills, well as they progress through the school. For example, in the Reception class, pupils develop physical dexterity and accuracy while hammering wooden tees into polystyrene blocks. Many pupils in Year 1 demonstrate strong physical skills while balancing, jumping from height and landing carefully on large apparatus in the hall. They manoeuvre large cardboard tubes, heavy blocks and branches skilfully in the outdoors to make a den.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Pupils are proud of their school and feel safe in its inclusive environment. They are happy to discuss any worries with staff, and are confident that adults listen to them and act upon their concerns and suggestions. Many pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe at school and when they are online. For example, older pupils speak confidently about the need to keep personal information safe from people they do not know. Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. Many have a good understanding of the importance of keeping fit and know how exercise is good for their bodies. For example, pupils in the Reception class explain that if you eat 'healthy vegetables' you will live longer.

Most pupils behave consistently well inside and outside the classroom. They are polite and treat their classmates, staff and visitors with respect. Nearly all are caring towards each other, and work and play together very successfully. For example, 'yard buddies' are watchful on the school playground and offer immediate support to any pupils who want someone to play with.

Most pupils across the school have positive attitudes towards their learning. They settle quickly at the beginning of lessons, listen attentively to presentations and focus on independent learning activities purposefully. Many pupils are resilient and persevere well when faced with challenging activities. For example, pupils in Year 1 work diligently as a group to build a den in the outdoor environment. Most pupils embrace new experiences readily, such as when using a saw for the first time in the 'STEM room'. Many discuss their work with their peers willingly, respect the contributions of others and respond positively to their ideas. Most pupils make a beneficial contribution to their learning by offering ideas to be included in the termly themes, such as wanting to find out more about endangered animals.

Pupils with leadership roles are conscientious and take their responsibilities seriously as members of the school council and Criw Cymraeg. For example, members of the school council suggest charities to support and provide worthwhile ideas on how to improve the outdoor areas. However, pupils make a limited contribution to decisions about wider school life.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers plan and deliver an interesting range of learning activities that engage pupils effectively. They ensure that there is an appropriate balance between adult-led activities and purposeful opportunities for pupils to work independently. For example, in Year 2, pupils work with adults to identify and find autumnal objects in the outdoors, while others practise using money during role-play in the shop. In most classes, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do, and adapt learning effectively for pupils who need support or more challenge. They ask questions skilfully that encourage pupils to think and develop their responses effectively. For example, they encourage younger pupils to extend their oral responses and explain how they know an object is a particular shape, such as a triangle.

During lessons, teachers and support assistants observe pupils carefully as they work. They record pupils' accomplishments beneficially and this allows them to plan future learning that builds on pupils' skills successfully. They provide useful written feedback for older pupils that helps them to understand when they have been successful. Pupils have suitable opportunities to assess their own work and performance and that of others. For example, pupils in Year 2 identify effective practice and comment helpfully on how others can improve their dance.

The school's curriculum provides a wide range of engaging learning experiences that meet pupils' needs well. In most classes, teachers plan a suitable variety of learning activities to develop pupils' skills in the indoor and outdoor areas. They focus their learning around a range of topics that interest pupils well. For example, in Year 1, pupils enjoy learning about the season in their 'times they are a-changing' topic. These planned topics ensure that pupils have valuable learning experiences across all foundation phase areas of learning. For example, all teachers recognise the importance of developing pupils' physical skills. They plan purposeful opportunities to teach these important skills, from using tweezers, saws and hammers to jumping and balancing. Most pupils have worthwhile opportunities to take part in art and craft activities, but adults tend to structure pupils' opportunities to be creative too heavily. This limits pupils' independence and chances to be imaginative.

The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of Welsh culture. Throughout the school, all pupils study well-known contemporary Welsh people, such as Tom Jones. They learn about Welsh history and places through activities such as visiting Conwy Castle. Pupils celebrate local culture and history, studying Old Colwyn and examining the work of a local artist.

All teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a wide variety of contexts across all areas of learning. They plan these activities carefully so that pupils have beneficial opportunities to develop and consolidate the skills they have learned during focused activities. For example, in Year 1, pupils develop their understanding of shapes and length more fully when creating enclosures with coloured rods and lolly sticks. In the Reception classes, pupils improve their understanding of letters and their associated sounds when searching for animal names in the outdoors that they match to given pictures. Most pupils receive appropriate opportunities to use their ICT skills. These support their work across the curriculum well. For example, in Year 1, they use apps confidently to play games that improve their spelling. In Year 2, pupils use word-processing software to write letters and develop a fuller understanding of direction and distance when programming a small robot.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy and caring community that values all pupils and adults highly. Positive behaviour strategies secure high standards of politeness and mutual respect effectively. Staff implement consistently well an agreed programme designed to help develop pupils' emotional awareness and interpersonal skills. This builds pupils' confidence, self-esteem and kindness for others effectively.

