



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Y Bedol  
Cwmamman Road  
Glanamman  
Ammanford  
Carmarthenshire  
SA18 1DZ**

**Date of inspection: October 2018**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Y Bedol

Ysgol y Bedol is located in the village of Glanamman, in Carmarthenshire. There are 357 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including nine full-time and 37 part-time nursery-age children. They are divided into 14 classes, including three mixed age classes.

Approximately 30% of pupils on average over a rolling three-year period are eligible for free school meals. This is significantly higher than the national percentage of 18%. A few pupils speak Welsh at home and very few are from an ethnic minority background. The school has identified 38% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. This is again significantly higher than the national percentage of 21%. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2017 and the school was last inspected in April 2012.

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 wellbeing and care of pupils are central to the work of Ysgol y Bedol. Staff place a strong emphasis on creating a safe learning environment for their pupils, which has a relatively positive impact on their behaviour and wellbeing. However, teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations in terms of pupils' standards or academic aspirations, especially in the development of their Welsh language oral skills. As a result, a minority of pupils do not make sufficient progress, especially in key stage 2.

In a short period, current leaders have established an ethos of successful co-operation among staff. They have made beneficial improvements to aspects of provision and pupils' standards. Although leaders identify the school's strengths and many of the areas for improvement, monitoring procedures are not always rigorous enough to identify or address important issues such as the lack of challenge in teaching.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</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 Ensure that the school addresses the safeguarding issue raised about the car park
- R2 Raise teachers' expectations to ensure that teaching is challenging enough and responds appropriately to the needs of pupils of all abilities
- R3 Improve pupils' Welsh language oral skills
- R4 Improve pupils' reading and writing skills in both languages in key stage 2
- R5 Improve teachers' understanding of levelling and ensure that their assessments are accurate
- R6 Strengthen leaders' monitoring role to ensure that procedures are thorough enough to address the areas for improvement

## **What happens next**

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

## Main findings

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

Many pupils start school with communication skills and mathematical skills that are lower than expected for their age. Across the school, many pupils make progress that is at least appropriate from their starting points. Many pupils with additional learning needs make appropriate progress towards reaching their targets. On the whole, more able pupils do not make effective enough progress in relation to their ability.

Most Nursery pupils begin to grasp the Welsh language soon after they start school. They develop an effective understanding of the Welsh language and begin to use new vocabulary when discussing their work, for example when describing the colour of their eyes to create a class graph. However, as they move through the school, many pupils do not build on their Welsh language oral skills effectively enough in lessons or during break times. On the whole, they do not have a strong enough grasp of Welsh language syntax and a lack of vocabulary hinders their ability to discuss their work confidently. In key stage 2, however, many pupils' English language oral skills develop soundly.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop a sound phonological awareness. By the end of Year 2, many can read fluently and with some expression. They discuss the content of their stories confidently. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils do not make enough progress in their Welsh language reading skills. By Year 6, the majority read without confidence and their understanding of different texts is not sufficiently robust. Many pupils' English language reading skills develop appropriately. However, in both languages, their use of skills such as scan reading is not sufficiently well developed.

Many pupils' early writing skills are developing well. They form letters correctly and begin to write simple sentences to convey meaning. For example, in Reception, a few of the more able pupils use their skills independently to re-tell the story of Gelert. Many build on these skills increasingly as they move through the foundation phase. Across key stage 2, the majority of pupils have a sound understanding of different forms of writing, for example when writing an informal letter to parents from an evacuee's point of view during the Second World War in Year 5 and 6. However, pupils do not use their writing skills accurately enough or at a high enough level in Welsh or English, because teachers give them too much structure. As a result, pupils do not extend their ideas independently. On the whole, pupils do not apply their skills consistently enough when writing across the curriculum.

Across the school, many pupils develop number, shape, measuring and data-handling skills effectively. By Year 2, most can recognise coins up to £1 confidently and can arrange coins correctly from the smallest to the largest denomination. They make sound use of their understanding of addition to calculate a total and pay for items in 'Siop y Bedol' in the outdoor area. In key stage 2, many pupils use their number skills effectively to solve problems. For example, in Year 5 and 6, pupils find information in order to estimate and calculate independently the perimeter, surface area and volume of different boxes. Across the school, pupils do not use their numeracy skills regularly enough when working across the curriculum.

Most pupils across the foundation phase develop a wide range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills successfully. They use these skills confidently across the areas of learning. A good example of this is the way they create graphs to indicate litter collected throughout the school in the course of a week. Many pupils in key stage 2 develop safe web-based research skills well. They develop appropriate skills to produce and use databases to analyse information and to follow specific lines of inquiry, for example about aircraft during the Second World War. Their understanding of the use of spreadsheets when modelling is developing appropriately.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement**

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are very friendly and caring towards each other and treat adults and visitors with respect and courtesy.

