



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

A report on

**Ysgol Y Faenol
Penrhosgarnedd
Bangor
Gwynedd
LL57 2NN**

Date of inspection: January 2019

by

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

About Ysgol y Faenol

Ysgol y Faenol is situated in Penrhosgarnedd in the city of Bangor. The school is under the voluntary control of the Church in Wales and is maintained by Gwynedd local authority. 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.

Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 212 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 20 part-time nursery age pupils. The school has eight single age classes.

Over the last three years, around 5% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national percentage (18%). Approximately 10% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Around 22% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Very few receive support to learn English as an additional language. The school has identified around 14% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is lower 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. The school was last inspected in October 2010.

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 caring and inclusive community where pupils and adults work together effectively. As a result, pupils are happy to attend, behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. During their time there, most make sound progress and achieve well.

Teachers plan practical, stimulating and rich learning experiences, which meet pupils' needs effectively. Provision in the foundation phase is highly successful and ensures that pupils show a particularly high level of independence. The school has a strong Welsh ethos and, as a result, many pupils become competent and confident bilingual learners.

The headteacher and management team provide purposeful leadership, which sets a clear strategic direction for the school. All staff are dedicated and enthusiastic, and work together closely as a team. They show strong commitment to promoting continuous and sustainable improvements. Governors have a sound understanding of the school and use their knowledge purposefully to challenge the school and hold it to account for its performance.

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 Share the best features of teaching across the school
- R2 Improve pupils' oral Welsh skills
- R3 Strengthen opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to improve their numeracy skills and aspects of their ICT 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 provision in the foundation phase that fosters pupils' independence, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress as they move through the school, and achieve well.

Although the Welsh language is new to most pupils on entry to the school, most pupils' oral skills develop soundly and quickly in the nursery class. Across the foundation phase, most pupils use an increasing range of vocabulary successfully in various situations. This can be seen clearly as pupils in the reception class create a recipe for dinosaur food and when pupils in Year 2 discuss the legend of 'The Secret of King March'. Many pupils in key stage 2 build well on this firm foundation and speak Welsh correctly. By Year 6, many are competent and confident bilingual learners. However, limited vocabulary and awkward syntax hinder a few pupils' confidence to communicate confidently when discussing their work. Most pupils in key stage 2 communicate confidently in English. By Year 6, most discuss their work intelligently and maturely, and use extensive and rich vocabulary, for example when discussing the feelings of a mother as she says goodbye to her child during the Second World War.

Most pupils enjoy reading and make good progress every year. The youngest pupils identify letters and sounds correctly and are beginning to recognise words confidently. By Year 2, most pupils read meaningfully and with expression, and discuss the content of their books maturely. In key stage 2, most pupils read intelligently in both languages. They develop their higher order reading skills effectively in a variety of contexts. For example, these pupils gather information from different sources when comparing two locations in Sri Lanka, and analyse a newspaper article to research the effect of the Blitz on the residents of Cardiff.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their early writing skills successfully. They develop sound writing skills by the end of the phase. They write independently, understand the different writing styles well and extend their ideas effectively, for example when writing about their visit to Beaumaris castle. As they move through key stage 2, most pupils write at length in both languages, and use paragraphs and punctuation with increasing accuracy. By Year 6, most adapt the style and structure of different texts skilfully, for example when creating monologues and diaries based on the life of evacuees, or when writing about their visit to Cardiff. They use their re-drafting skills masterfully to improve their work.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in their mathematical development. They apply their skills skilfully, for example when preparing food for the three bears. By Year 2, they have a sound grasp of number facts, handle money correctly and develop a good understanding of measurement. Most pupils in key stage 2 build well on this firm foundation. By Year 6, most use a range of problem-solving methods confidently, for example when calculating the cost of a Welsh breakfast. However, they do not always use their numeracy skills at the same high level in activities across the curriculum as they do in mathematics lessons.

Most pupils make purposeful use of their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support their work across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils in the foundation phase use electronic tablets effectively, for example when Year 2 pupils use a simple animation program to record King March's journey to the party. They use a simple database confidently to record the shoe sizes of members of the class, for example. Most pupils in key stage 2 use the internet effectively to search for information, and create multimedia presentations successfully to present their findings, for example when creating an information leaflet to attract visitors to Nant Gwrtheyrn. However, only a minority of pupils in key stage 2 develop a good understanding of how to handle data to enable them to follow specific lines of enquiry across the curriculum.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are very willing to discuss their work and successes with adults. They show motivation in their work, work together in harmony and apply themselves diligently to their tasks. This contributes successfully to the ethos of effective learning that exists within the school and has a positive effect on pupils' standards.

