



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Penygroes
Waterloo Road
Penygroes
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA14 7NT**

Date of inspection: March 2020

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Penygroes

Ysgol Gynradd Penygroes is situated in the village of Penygroes in Carmarthenshire. It serves the village and the surrounding area. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work, and English is introduced to pupils in key stage 2. There are 171 pupils between 4 and 11 years old on roll. Around 27% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes.

Over a three-year period, around 11% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is lower than the national percentage of 18%. The school has identified around 12% of its pupils as having special educational needs, which is lower than the national percentage of 21%.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2016, and the school was last inspected in January 2017.

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 an extremely friendly and caring community. Most pupils treat each other with a great deal of care and have a sound awareness of fairness. From an early age, their independent learning skills are a prominent strength.

Staff establish an excellent working relationship with pupils, which fosters successful learning. The system of planning activities based on themes and interesting learning experiences ensures that pupils achieve good standards.

All pupils' wellbeing is given a prominent place in the school's provision, and staff provide them with effective care, support and guidance. Pupils take full advantage of the valuable opportunities that are provided for them to express their views and contribute to important aspects of the school's work. As a result, nearly all pupils make sound and consistent progress, and achieve well by Year 6.

The headteacher's vision for developing the school is clear and has a positive effect on the quality of provision, standards and pupils' wellbeing. Staff respond well to individuals' needs and provide them with effective care and guidance.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that pupils use the Welsh language regularly both inside and outside the classrooms
- R2 Ensure regular opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to use databases in their work 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 success in developing pupils' independent learning skills, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, nearly all pupils make very sound progress, achieve well and work very maturely independently. They show a genuine interest in their tasks and work diligently for extended periods. Nearly all pupils who come from non-Welsh-speaking homes acquire good Welsh communication skills quickly. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against their targets.

Pupils' oral skills are good across the school. Nearly all pupils listen attentively, speak clearly and express their ideas very confidently. In the foundation phase, most pupils discuss their work with adults and other pupils knowledgeably and enthusiastically, for example when giving instructions to create a party for King Gwyddno. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils communicate clearly in both languages and provide answers, comments and express an opinion extremely maturely. However, at times, only a minority of pupils use the Welsh language to socialise during break times and talk to their friends during lessons.

Nearly all pupils' reading skills are developing successfully. By the end of the foundation phase, most read fluently and accurately, and strive maturely to build unfamiliar words. They read with clear expression and meaning, and are able to search for facts about the seasons and planets skilfully. Most pupils in key stage 2 read intelligently and maturely in Welsh and English. They use their skills effectively to gather relevant information from books and various texts, and from appropriate websites, to support their work across the curriculum, for example to search for information about the effect of smoking on their lungs and other parts of the body.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their writing skills effectively. By the end of the phase, they use adjectives to enrich their work skilfully, for example when writing a description of a prince. They spell correctly, make good use of mutations and punctuate purposefully, on the whole. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils convey information clearly for different purposes in Welsh and English. They use a wide range of purposeful vocabulary to enrich their work, for example when creating an information sheet about Bishop William Morgan. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are coherent and neat.

Most pupils develop their numeracy skills soundly as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, most develop their number skills successfully in mathematics lessons and use them confidently while working independently to complete their challenges. They use simple addition, subtraction, division and multiplication strategies well. They use equipment and standard and non-standard units of measurement skilfully in a variety of tasks, for example when measuring millilitres correctly to make a drink for the king of Cantre'r Gwaelod. Most pupils in key stage 2 show sound skills in terms of counting and calculation methods across the four number rules. They have a thorough understanding of shape, scale, size and placement, for example when designing a new pond for the school to a specific scale of area, and placing objects by distance and size. They gather information, and produce and interpret clear and purposeful graphs, particularly in their science lessons while investigating the growth of watercress.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing soundly across the school. In the foundation phase, most use software confidently in order to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills. They use word-processing programs purposefully, for example to create computerised pictures and write news. They follow instructions confidently to control an electronic toy effectively. Most pupils in key stage 2 use technology equipment maturely when working on their challenges. They explore information effectively in multimedia presentations to create a successful animation to trace the history of creating the first apostolic temple in Wales. Older pupils develop their coding skills well. They have begun to use various programs to input and interpret data. However, these skills have not had time to become embedded and have a robust enough effect on pupils' standards.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils' standards of wellbeing and attitudes to learning are excellent. An exceptional feature of school life is the courtesy and respect with which all pupils treat their peers and adults. This contributes significantly towards the excellent and highly effective learning environment within the school. Nearly all pupils enjoy the school's life and work, and feel safe there. They are aware of whom to approach if they have any concerns, and are very confident that staff listen to them. All pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe online. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily, in addition to taking part in regular exercise activities. This has a very positive effect on their personal and social skills, in addition to developing their confidence and fitness successfully.