Most pupils feel safe at school and are confident that staff respond promptly to any concerns they have. They have a valuable understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet. For example, older pupils explain successfully the importance of keeping contact details confidential.

Most pupils across the school have an appropriate understanding of healthy living and they make sensible choices in relation to food and physical activity. Many take advantage of the 'Hwyl a Heini' clubs that give them a beneficial opportunity to focus on health after school hours. Bronze ambassadors plan interesting activities for the rest of the pupils during break times. This has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour on the playground.

The school council is active and supports the school's priorities appropriately, for example by contributing to creating a code of conduct for key stage 2. However, their role in leading their activities and making strategic decisions has not developed fully. A few pupils shoulder any additional responsibilities that are delegated to them seriously, for example the Digital Wizards who support pupils effectively with their ICT skills.

Across the school, most pupils work sensibly with a partner and in groups. In the foundation phase, most pupils have a positive attitude towards their work. They show enthusiasm and persevere diligently with their tasks. An effective example of this is the way they recycle materials to build a tractor in the outdoor area. This develops their ability to work independently successfully from a young age. In key stage 2, many pupils keep on task appropriately. However, a lack of ambition and over-reliance on adult support and ready-made frameworks hinder their ability to complete tasks independently to a high standard. In the foundation phase, many pupils contribute appropriately to what they wish to learn within the areas, but pupils' contribution to this is not as clear in key stage 2.

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

Across the school, teachers create an effective working relationship with pupils. They manage their behaviour skilfully and sensitively, which leads to creating and maintaining a safe learning environment.

Teachers plan jointly, which ensures that pupils receive the same experiences across different years of learning. Overall, teachers offer interesting activities for pupils, which engaging the interest of the majority successfully. Effective examples of this include encouraging pupils to make blackberry jam sandwiches in the Reception class and to conduct scientific investigations to discover how different drinks affect teeth in key stage 2. Effective use is made of educational visits to enrich the curriculum, for example visiting Llancaiach Fawr to learn about life during the Tudor period.

Nearly all teachers share lesson aims and objectives together with clear success criteria with pupils. In the minority of classes where teaching is most effective, teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to work independently and encourage them to persevere with any difficulties with their work. In these classes, teachers question pupils skilfully to encourage them to think for themselves.

In the minority of classes where teaching is less effective, teachers take too much of a lead in activities. The pace of lessons is too slow, and as a result, pupils do not achieve enough within a specific period. On the whole, throughout the school, teachers do not always have high enough expectations or aspirations for their pupils, especially in the development of their Welsh language oracy skills. Although many teachers are appropriate language models within lessons, they do not correct pupils' language consistently enough nor do they plan purposefully enough to develop their oral skills progressively over time.

Recently, the school has been focusing on embedding of the principles of the foundation phase robustly. Teachers now plan purposefully to ensure a suitable balance between adult-led and pupil-led activities in the classroom and outdoors. They are beginning to design purposeful challenges that have a positive impact on pupils' ability to work independently. However, these challenges are not always clear enough to pupils, nor do they offer them enough challenge.

In order to prepare for the new curriculum for Wales, the school has begun to develop some of the principles of the foundation phase in key stage 2. Therefore, teachers are beginning to plan a few suitable opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum. However, teachers do not tailor activities effectively enough to support and challenge pupils of all abilities so that they make the best possible progress within lessons.

Many teachers plan regular activities for pupils to use their literacy skills appropriately across the curriculum. For example, in Year 5 and 6, they write an explanatory text in English to describe the effect of smoking on the body. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in work across the curriculum. Teachers do not plan purposefully enough to teach literacy and numeracy skills progressively or to the appropriate level.

Over the past year, the school has improved the use of formative assessment strategies, including offering suitable opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers. In most cases, many teachers offer appropriate oral feedback to move the learning forward. Written comments are beginning to offer relevant feedback to pupils on how to improve their subsequent work with suitable opportunities for them to respond to the feedback.

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

One of the school's main strengths is the support and provision for vulnerable pupils and their families. Staff create a caring and supportive ethos in a safe environment for pupils. As a result, most of them feel confident about sharing their feelings as well as their concerns with staff and peers. The purposeful focus on promoting wellbeing and supporting pupils with emotional, health and social needs is effective. A good example of this is the way in which the school offers a range of intervention groups for those pupils who have difficulty with managing their feelings. This has had a positive impact on improving the behaviour of groups of pupils.

The school provides direct experiences for pupils to make a difference in the community. This develops pupils' personal and social wellbeing well. An effective example of this is the valuable opportunity given to the Eco Committee to work with the town council in planting trees in the local community.

