



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

A report on

**Ysgol Ger y Llan V.C. School
St Davids Road
Letterston
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA62 5SL**

Date of inspection: January 2020

by

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

About Ysgol Ger y Llan V.C. School

Ysgol Ger y Llan is a primary school that is under the voluntary control of the Church in Wales. It is situated in the village of Letterston, which is between Haverfordwest and Fishguard in Pembrokeshire local authority. There are 129 pupils on roll, including 9 nursery age pupils who attend the school on a full-time basis following their fourth birthday.

Over time, around 14% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is slightly lower than the national percentage of 18%. The school has identified around 27% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is slightly higher than the national percentage of 21%. Around 9% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes, and most come from white British backgrounds.

The school was last inspected in June 2012, and the current headteacher was appointed in September 2018.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

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 headteacher has a clear vision that is based on ensuring that all pupils' emotional wellbeing is sound, so that they can give of their best to their learning. The recent behaviour charter is beginning to have a beneficial effect on pupils' positive attitudes to learning. As a result, this is beginning to have a positive effect on a majority of pupils' standards.

Staff establish a supporting working relationship with pupils, which fosters a supportive environment for learning. They engage most pupils' interest successfully, and give them clear instructions in terms of what they need to achieve. However, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not planned purposefully enough to ensure that a majority of pupils develop their skills systematically and constructively across the areas of learning.

Nearly all pupils are welcoming and polite, and treat their peers, staff and visitors with respect. They are very caring towards each other and learn to play together happily. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, listen attentively and apply themselves successfully to their learning. A majority make sound progress in suitable activities across the areas of learning. However, a minority of pupils do not make enough progress, particularly more able pupils.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards of spoken Welsh across the school
- R2 Develop pupils' literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum
- R3 Expand the senior management team's leadership skills in order for them to have a more effective influence on improving provision and raising standards
- R4 Ensure that teaching provides an appropriate challenge for all pupils, particularly those who are more able

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress as they move through the school. They recall previous knowledge skilfully and develop their skills regularly across an appropriate range of areas of learning.

In both key stages, most pupils listen attentively to adults and each other. In the foundation phase, a majority of pupils develop their oral skills relevantly and respect the contributions of others. They are keen to provide answers and contribute appropriately to discussions when discussing the importance of keeping the school tidy by putting litter in the recycling bin. In key stage 2, a minority of pupils develop Welsh vocabulary and patterns appropriately, for example when discussing the life cycle of a butterfly. At the top of the school, most pupils develop their English oral skills successfully when discussing scientific activities. However, a majority of pupils do not develop their Welsh oral skills soundly enough. Their extended vocabulary is limited, and they do not develop correct syntax effectively enough. As a result, orally, they do not develop to become confident bilingual learners or make enough progress in the Welsh oral skills.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make regular progress in learning to read. By Year 2, they show an interest in a suitable variety of books and enjoy leading aloud, and do so with increasing confidence. In key stage 2, many pupils read fluently in English, and with appropriate accuracy in Welsh. They discuss the content of their books confidently, on the whole. At the top of the school, most pupils gather information from various sources effectively, for example when researching national parks in Wales and Africa.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing skilfully in the foundation phase. They form letters and simple words through an appropriate range of activities, for example when writing a St Dwynwen's Day card. By Year 2, many write independently for different purposes, and use sentences and suitable vocabulary to enrich their work, for example when writing a story about Jack and the Beanstalk. Most pupils develop their writing skills successfully in Welsh and English in key stage 2. They show a sound grasp of a wide variety of writing genres, and show an appropriate grasp of spelling patterns, paragraphing and punctuation in both language, on the whole. A good example of this is pupils writing a newspaper article about the fires in Australia. However, a minority of pupils, including those who are more able, do not write extensively enough. As a result, they do not achieve to the best of their ability. Most pupils treat their work with respect and present it neatly and tidily in cursive writing, which is developing effectively.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make sound progress in their mathematical development. They have sound number skills and an appropriate grasp of shape and data. Most Year 2 pupils create a simple database of their peers' birthdays, and use this to produce an accurate bar graph. In key stage 2, most pupils develop their knowledge of number regularly, and they have a sound understanding of how to handle sums of money and the properties of shapes. However, a minority of pupils do not develop their numeracy skills consistently enough across the curriculum, particularly more able pupils.

