



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Betws yn Rhos
Betws yn Rhos
Abergele
Conwy
LL22 8AW**

Date of inspection: October 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Betws yn Rhos

Ysgol Betws yn Rhos is situated in the village of Betws yn Rhos, approximately five miles from the town of Abergele. The school is under the voluntary control of the Church in Wales and is maintained by Conwy local authority.

Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 67 pupils between three and eleven years old on roll, including nine part-time nursery pupils. The school has three mixed-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%). Around half of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified around 15% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is lower than the national percentage of 21%. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2012. The school was last inspected in May 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

Staff create a happy, caring and inclusive ethos at the school, which fosters a supportive and hard-working environment for pupils. As a result, pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They treat their peers, staff and visitors with respect and show pride in their school.

Teachers have established an effective working relationship with pupils and provide rich and interesting learning experiences that meet most pupils' needs. The school has a strong Welsh ethos, and provision encourages pupils to make full use of the Welsh language in all aspects of school life. As a result, most pupils develop as competent and confident bilingual learners. They make sound progress and achieve well.

The headteacher provides purposeful leadership that provides a clear strategic direction for the school. She is supported strongly by dedicated staff who work well together as a team.

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 pupils' information and communication technology skills
- R2 Ensure that all teachers challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability consistently
- R3 Ensure that pupils are more aware of what they need to do to improve their own work
- R4 Ensure more opportunities for teachers to share good practice, both inside and outside the school

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, most pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are similar to those that are expected for their age. As they move through the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress and achieve well. Although the Welsh language is new to around half of pupils, the oral skills of pupils from non-Welsh-speaking homes develop at a very early stage.

Most pupils' oral skills in the foundation phase are developing well. They listen attentively and, by Year 2, pupils use the Welsh language confidently in their activities and at other times during the day. At the top of the school, most express themselves clearly in Welsh and English and reach a good standard of bilingualism. They discuss their work confidently, and the best use rich and well-developed vocabulary, for example when discussing the life and work of Hedd Wyn.

Most pupils in the foundation phase make good progress in learning to read. They enjoy reading aloud and use appropriate strategies when reading unfamiliar words. By the end of the phase, most read correctly and fluently, and discuss the content of the text meaningfully by referring to events and characters in the books that they read. In key stage 2, many pupils read correctly and confidently in Welsh and English. They express an opinion about books and describe the main characters and sequence of events within the stories meaningfully. The best discuss texts maturely and intelligently, and summarise the main points effectively. Most pupils practice their reading skills regularly to gather information from different sources, including reference books and the internet, for example to find out about the school life of children in the Victorian era.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing well. By the end of the foundation phase, most write independently for different purposes, for example when writing an invitation for Sali Sgerbwd. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils present their ideas effectively and show a sound grasp of spelling patterns, paragraphing and punctuation in both languages when writing a portrayal of a character of their choice. Many write successfully in a range of forms across the curriculum, for example when writing about the life of a child during the Second World War. The standard of many pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is neat.

Most pupils in the foundation phase make good progress in their mathematical development. By Year 2, they handle money correctly, for example when role-playing in the class shop. They develop a good understanding of measuring when planning a Celtic house. In key stage 2, most pupils have a sound understanding of number strategies and, by Year 6, they use a wide range of methods confidently to calculate mentally. They apply these successfully in a variety of activities across the curriculum, for example when comparing pop record sales during the 1960s or when presenting the results of an investigation into how a shadow changes over time.

Many pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop gradually as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, many use a

tablet effectively when taking a picture and recording their voices. In key stage 2, many research safely on the internet, for example when creating a fact file about the moon. They use spreadsheets suitably to present information, for example when creating a graph about the weather in Snowdonia. However, overall, many pupils do not apply their ICT skills to a level that is appropriate for their age and ability.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy school. They behave well in lessons, when moving around the school and during leisure time. 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 lunchtimes, and older pupils are very willing to undertake roles and responsibilities, such as 'playground buddies, to help to care for the younger pupils and encourage them to play during break time. This promotes care and responsibility among pupils.