Nearly all pupils are hard-working and enthusiastic, work together harmoniously and stay diligently on task for extended periods. They respect the opinions of others by listening to their views and waiting patiently for their turn. They have a sound understanding of what they need to do to improve their work, and contribute positively towards supporting and improving each other's learning. Their ability to use their independent learning skills is an excellent feature.

Nearly all pupils take pride in the regular and valuable opportunities they are given to perform in front of audiences. These include school concerts, various assemblies and the Urdd Eisteddfod.

Nearly all pupils' behaviour is excellent in the classrooms and as they move around the school. Older pupils show great care towards the younger pupils, which ensures that they grow to become confident and happy learners. This contributes to the school's inclusive nature and highly caring ethos. Nearly all pupils show pride when talking about their school and the wider community, and are very willing to support the local community by performing regularly in the old people's home, the local chapel and by planting daffodils around the village.

Across the school, pupils take full advantage of extensive opportunities to express their views and have an influence on the school's life and work. A notable example of this is the natural way in which they lead their own learning to match their interests. Pupils in all classes contribute maturely to relevant challenges that they would like to learn, as well as main lines of enquiry on which they would like to focus. As a result, nearly all pupils take full ownership of their learning. Members of the numerous committees, such as the school council, the eco committee, digital

leaders, the Criw Cymraeg, and the sports and children's rights ambassadors are very enthusiastic and take their responsibilities seriously. They have an excellent influence on the school's life and work. For example, members of the school council have produced an anti-bullying policy that has been signed by their fellow pupils. They have introduced a mascot, 'cyfaill caredig' (kind friend), to supervise and include children in play during break time so that no-one is lonely. The children's rights ambassadors hold regular sessions with foundation phase pupils to explain their rights to them.

Most pupils take full advantage of the opportunity to develop as conscientious citizens. They raise money for good causes regularly and take pride in their success in contributing towards charities, such as Save the Children, Children in Need and the Carmarthenshire toy appeal.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Across the school, staff establish a very good working relationship with pupils, which fosters a supportive and stimulating learning environment for them, which ensures that they achieve well. Teachers use a rich range of successful learning methods to develop pupils' skills. They have high expectations of all pupils, and the quality of their presentations and questions is challenging and purposeful. This ensures that nearly all pupils apply themselves fully to their tasks, concentrate for extended periods and show a clear motivation to succeed. Teachers and assistants work together effectively as a team and take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' language, which contributes successfully towards developing their oral skills.

Assessment for learning strategies have been established firmly throughout the school. Pupils are given constructive oral and written feedback in order for them to understand what they need to do to improve the standard of their work. Pupils are given beneficial opportunities to reflect on their own learning and that of their peers, and to contribute effectively to the process of setting challenges to improve their work. This element contributes well towards pupils' progress and achievement.

The school provides a wide range of rich learning experiences that meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities successfully. Through effective co-operation and setting clear guidance, teachers ensure that there are opportunities for all pupils to experience a range of stimulating activities. Staff challenge pupils to work independently in the learning areas. Pupils have prominent input in planning the curricular themes, which extends their knowledge and understanding, and strengthens their commitment to their work very successfully.

The principles of the foundation phase have been embedded firmly. Continuous access to the outdoor area ensures that all pupils benefit from stimulating activities, both indoors and outdoors. Effective focus tasks and continuous activities are provided, which include beneficial opportunities for pupils to investigate, role-play, build and practise their physical skills. Key stage 2 teachers build well on this foundation by encouraging pupils to apply their skills in challenging tasks. Beneficial opportunities are provided to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills successfully across the curriculum, which ensures continuity and progression in their learning. However, planning and procedures to develop pupils' database skills in their work across the curriculum have not had an opportunity to become embedded.

The school has a natural Welsh ethos, and all staff create a highly positive ethos that promotes this skilfully and engages pupils' enthusiasm towards the language. Adults encourage pupils to use the Welsh language regularly during lessons and, as a result, by the end of key stage 2, many pupils have sound translanguaging skills and develop as competent and confident bilingual learners. However, strategies to encourage pupils to use the Welsh language in a variety of different contexts have not had a full effect, for example during break times.

Provision for the Welsh dimension is exciting and imaginative. Experiences such as visits to a local country park, Dinefwr castle and Pembrey raise pupils' awareness of their local area well. Learning about traditional and local legends is given a prominent place in planning. There are good examples across the school of work on Blodeuwedd, Culwch and Olwen, Cantre'r Gwaelod, Branwen and Llyn Llech Owain. There is a variety of work on the history of famous Welsh people such as Owain Glyndŵr, St Dwynwen, St David, Barti Ddu and Twm Siôn Cati. This ensures that pupils are given rich and interesting experiences to develop an understanding of Welsh history and culture.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is a highly caring and friendly community that promotes the importance of good behaviour successfully. The staff's care, support and guidance to ensure pupils' wellbeing are exceptionally effective, and ensure that they are given excellent opportunities to flourish in their academic, social, moral, emotional and creative development. All members of staff have very high expectations in terms of pupils' effort, wellbeing and behaviour. This is reflected very clearly in the mature and enthusiastic way in which pupils respond to all aspects of the school's life and work.