A majority of pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing appropriately to support their work across the curriculum. Most pupils in the foundation phase use electronic tablets effectively, for example when recording and listening to familiar stories. They use a programmable toy confidently by moving it in different directions in order to discover two-dimensional shapes. In key stage 2, a majority of pupils make relevant progress. They use spreadsheets effectively when changing the weight of a lion's food at Folly Farm from imperial to metric units, and use this information relevantly in their numeracy work. At the top of the school, most pupils use animation programs successfully to create images of turtles moving in a sea of plastic as part of the theme on the environment. However, a minority of pupils do not apply their ICT skills soundly enough across the areas of learning.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils enjoy the school's life and work. They are welcoming and polite, and treat their peers, staff and visitors with respect. Nearly all pupils are very caring towards each other, and learn and play together successfully. A good example of this is the way in which the oldest pupils are very caring towards the youngest pupils and help them on the playground. They feel safe within the school's caring and inclusive community. Pupils know that they are able to turn to any members of staff to share their concerns, when necessary, and that they will respond positively to their worries.

Nearly all pupils' behaviour is continuing to improve in lessons and around the school, following the development of a new behaviour charter. They concentrate well on their work and stay on task effectively for extended periods. Most pupils work effectively as individuals, in pairs and in groups. They are ready to learn at the beginning of lessons, apply themselves enthusiastically to their tasks, and are able to discuss their work effectively.

Most pupils are proud of their school and their local community. Nearly all pupils take part in a number of activities, for example they plant daffodils on the school grounds with members of the community. Nearly all pupils are given an opportunity to take part in assemblies, for example when celebrating 'Sankta Lucia' and singing Welsh, English and Swedish carols at St David's cathedral. Older pupils develop their oral skills by socialising with residents from the village when attending the cafe at a local church. As a result of these experiences, most pupils broaden their knowledge and understanding of their locality intelligently, and develop as moral and conscientious citizens.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and they understand the positive effect of exercise on their health. They make sensible choices in relation to their diet, for example when buying fruit from the fruit stall that is run by pupils. Most pupils take part in exercise activities successfully, including activities that are organised by the sports ambassadors. Most pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe online.

Most pupils develop their leadership skills soundly by taking part in a number of school committees and teams. Members of the school councils and the Criw Cymraeg make a beneficial contribution to school life. For example, the school council spends funds to purchase sports equipment to be used during play times.

They plan activities to raise money for local and national charities, which nurtures pupils' ability to think about others. Pupils who are members of the eco council are developing their roles appropriately, and are beginning to present and implement new ideas, for example by placing recycling bins in the classrooms. However, across the school, a minority of pupils do not develop their leadership skills effectively enough to have a purposeful effect on the school's wider decisions.

In the foundation phase, many pupils show a sound understanding of classroom organisation, and move around the various areas successfully. They are beginning to have an influence and share their ideas for activities in the learning areas. Most pupils in key stage 2 respond positively to opportunities they are given to influence what they would like to learn within the term's theme. This motivates them successfully to apply themselves fully to tasks; for example, they respond enthusiastically to visual prompts in order to promote written work.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Staff establish a supportive working relationship with pupils, which fosters a supportive learning environment. They engage most pupils' interest skilfully and motivate them to work diligently. Teachers encourage pupils to give of their best by providing them with effective support. Respect between pupils and adults is an excellent feature of the school's work, and is beginning to have a robust effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Teachers set clear learning objectives for pupils, and question them effectively in order to recall previous knowledge. They develop their ideas soundly by encouraging them to contribute regularly to learning activities, for example when learning about the Amazonian forests. Teachers share clear instructions and ensure that activities have a suitable pace. On the whole, activities correspond effectively to a majority of pupils' needs. However, teachers do not always have high enough expectations. As a result, a minority of pupils do not achieve to the best of their ability, particularly those who are more able.

