



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Llys Hywel  
Market Street  
Whitland  
Carmarthen  
Carmarthenshire  
SA34 0QB**

**Date of inspection: November 2019**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Llys Hywel

Ysgol Gynradd Llys Hywel is situated in the village of Whitland in Carmarthenshire local authority. It provides education for pupils through the medium of Welsh and English in two streams. There are 153 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including five nursery age pupils who attend on a full-time basis. The school has six mixed-age classes. A majority of pupils attend the Welsh-medium department and 23% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes.

Over a three-year-period, around 18% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This corresponds with the national percentage. The school has identified around 19% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. This is lower than the national percentage of 21%.

The school was last inspected by Estyn in April 2013 and the current headteacher was appointed in September 2019.

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

Pupils feel happy and safe at the school. They are caring towards each other and respect their peers and adults. During their time there, many pupils in the Welsh stream gain robust Welsh and English communication skills. Considering their starting points, they achieve soundly in their speaking and reading. Many pupils in the English stream make sound progress in their English communication skills, but their progress in their Welsh second language skills is limited.

Teachers and assistants care for their pupils well and provide them and their parents with effective guidance and support. The school provides effective opportunities for foundation phase pupils to develop their communication, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills successfully. However, the standard of provision in key stage 2 is inconsistent.

In a short time, the headteacher has identified the need to improve aspects of teaching and planning in order to raise standards. The headteacher and governors have new plans in place to achieve these improvements but, as yet, they have not been embedded in full.

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

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Develop the role of leaders to enable them to contribute effectively towards developing the school's strategic direction
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching in key stage 2 to ensure that all pupils achieve to the best of their ability
- R3 Improve pupils' writing skills
- R4 Improve provision to develop pupils' numeracy skills

## **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**

Most pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are lower than expected for their age on entry to the school. During their time at the school, most make the expected progress from their starting points. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress against their individual learning targets. However, the most able pupils do not make enough progress.

Many pupils' speaking and listening skills are developing well. They listen attentively to presentations and respond sensibly in lessons. By the end of the foundation phase, many speak enthusiastically about their work and use an increasing range of relevant vocabulary as they make mature observations while creating a picture of the phases of the moon. Many key stage 2 pupils express their ideas clearly and correctly, for example as they discuss 'should animals be kept in a zoo?' By Year 6, many pupils' oracy skills are developing purposefully in both languages in the Welsh stream. Many pupils' English oral skills are very good in the English stream.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop their early reading skills effectively. By the end of this phase, many pupils read fluently and recount stories confidently in both languages. They discuss their favourite characters well. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read accurately with a good understanding in both languages. They discuss the main events and characters in the book 'Plentyn y Stryd', for example, maturely. Most pupils gather information from different sources independently, for example in order to produce written reports on the Aberfan disaster.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their early writing skills successfully in both languages. For example, pupils in the reception class write simple sentences to describe different superheroes effectively. By the end of this phase, many older pupils write well in a suitable range of different genres, for example when recounting the story of 'Serenola'. In key stage 2, many pupils make appropriate progress in developing their writing skills in both languages in the Welsh stream, and in English in the English stream. Pupils are beginning to use mature vocabulary and include appropriate facts to support their writing, for example when producing a factual leaflet about Queen Victoria. However, many pupils in key stage 2, do not write to a standard that corresponds with their ability in language lessons or across other areas of the curriculum, particularly those who are more able. The standard of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work varies greatly in key stage 2.

The standard of most pupils' Welsh second language is appropriate. Across the school, many in the English stream respond to Welsh instructions effectively. Very few Year 6 pupils hold an extended conversation confidently and respond to questions correctly. Many pupils' writing skills in key stage 2 have not developed sufficiently, and rarely do they use their oral skills outside the formal classroom situation. Many pupils have suitable reading skills.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make sound progress in their mathematical development. They have strong number skills, an appropriate grasp of the principles

of shapes and collect data confidently. For example, many Year 1 pupils use their knowledge of addition and subtraction confidently when handling money to buy clothes in the fancy dress shop. Most pupils in Year 2 create a simple database of their favourite animals and use it appropriately to produce an accurate bar graph. In key stage 2, most pupils develop their knowledge of number well and have a sound understanding of how to collect and present data. However, pupils in key stage 2 do not always develop their knowledge of all areas of the mathematics curriculum to a suitable depth nor apply their skills regularly enough in other areas of the curriculum.

Many pupils' ICT skills develop gradually as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, many use an electronic tablet effectively when taking pictures and recording their voices. Most pupils in key stage 2 use the internet effectively to search for information and create multimedia presentations successfully, for example when presenting their work on Welsh rugby clubs. They are beginning to use spreadsheets suitably to convert grams to kilograms. However, overall, pupils do not apply their ICT skills regularly enough across the curriculum. This limits their progress in this area.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel very safe and happy there due to the exceptional care that they receive. Most pupils treat staff and each other with respect and are highly welcoming towards visitors. This contributes strongly towards the school's friendly and inclusive ethos. Most pupils understand how to use the internet safely.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Through the effective work of the super ambassadors, pupils have a sound understanding of their rights within the school community and the wider world, and discuss them confidently. Most pupils show that they are polite, share well with each other and take turns when completing their work.

Most pupils speak confidently about their current and previous work and with maturity and enthusiasm. They enjoy the subjects that they study and, on the whole, are willing to work hard. Most pupils participate positively in their learning and settle well to their tasks. In Year 6, many develop confidence and resilience when facing their curricular challenges, and use the 'three before me' strategy successfully when they face difficulty with their work. Most pupils listen attentively to the views of others and give good consideration to opinions that are different from their own, for example when discussing 'has the true purpose of Christmas changed?'