Pupils in the foundation phase play a key part in organising the variety of activities in the learning areas. This engages them and motivates them to learn successfully. They are always willing to learn and show an exceptional level of independence. Nearly all pupils concentrate well and show resilience when facing new challenges. Most pupils in key stage 2 respond positively to the opportunities they are given to influence what they would like to learn within the termly theme. They show an increasing ability to plan jointly and express an opinion about what they learn. As a result, many develop to become independent, confident and ambitious learners. From an early age, most pupils have a good understanding of how to improve their work. At the top of the school, pupils show maturity when evaluating what they have achieved and identifying what they need to do to progress their learning.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite towards each other, staff and visitors, and show pride when talking about their school. Most pupils have good social and life skills. They are caring towards each other during break times and lunchtime, and older pupils are very willing to undertake roles and responsibilities as 'ffrindiau ffeind' (kind friends) by helping to care for the younger pupils and encouraging them to play during break time. This promotes care and responsibility among pupils. Most pupils are proud of the opportunities they are given to develop their leadership skills. Through various committees and groups that represent pupils, they contribute appropriately to the school's life and work. Pupils are active in supporting various charities, including the Royal National Institute for the Blind. This has a positive effect on most pupils' awareness of the needs of others in their community and the wider world.

Nearly all pupils enjoy school. They feel completely safe there and know whom to approach for advice if anything is worrying them. They are confident that the school responds promptly to any concerns they may have. Most pupils have a sound awareness of how to stay safe when using the internet. Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. Most understand the importance of keeping fit and undertake regular and vigorous exercise. Nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of attending school regularly.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers provide a broad and balanced curriculum, in addition to exciting experiences and challenges for pupils, which engage their interest and enthusiasm to learn. They plan effectively to develop a curriculum that is based on Wales and Welsh heritage. This contributes successfully to pupils' understanding of their local area, history and culture. By including the pupil's voice in planning, most teachers build successfully on previous learning experiences effectively.

The principles of the foundation phase have been established particularly well at the school. Through effective co-operation and clear guidance, teachers ensure that there are opportunities for all pupils to experience a range of practical, stimulating and rich learning experiences. Cross-curricular themes and interesting and imaginative work programmes extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, and strengthen their engagement in their work very effectively. A range of imaginative and challenging activities is used that fosters pupils' independence effectively. As a result, pupils have the confidence to try and to think for themselves. In order to develop pupils' skills further, staff make flexible use of the school's resources and include pupils' ideas very effectively when organising the learning areas, including the outdoor areas. These activities provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively across the areas of learning.

Key stage 2 teachers plan purposefully to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Planning is methodical and helps teachers to create interesting tasks that build well on pupils' previous learning, for example in language and mathematics lessons. Teachers plan comprehensive opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh and English skills across the curriculum. As a result, most pupils transfer and apply these skills confidently. However, there are no regular opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills to a high level across the curriculum. Key stage 2 teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills to gather and present information. However, opportunities to develop their data-handling and modelling skills have not been developed effectively enough for them to apply these skills regularly across the curriculum. The school has given careful consideration to the Digital Competence Framework, and has begun to address gaps in its current provision.

Across the school, staff forge a successful working relationship with pupils, which fosters an industrious learning environment. Teachers know the pupils well and provide them with effective support while they are working and interacting with their peers. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, on the whole, lead effective learning sessions. They model language of a high standard, which has a positive effect on the standard of pupils' spoken language. Most teachers use a variety of successful teaching methods effectively, which ensures that pupils achieve well and apply themselves fully to their learning. They explain new concepts clearly and usually ensure that sessions have a good pace. Where teaching is at its best, teachers have very high expectations. They use open-ended questions very successfully to encourage pupils to think independently. Imaginative presentations and the pace of lessons are strong features of teaching. In the few examples where teaching is less effective, teachers over-direct learning and do not always challenge pupils effectively enough. As a result, pupils do not always work to the best of their ability.

Teachers provide pupils with robust feedback in order for them to make improvements and develop their work further. Staff intervene sensitively to support pupils at appropriate times during the lesson, for example to encourage them to check their progress against lesson objectives and success criteria. There are regular opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work against that of other pupils. This ensures that pupils, at a very early stage, understand how well they are doing and know how to improve their work.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Staff create a happy, caring and inclusive community at the school, where everyone is respected and valued. This has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing. The school promotes the importance of good behaviour, respect, courtesy and commitment effectively. The school has a strong anti-bullying culture and teachers equip pupils to nurture the skills necessary to overcome problems successfully. This is reflected in most pupils' positive behaviour and positive attitudes towards each other.