Foundation phase provision is developing soundly. A majority of pupils develop their skills suitably in the outdoor area. Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to learn and develop their creative skills, for example when creating music in the 'sounds area'. In key stage 2, teachers encourage pupils to develop their creative skills effectively when building a model house for the residents of Watu Island. On the whole, teachers promote pupils' independent learning soundly. However, across the school, teachers do not provide regular enough opportunities for a majority of pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. As a result, they are over-reliant on instructions from adults, and they do not develop to become sufficiently enterprising and independent learners.

Teaching staff promote pupils' Welsh language skills skilfully and encourage them to use Welsh in the classroom and around the school. They support pupils ably and provide suitable opportunities for them to develop their Welsh vocabulary and syntax. Teachers provide interesting activities about Welsh traditions and history, for example when learning about the Mari Lwyd and St David. Regular visits to local sites, such as Melin Tregwynt, support learning and deepen pupils' understanding of their Welsh heritage effectively.

Teaching staff provide most pupils with constructive oral feedback, and encourage them to take responsibility for developing their work further. They ensure appropriate opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and provide them with purposeful improvements. Teachers encourage pupils to respond to their own work and that of their peers regularly in order to improve the quality of their work. This is beginning to have an effect on many pupils' standards across the areas of learning.

Teachers provide a suitable range of learning experiences, which develop pupils' skills appropriately and, on the whole, engage most pupils' interest in their learning. Teachers are beginning to ensure valuable opportunities for pupils to contribute to their activities. This gives pupils an opportunity to take ownership of their learning relevantly. However, planning does not ensure consistent experiences in all areas of the curriculum, for example in science and humanities.

Teachers use the literacy, numeracy and ICT frameworks appropriately in their planning in order to ensure continuity and progression in the development of pupils' skills. The school has begun to implement the digital competence framework and is beginning to develop pupils' ICT skills soundly. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills successfully in a rich range of learning activities. Plans do not focus in enough detail on ensuring that pupils develop their skills in a way that ensures continuity and progression in their learning across the areas.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

The school provides a caring and supportive learning environment for pupils. This is beginning to have a positive effect on their standards. Developing emotional and social wellbeing is one of the school's priorities, for example by establishing a support class as inclusive provision for specific pupils. The school is a safe haven for all pupils, with a supportive environment in which pupils can learn. As a result, in a short time, this provision is having a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and progress.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. The school has effective arrangements for monitoring pupils' attendance, and this has a positive effect. There are strong links between the school and specialist agencies and services, such as the educational psychologist, speech therapist, the nurse and the police. The school works closely with them to provide effective support for pupils and families, as necessary.

Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support in the classroom and in support groups. The school is beginning to use procedures to track and monitor the progress of specific groups of pupils, and set targets for all pupils more effectively. These procedures are beginning to have a robust effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing, and contribute effectively to the learning environment. A number of literacy, numeracy and wellbeing programmes are provided beneficially for pupils. As a result, a majority of pupils make sound progress.

Within a short time, the new headteacher has established a very successful working relationship with parents. They value the excellent communication procedures, which provide parents with valuable information about school life. As a result, the effective relationship between the school and parents ensures their commitment to

their children's education. Pupils and parents value the new homework menu that the school has developed by setting challenges for the term. Beneficial opportunities are available regularly for parents to learn about their children's work at the school, which enables them to support their children further, for example home reading support. The school provides parents with appropriate information about their children's progress and identifies the next steps in learning successfully.