Staff monitor all pupils' progress diligently. They identify pupils who need extra help and implement valuable support for many through suitable intervention programmes that are adapted to meet their individual needs. They build one page profiles for pupils with special educational needs that help staff to monitor pupils' effectively. Teachers review them thoroughly in consultation with pupils and parents. Where needed, the school uses specialist services beneficially, for example for pupils with speech and language needs. However, current arrangements for a minority of pupils in Reception and Year 1 who need support in literacy and numeracy do not enable pupils to make effective enough progress.

The school supports pupils with emotional, health and social needs successfully. For example, the employment of a specialist play therapist helps the most vulnerable pupils feel settled and happy in school. A team of committed teaching assistants provide valuable support to vulnerable pupils and ensure that they are well cared for and that they progress well towards their targets.

The school provides beneficial opportunities to ensure that pupils are able to make sensible choices about how to stay safe. Opportunities include personal education lessons about keeping themselves safe, and how to stay safe online. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and has appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking. Pupils learn about the impact of lifestyle choices and behaviours through a broad range of resources and presentations from specialist visitors, such as members of the police service. Teachers provide worthwhile opportunities to support pupils in making healthy lifestyle choices, for example a visit to the local health food shop to learn about making sensible food choices and sustainability. The school provides pupils with a useful range of physical activities and extra-curricular clubs, for example judo and athletics. This promotes pupils' awareness of the importance of keeping fit.

There are effective arrangements to help parents support their children's learning at home. For example, the school provides play and learning sessions that parents can attend to learn how to help develop their child's awareness of phonics, and improve their spelling and reading skills. Most parents have a strong sense of belonging to a caring school community, which derives from the school's successful open-door policy.

The school provides pupils with valuable opportunities to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural skills. They ensure that all pupils benefit from mindfulness sessions that help them to think about how to deal with worries. All pupils and staff focus well on the health service's 'five ways to wellbeing'. This helps children and

adults take note of how they feel and what steps to take to remain physically and mentally healthy. Teachers encourage pupils to be responsible citizens who are willing to help others. The school's work within the community contributes effectively towards this, such as the choir singing for the local nursing home.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher's vision for the school focuses primarily on the development of high levels of pupil wellbeing as a basis for strong pupil progress and attainment. This overarching vision informs the school's strategic decision-making effectively. It has supported the establishment of many beneficial aspects of the school's provision, such as the work of the family liaison officer and play therapist. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. She has enhanced standards and the quality of provision well since the last inspection. Her engagement in national programmes and organisations, such as her involvement with the National Academy for Education Leadership, has strengthened the school's capacity to develop its own leaders and helped to widen staff understanding of current educational developments.

Senior leaders model strong professional values and behaviours, and work well as a team. Staff at all levels have purposeful opportunities to undertake leadership roles in relation to priorities within the school development plan, for example developing approaches based on 'five ways of wellbeing'. The school responds positively to local and national priorities, such as the new curriculum for Wales. For example, leaders and staff have begun to consider carefully how their new curriculum will reflect the significant changes that this curriculum will bring. They have engaged governors and parents purposefully in considering how a curriculum for younger pupils could reflect the curriculum's four purposes.

The school has a strong track record of improvement, for example in relation to improved oracy skills, better reading by boys and greater support for pupils' wellbeing. The school's priorities are appropriate and derive sensibly from the outcomes of the school's self-evaluation processes. These include learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations. Staff at all levels contribute regularly and effectively to an online portal that builds up an emerging picture of improvement actions linked to school priorities. These processes give the school a secure understanding of its strengths and areas for development across many aspects of its life and work. However, self-evaluation does not always take place promptly enough after a significant change in provision to check that it is having the required effect.

The governing body supports the school well and provides constructive challenge when required. Members of the governing body undertake a suitable range of monitoring activities to give them first hand knowledge and understanding of the life and work of the school. Governors access the school's online self-evaluation tool and this helps them to see an emerging picture of how staff are implementing actions within the school development plan and their impact on pupils.

The school has a strong culture of professional learning. Senior staff engage purposefully in professional learning opportunities, such as training for aspiring headteachers and the middle leaders' development programme. Staff undertake

focused visits to each other's classes and plan together effectively. All teachers have a target to undertake research in areas identified through the performance management process. This is increasing their awareness of research findings and work in other schools, and is making a difference to the school and its pupils.

The main classrooms and communal areas in the school are pleasant and productive places for teaching and learning, but there are limitations in the use and quality of the 'ocean room' intervention space. Nearly all classrooms have suitable access to reasonably well-developed outdoor areas.

There are clear links between priorities in the school development plan and spending decisions. The school is successful in attracting significant additional funds, for example through the headteacher's involvement in the National Academy for Education Leadership. The school has moved from a substantial deficit five years ago to a significant surplus. The school's reserves are relatively high, but there are well-developed plans to reduce these during the year, mainly through the further development of outdoor areas. Leaders generally make suitable use of the pupil development grant. Much of the funded work focuses on the development of pupils' wellbeing, for example through play therapy and family liaison work. There is also a suitable emphasis on developing pupils' language skills, especially their speaking and listening. However, the priorities do not relate enough to improvements in the attainment of the targeted pupils.

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)

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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