Most pupils show positive attitudes towards their work. They are hard-working and enthusiastic learners, who work together in harmony and stay diligently on task over extended periods. Most show good levels of motivation, interest and pride in their work. This contributes successfully to the ethos of effective learning within the school and has a positive effect on many pupils' standards. However, pupils' skills in improving and guiding their own learning are only just beginning to develop. A minority, at times, are over-reliant on teachers' guidance.

Pupils on the numerous committees undertake their work effectively. For example, the active eco council promotes valuable outdoor activities, such as ordering a 'polytunnel' and a project to keep chickens. As a result, pupils learn about growing vegetables and eating healthily, gain an awareness of agriculture and develop entrepreneurial skills by selling eggs.

Pupils take pride in the opportunity to support various charities and contribute to activities in the community, such as the harvest thanksgiving service in the church. By exchanging information with children in a school in Zambia, pupils gain an awareness of life in other countries. This has a positive effect on their understanding of the needs of others, both in their community and the wider world.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and have a good awareness of the effect this has on the body. Pupils feel completely safe at school and are happy to discuss problems with members of staff, and are confident that they listen to them. Most have a sound understanding of how to stay safe on the internet. Nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of attending school regularly.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Staff establish a close and close-knit relationship with pupils, which fosters a successful learning environment. Teachers know the pupils well and provide them with effective support while they work and interact with their peers. There is a strong Welsh ethos, and provision encourages pupils to make full use of the Welsh language in all aspects of school life. Teachers take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' language, which contributes successfully to their oral skills. As a result, most pupils develop as competent and confident bilingual learners.

Teachers use the local community effectively to broaden pupils' experiences, for example when younger pupils go for a walk around the village to look for features of the autumn. The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about their local area and Wales, by organising visitors to the school, such as a local composer and a drama company, and by studying the life and work of famous Welsh people and local artists. This promotes pupils' awareness of their local area and Welsh culture successfully.

Teachers provide tasks and experiences that engage most pupils' interest effectively. In the youngest class in the foundation phase, a range of stimulating and challenging activities is used to encourage learning, which nurtures pupils' independence effectively. These activities provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills effectively across the areas of learning. Staff make effective use of the outdoor learning area. A good example of this is pupils' work to create and continue a sequence pattern with natural materials outdoors.

At the top of the foundation phase and in key stage 2, teachers provide a range of valuable learning experiences that meet most pupils' needs successfully. They explain new concepts clearly and, on the whole, ensure that sessions have a good pace. In the few examples where teaching is not as effective, planning does not always provide suitable activities to challenge more able pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. Teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' Welsh and English literacy skills, and numeracy skills, across the curriculum. As a result, most pupils transfer and apply these skills confidently. The school has given careful consideration to the Digital Competence Framework, which is beginning to address the gaps in its current provision. However, planning to develop pupils' ICT skills does not ensure enough opportunities for pupils across the school to apply their skills regularly.

The school has recently strengthened its use of assessment for learning strategies. Most teachers provide pupils with valuable feedback during lessons and encourage them to persevere and reflect further on how to improve their work. However, this practice is not consistent across the school, and opportunities for pupils to guide and improve their work are limited.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has robust arrangements for tracking pupils' progress, and teachers monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing effectively. This ensures that they have good knowledge of pupils' progress in order to target individuals and specific groups purposefully. Staff identify pupils' additional learning needs and social needs from an early age, in order to implement appropriate interventions to enable them to make good progress in their learning. Teachers provide good quality individual education plans for these pupils. They evaluate them regularly, and pupils and parents play a full part in the review process. The school also has a robust working relationship with a range of other agencies in order to support pupils and offer support and guidance to staff.

The school has a good relationship with parents, and regular progress meetings are held in order to share information and reinforce what parents can do to support their children and their work. An example of this is an information evening on methods to

increase confidence and resilience, where pupils taught their parents about the strategy. Appropriate communication methods ensure that parents are able to raise any issues that may have an effect on their child's learning and wellbeing in a timely manner. As a result, parents feel a part of the school, and support the school and co-operate with it effectively. Friends of the school contribute significant funding, for example by purchasing ICT resources that enable the school to implement the Digital Competence Framework.