Staff provide very extensive opportunities for pupils to play an active part in class plans, express their views and have an influence on the school's life and work. As a result, council members and ambassadors are very enthusiastic and have been very successful in raising money, and are proactive in the local community. An excellent feature of the school's work is the opportunities for pupils to contribute to their learning, for example by deciding on the challenges that they would like to study as part of the areas of learning and experience. This provision makes an excellent contribution to pupils' enthusiasm towards working confidently and independently. This has a strong effect on the standards that they achieve.

Staff promote local and Welsh culture, language and heritage exceptionally well. They provide valuable opportunities to develop imaginative experiences for pupils by providing stimulating lessons that weave local and national history into their theme. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to perform at the school, in the local community and to take part in concerts and compete in eisteddfodau and other national competitions. This develops their self-confidence and their pride in themselves, their school and their local community very successfully.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development exceptionally well by providing stimulating acts of collective worship, through religious education lessons and humanities challenges in the classrooms. Provision for personal and social education is of a very high quality and ensures that pupils develop a sound understanding of values such as honesty, fairness and respect towards other

religions and beliefs. This is highlighted clearly in the good-natured way in which the school provides valuable guidance in order for pupils to foster very good behaviour practices.

The school has clear procedures to promote eating and drinking healthily. As a result, most pupils have a sound understanding of what they need to do to keep fit and healthy. Daily exercise sessions and sports clubs contribute to this successfully. Various activities to develop pupils' understanding of personal wellbeing ensure that nearly all pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves safe at school, at home and online. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The school has effective and thorough procedures to track and monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing. This enables staff to identify any pupils who need additional support or challenge quickly. Improvement actions enable staff to plan and provide comprehensive support to address the needs of individuals and specific groups of pupils very successfully. This enables them to make sound progress from their starting points. Learning assistants and teachers from specialist agencies are used very effectively. Reports for parents provide detailed information about their children's progress, and set clear and relevant improvement targets.

Despite all of the school's efforts, in comparison with similar schools, the attendance rate of a cohort of pupils has declined over the last three years.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides robust leadership for the school, and ensures an effective strategic direction and a culture that promotes continuous improvement. She has a clear vision that is based on ensuring that the wellbeing of pupils and staff is at the heart of the school's work, and that there is a strong focus on encouraging learners to reach their full potential. She conveys this information to staff, pupils, parents and governors very successfully. As a result, everyone has high expectations of themselves, each other and of pupils' standards of achievement.

A robust feature is the way in which responsibilities are distributed effectively. This is part of the school's strategy to develop staff's skills and promote co-operation and sharing of good practice. As a result, there are clear communication procedures between all members of staff. They work highly effectively as a team, and meet regularly to monitor and evaluate progress against all of the school's priorities. All staff have a strong commitment to developing and promoting continuous and sustainable improvements. A good example of this is the successful way in which the school enriches provision to develop pupils' independent skills and their ability to improve their own work.

One of the good features of the school's leadership is the rich experiences that are provided for staff to develop professionally. Robust performance management procedures enrich staff's professional development successfully and have a positive effect on standards. A successful example of these activities is the way in which the school works beneficially with nearby schools to improve their standards and ICT provision.

The school's priorities for improvement are based on a good range of first-hand evidence, and staff's understanding of them is sound. The self-evaluation procedure gives careful consideration to evidence; for example, scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations lead to good identification of strengths and areas for improvement. The school improvement plan refers effectively to the steps to be taken, the associated success criteria, timescales and responsibilities, monitoring arrangements and budget. Monitoring reports, which focus on teaching, learning and provision, show the way forward clearly in order to improve further. This has led, for example, to improving pupils' extended writing skills across the school.

The governing body is dedicated and supportive of the school. By working with staff and discussing examples of work with pupils, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use this knowledge well to make decisions when setting a strategic direction for the school's work. As a result, the role of governors as critical friends is developing successfully and enables them to challenge the school about its performance conscientiously.

The school has a good supply of resources, which are used effectively to enrich pupils' learning experiences. The headteacher and governors manage expenditure very carefully to ensure that it links closely to the school's strategic priorities. Good use is made of the pupil development grant to improve provision to develop the literacy and numeracy skills and wellbeing of those who are eligible to receive it. As a result, these pupils make sound progress from their starting points.

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 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 the specialist resource base (where appropriate), 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 (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- 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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