The school promotes pupils' moral, social and spiritual development regularly through curricular activities. Pupils discuss important aspects of the world effectively when describing the dangers of climate change on the environment. They perform regularly by taking part in local workshops, for example folk dancing. As a result, most pupils develop their skills beneficially. However, opportunities that are provided for pupils to learn about the practices and cultures of people in other countries are limited.

The school provides a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities, sports and artistic events. For example, the school choir sings as part of a chorus in a music festival at St David's cathedral. There are effective opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide variety of sports, such as football, dancing, netball and gymnastics. The school invites various artists to hold workshops with pupils in order to develop their creative skills. Most pupils are given valuable experiences by taking part in concerts, services and local eisteddfodau within the community. As a result, they perform confidently in front of an audience.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. They understand the importance of keeping fit and eating healthily. For example, older pupils have received training on how to hold activities for the youngest pupils in order to develop their fitness purposefully.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The headteacher provides a clear strategic direction for the school's work. She has a robust vision to challenge and develop the school, which focuses effectively on the school's ethos, providing skilful teaching and raising pupils' standards and wellbeing. The headteacher provides strong leadership and works successfully with staff, governors, pupils and parents to achieve this vision. She sets high expectations for pupils, staff and governors in order to develop an effective and consistent team. Recently, the whole school community has worked closely as a team for the benefit of all pupils.

The headteacher has established suitable strategies to address shortcomings promptly in important aspects of pupils' wellbeing, provision and the school's performance, for example by establishing specific procedures to develop pupils' social skills by introducing a behaviour charter for pupils, which includes agreed rules and robust boundaries. As a result, this is having a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and their commitment to their work. Pupils are also beginning to show enthusiasm towards their Welshness and experience success in various activities within the local community. In a very short time, the influence of these charters is having a positive effect on nearly all pupils. However, it is too early to measure the effect of these actions on pupils' standards over a longer period.

There is a good link between the findings of self-evaluation processes, which ensures that the school development plan now prioritises areas for development effectively. The plan identifies the resources that are needed, and includes sensible timescales and suitable criteria to measure effectiveness. Sensible priorities are in place, which place a worthy emphasis on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy, ICT skills and wellbeing. During the last year, monitoring procedures have enabled staff to identify the school's strengths and some areas for improvement successfully. Staff meetings are held regularly, and give increasing attention to discussing developments in the school's priorities and national priorities. However, improvement procedures have not had enough time to have an effect on developing provision. For example, planning is not robust enough to ensure development and continuity in pupils' skills across the school.

Governors are very supportive and now show full commitment to the school's life and work. Through recent visits and learning walks, they have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and a number of areas for improvement. They are beginning to act as effective critical friends.

The school has recently restructured staff responsibilities and they now have clear job descriptions. Performance management arrangements are in place to develop teachers' skills further, and are based on the priorities in the development plan. However, the senior management team's leadership responsibilities have not been shared effectively enough. As a result, these members are not accountable enough for their responsibilities to have a sustainable effect on improving provision and raising standards.

Staff have recently been given beneficial opportunities to develop professionally, in line with their own needs and those of the school. For example, foundation phase teachers have visited other schools to observe good practice in developing the outdoor area. The school works skilfully with local schools within its cluster in order to work and plan jointly, for example by conducting action research on effective learning methods when teaching numeracy. As a result, staff are developing to become skilful practitioners.

The headteacher and governors ensure that the budget and additional grants link closely with the school's priorities, and expenditure is distributed carefully. The school earmarks the pupil development grant to improve the literacy and numeracy skills, and wellbeing, of pupils who are eligible to receive it. As a result, these pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points. The school has sufficient resources to meet pupils' needs. Staff make the best use of the school grounds to create a stimulating learning environment. Significant and regular contributions from Ffrindiau Ger y Llan enable the school to purchase, for example, purposeful resources to develop the outdoor areas further.

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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