Staff create a happy, caring and inclusive ethos at the school, where everyone is respected and valued. The school has a welcoming and familial ethos, which ensures that pupils and staff care naturally for each other. The school places a prominent emphasis on respect and courtesy. This is reflected in the positive behaviour of nearly all pupils. The school celebrates individuals' personal successes regularly, for example through the 'Star of the Week' award. This has a positive effect on pupils' confidence and wellbeing. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development well by providing valuable opportunities to reflect and share their experiences, for example by learning about values in their daily assemblies. The close link with the local church makes a beneficial contribution to pupils' moral and spiritual development. The school takes pride in its strong links with the local community and supports the village eisteddfod and show every year. These links strengthen the pupils' sense of belonging to the community, and develop their knowledge and understanding of their local area. The school helps pupils to develop an understanding of the wider world through its links with schools in Zambia.

There is a clear focus on developing pupils' personal and social education. Teachers' provide a variety of effective opportunities for pupils to join leadership groups, such as the school council, the eco council and the Welsh Language Charter ambassadors, who have a positive effect on provision. Through the school council's activities, an air dryer has been obtained to dry hands in the toilets in order to save paper. The school promotes the importance of helping others regularly, for example by supporting local and national charities. This develops their understanding of other people's needs effectively.

Provision to develop pupils' creative and performing arts skills is sound. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to develop their creativity through musical and artistic activities, for example by emulating the work of a Welsh artist and taking part enthusiastically in a drumming workshop. This contributes successfully towards increasing their self-confidence and their ability to work successfully as part of a team.

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

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides robust leadership, which ensures a clear strategic direction for the school. She has a vision that is based on raising standards and promoting pupils' wellbeing and Welshness. She conveys the vision effectively to staff, pupils, governors and the wider community. Members of staff work together

effectively, and fulfil their roles and support the headteacher conscientiously. They take responsibility for leading on specific aspects of the school's work, which focus clearly on improving provision and raising standards. A good example of this is the way in which leaders give status to the Welsh language through the Welsh Language Charter and develop pupils' oral language skills successfully from an early age.

The headteacher has established a wide range of suitable self-evaluation activities, which ensure that she has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Self-evaluation processes are based on a good range of first-hand evidence of pupils' achievement, which include lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and conducting learning walks on specific aspects. The self-evaluation report identifies the school's strengths well and ensures that staff have a sound understanding of the areas for improvement. There are beneficial opportunities to consider and respond to the views of pupils and parents when identifying priorities for improvement. An example of this is the initiative to keep chickens, which provides an opportunity to develop a range of skills, including taking care of living creatures and entrepreneurial skills.

There is a clear link between the self-evaluation report and the school development plan, which focuses clearly on improving provision and raising standards. The school prioritises appropriately by placing a strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and wellbeing. An example of this is the way in which the school has improved pupils' numeracy skills by ensuring regular opportunities for them to apply these skills across the curriculum.

There are appropriate performance management arrangements in place to develop teachers' and assistants' skills, which are based on national priorities and the school's priorities. As a result, staff are given appropriate opportunities to develop professionally and contribute effectively to improvements to teaching and learning, for example by improving pupils' oracy and writing skills. The headteacher has recently ensured valuable training for teachers and pupils on aspects of ICT in order to prepare to implement the Digital Competence Framework. Teachers take advantage of opportunities to work with nearby schools, for example to develop aspects of assessment for learning and introduce a strategy to develop resilient learners, which are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' ability to guide their own learning. However, opportunities for teachers to share good practice, both inside and outside the school, are limited.

The governing body is dedicated and supportive of the school, and members visit classes and the whole school regularly. By doing so, and by receiving comprehensive reports from the headteacher, they have an increasing understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. This develops their awareness of all aspects of school life successfully. As a result, the governors' strategic role is developing purposefully and they are beginning to challenge the school about its performance. Their role as critical friends is developing gradually.

The school's leaders and managers manage resources effectively in order to provide varied and rich learning experiences for pupils. They allocate funding appropriately to support the school's priorities and monitor expenditure carefully. The school uses a range of grants purposefully, including the pupil development grant, to raise standards of literacy and numeracy, and develop pupils' wellbeing successfully.

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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