Recent improvements in provision for pupils with additional learning needs are beginning to ensure consistency and thoroughness in the school's procedures. However, targets set in individual education plans are not always specific enough to measure pupils' progress effectively and they are not evaluated consistently enough at specific times during the year. In the main, teachers' planning and classroom practices on a day-to-day basis do not always give sufficient attention to these pupils' individual needs. As a result, the progress of many pupils with additional learning needs is satisfactory, particularly in terms of literacy. However, valuable links exist with specialist services, for example providing valuable help for adults working with pupils with medical needs or statements of special educational needs.

Relatively recently, the school established appropriate electronic procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress as they move through the school. Leaders and teachers are beginning to use the information that derives from them to monitor the progress of specific groups of pupils. However, many teachers do not have a thorough enough understanding of pupils' standards, therefore judgements on pupils' achievement based on their assessments are not always an accurate reflection of their ability.

The school has successful arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. Teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to study the impact of healthy eating and drinking on their bodies as part of the curriculum. For example, pupils in key stage 2 have had beneficial opportunities to investigate sugar in drinks and specific activities were organised to promote good practice in this area for national healthy eating week. This has a positive impact on pupils' understanding of the importance of a balanced diet. The school provides a range of regular and beneficial opportunities to ensure that pupils make healthy lifestyle choices by taking part in regular physical exercise activities as part of physical education lessons and after-school activities. The opportunity for older pupils to use the community fitness room on a regular basis is an effective example. The school provides rich opportunities for pupils to benefit from a range of adventurous experiences, for example during a visit to an outdoor residential centre.

Staff place a successful emphasis on developing values across the school. Aspects of equality, diversity and sustainability are developed effectively through a personal and social education programme. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural attitudes



are promoted comprehensively through studying world beliefs and regular sessions of collective worship. Pupils also benefit from regular visits by community religious leaders who make purposeful contributions to developing these aspects.

The school has a positive relationship with parents and the new headteacher has established effective lines of communication with them using social websites and parents' forums. As a result, an increasing number of parents are beginning to co-operate with the school on issues that affect their children's learning and wellbeing. The school is developing support for parents appropriately to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to enable them to support their own children. A good example of this is the way in which the school has organised mathematics and Welsh language training sessions for parents which have been delivered by external providers.

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. However, the inspection team drew school leaders' attention to a health and safety issue relating specifically to arrangements for dropping off and collecting pupils in the car park.

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

Within a short period, the headteacher and senior management team have succeeded in creating an ethos of successful co-operation among staff. Their leadership is beginning to have a positive impact on the school's strategic development. They have a sound vision based on creating a caring school in which pupils' wellbeing is central to their work. They share this vision successfully with staff, governors and parents. Recently, the headteacher and senior management team have implemented a number of valuable strategies that have had a positive impact on improving pupils' wellbeing and on a few aspects of provision and pupils' standards. However, they do not always have high enough expectations or aspirations, especially in relation to developing aspects of teaching and developing pupils' Welsh language oral skills.

Governors are very supportive of the school and undertake their duties conscientiously. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and a number of the areas in need of development. Recently, they have been using their strengths beneficially in order to act effectively as critical friends. The findings of their regular visits are beginning to strengthen the self-evaluation process and contribute soundly to priorities for the school improvement plan.

Nearly all senior leaders are new to their roles. They are developing an awareness of their roles and responsibilities in the appropriate improvement of various important areas of teaching and learning. For example, they have begun to lead in areas in need of improvement, such as ensuring that the principles of the foundation phase are embedded fully. This has had a positive impact on improving provision and ensuring that pupils have beneficial opportunities to develop as independent learners.

Leaders have established appropriate self-evaluation procedures, which include lesson observations, talking to pupils, scrutinising work and analysing data. These procedures are useful in enabling them to identify the school's strengths and many of

the areas for improvement. However, monitoring procedures do not always have sufficient focus on evaluating pupils' standards. As a result, leaders have failed to identify a few important areas in need of improvement, such as the lack of challenge in teaching. There is a close link between the findings of the self-evaluation processes and improvement plans. On the whole, the school development plan identifies useful actions for improving aspects of provision and pupils' standards. However, success criteria are not always ambitious or quantitative enough to enable leaders to measure progress effectively enough.

Clear arrangements are in place to manage the performance of all school staff. However, leaders do not always use these arrangements thoroughly enough to hold staff to account sufficiently about pupils' performance. Valuable training opportunities for staff professional development are provided in line with the school's priorities and the performance management of individual staff. An effective example of this is phonics training which is having a positive impact on pupils' reading skills in the foundation phase.

The school has a generous complement of staff and they are used appropriately to teach the curriculum. On the whole, the school has enough good quality equipment to support pupils' learning effectively although there are not enough good quality reading books to encourage pupils to read. The school building and the extensive outdoor area provide an attractive environment for pupils to learn.

Funding is monitored carefully by the business manager, governors and senior management team. Expenditure is closely linked to the plan to develop the school's priorities. The school makes appropriate use of the pupil development grant, for example in maintaining interventions to improve the wellbeing and emotions of vulnerable pupils.

## 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.

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