The school has robust arrangements for tracking pupils' progress and wellbeing. Teachers use information that derives from these procedures skilfully to ensure effective support for pupils and specific groups who need additional support. They use a good variety of methods to provide them with purposeful interventions. A good example of this is the successful intervention to develop the numeracy skills of particular pupils. Individual education plans for pupils with additional learning needs include clear targets, which are implemented effectively by teachers and assistants to ensure that most pupils make sound progress against their targets. Staff monitor pupils' progress conscientiously. Parents receive good information about their children's progress and are included fully in reviewing their progress.

The school provides interventions that support pupils with emotional and social needs effectively. This ensures that they are given an opportunity to express their feelings and enables them to be well-rounded members of school life. Staff work effectively with a number of specialist agencies, which ensures valuable support and guidance for pupils and their parents.

The school forges productive relationships with parents. Appropriate communication methods ensure that parents are able to raise any issues that are of concern to them regarding their children's education and wellbeing. Parents are given valuable opportunities to discuss their children's progress and development targets.

The school places a great deal of emphasis on the pupil's voice. This can be seen at its best through the opportunities they are given to influence what they learn in the classroom, in their learning areas and when setting personal targets. This gives pupils ownership of their learning and fosters a positive attitude towards it. Through various school councils, there are opportunities for many pupils to contribute to valuable decisions. A good example of this is the pupils' contribution towards adopting the principles of the Gwynedd Welsh Language Charter.

The school promotes pupils' awareness of the local area and Welshness effectively, for example when studying the history of the Faenol Estate and arranging a visit to Cardiff. This makes a valuable contribution towards developing their understanding of Welsh heritage and culture. Teachers nurture pupils' cultural skills effectively by learning about various countries. A good example of this is the key stage 2 project on fair trade in Malawi, Ghana, India and Sri Lanka.

The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity and physical skills. Highly effective examples of the effect of this are the particular enthusiasm of the early years pupils when creating a dance with Caleb the monkey, and building a cosy nest for the dinosaur egg in the outdoor area. Teachers provide valuable opportunities to develop pupils' expressive arts skills, for example when studying the work of local artists and performing in concerts and services. This develops their self-confidence and ability to work together effectively.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting eating and drinking healthily. This has a positive effect on pupils' understanding of issues relating to health and wellbeing. The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to take part in a variety of physical activities, lessons on eating healthily, substance misuse, sex and relationships, and online safety. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides robust and effective leadership, which ensures a clear strategic direction for the school. She has a clear vision that is based on ensuring an inclusive community and focuses on providing rich learning experiences so that all pupils fulfil their potential. She succeeds in conveying that vision to staff, pupils, parents and governors. Staff are dedicated and work together closely as a team, and shoulder their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. They show a strong commitment to promoting continuous and sustainable improvements.

The headteacher and management team have established a range of purposeful self-evaluation activities, which ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The process is based on a good range of first-hand evidence in relation to children's achievement, which includes lesson observations, scrutinising pupils' work and conducting learning walks. Leaders provide beneficial opportunities to seek and respond to the views of pupils and parents to identify priorities for improvement. The self-evaluation report identifies the school's strengths clearly and ensures that staff have a sound understanding of the areas that need further attention. There is a clear link between the findings of the self-evaluation process and the priorities in the school development plan, which focuses clearly on improving provision and raising standards. Leaders review progress against the priorities regularly. This ensures that leaders and staff operate effectively in order to improve standards and the quality of teaching and learning. A good example of this is the consistency across the school in implementing assessment for learning strategies.

The governing body is dedicated and supportive of the school, and members include a good cross-section of expertise, which is a definite asset to the school's leadership and management. By co-operating with the school's staff, observing lessons and discussing examples of work with pupils, they play an active part in the school's self-evaluation processes. This, in addition to receiving purposeful reports from the headteacher, leads to a good understanding of the strengths of provision and areas for improvement. As a result, governors' strategic role as critical friends is developing gradually and enables them to challenge the school effectively on its performance.

The headteacher ensures valuable opportunities for staff to benefit from professional learning activities that are relevant to achieving the school's priorities. This supports their professional development effectively. The school has established a productive working relationship with other similar schools, which has a positive effect on developing aspects of provision, such as assessment for learning, the use of learning challenges in the foundation phase, and preparing for the new curriculum. This contributes effectively towards improving teaching and learning, for example when improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and developing their resilience.

Leaders manage resources effectively to provide a range of varied and rich learning experiences for pupils. They earmark funding appropriately in order to meet the school's priorities and monitor expenditure carefully. The school uses a range of grants purposeful, including the pupil development grant, to enrich provision through a good number of intervention programmes that contribute to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and promoting their wellbeing.

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:

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

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