Most pupils have begun to contribute effectively when providing interesting ideas about what they would like to learn. One example in which pupils have influenced their tasks is in Year 4, where they take a photograph of houses from the Victorian era in the village confidently as part of their independent challenges. Most foundation phase pupils choose their activities completely independently. They complete them, keep a record of them in their 'passport' and then move forward to the next activity without fuss. A majority of pupils in key stage 2 develop an effective understanding of how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve their work.

Many pupils take pride in the opportunities they are given to develop their role in representing other pupils' voices. Under the guidance of the eco council, most pupils' understanding of sustainability is developing well. By running the fair trade fruit shop, the council encourages pupils to make sensible decisions about how to eat healthily. As a result, many pupils have a sound understanding of how regular exercise has a positive effect on their fitness, health and physical wellbeing. Members of the 'Criw Cymraeg' have recently introduced playground games, which have a positive effect on pupils' use of the Welsh language during break times.

Most pupils in key stage 2 understand the importance of regular attendance. However, in the last few years, attendance rates have remained lower than the average of similar schools. Most pupils arrive at school on time in the morning.

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

The school provides a purposeful curriculum for pupils that engages nearly all pupils' interest well. Teachers provide a variety of stimulating learning experiences, which include various educational visits to places such as Swansea Museum as part of the key stage 2 theme work on the Victorian era. This succeeds well in broadening pupils' knowledge of the history of the wider area successfully. The school is beginning to plan purposefully to introduce the basic principles of the new curriculum for Wales by setting various challenges for pupils. This develops their independent learning skills effectively.

The principles of the foundation phase have been embedded very successfully in the school, and numerous opportunities to develop the pupil's voice, in addition to opportunities for them to choose their activities in the form of challenges, are a strength. Pupils make very effective use of the outdoors, and staff provide valuable opportunities for them to develop their social, creative and physical skills effectively. They provide a very wide range of stimulating and rich activities for pupils, which contribute successfully towards raising standards.

Provision for key stage 2 pupils is suitable. However, opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in various areas of the curriculum are inconsistent. The school is beginning to plan to meet the requirements of the digital competence framework appropriately. However, teachers' teaching plans do not always focus enough on ensuring that pupils develop their skills in a systematic way that builds logically on their previous knowledge, particularly in mathematics and numeracy.

Nearly all members of staff provide a purposeful language model in developing pupils' Welsh language skills, and they provide beneficial activities to enrich their knowledge of Welsh culture and heritage, for example by celebrating T. Llew Jones day and emulating the work of contemporary Welsh artists. However, provision to develop pupils' communication skills in Welsh as a second language for those in the English stream is only appropriate.

There is a good working relationship between all pupils and staff. Best practice in teaching is based on detailed planning, successful questioning and thorough preparation to engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Staff in around half of classes remind pupils effectively of their previous learning and present clear learning objectives and instructions. In these classes, teachers plan a range of activities with

an appropriate level of challenge to meet pupils' learning needs, and plan to develop pupils' independent learning skills and thinking skills skilfully. They have high expectations and lessons have firm learning aims. However, in the other half of classes, the standard of teaching is inconsistent. Where teaching is least successful, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, and they do not adapt learning effectively enough to challenge all pupils at the appropriate level. As a result, many pupils do not make progress in their learning. The pace of a majority of lessons in these classes is also too slow.

Teachers provide pupils with purposeful oral feedback and, on the whole, written comments and the 'gwyRDD gwyCh a glas gwella' (great green and blue for better) strategy helps pupils to improve their work efficiently. Pupils are beginning to assess their own work suitably.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is a caring community and the high level of care and co-operation between staff and pupils contributes well to their wellbeing. The school's positive ethos supports pupils effectively in developing their social and moral skills. Staff know the pupils and their families very well and have a positive relationship with them. Up-to-date communication strategies succeed well in encouraging and supporting pupils' direct participation in their children's education, for example by sharing homework challenges related to the current theme. The parents' association works closely with the school and the local community to organise fundraising activities, which succeed in strengthening the familial ethos effectively.

The school has developed suitable arrangements over time to track and monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing. Many staff use this information appropriately to plan and provide comprehensive support for most pupils. They address the needs of individuals and specific groups of pupils who need additional support in their basic skills and wellbeing successfully. However, a few teachers do not make the best use of these arrangements to ensure that more able pupils make the best progress possible.

Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage. Individual education plans focus very well on individuals and identify targets for improvement, which are shared purposefully with staff, parents and pupils. Staff monitor progress towards these targets beneficially and ensure that these pupils make good progress. This is one of the school's strengths. Assistants make a very valuable contribution by working skilfully to implement a wide range of purposeful intervention programmes, for example to deliver a building therapy resource to develop the social skills of groups of pupils. The school has effective partnerships with a range of external agencies that provide good support for pupils.

The school has effective arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. Staff encourage pupils to eat a healthy diet by providing activities in the classroom. Good use is made of visitors to expand pupils' artistic experiences, for example as they work with a Welsh artist to create a colourful mural on 'Keeping Healthy' in the canteen. These opportunities enrich pupils' experiences beneficially and increase their self-confidence.



The school's provision to develop pupils' creative skills is purposeful. The school provides a number of opportunities for pupils to take part in concerts, sing in the school choir and compete in the Urdd Eisteddfod. This contributes successfully towards increasing pupils' confidence and social skills. Staff plan a wide range of interesting activities that develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of Welsh culture. Educational visits to places of interest, such as a visit to the museum in Swansea and the residential weekend to the Urdd centre at Llangrannog, develop pupils' awareness of the history of the local area and further afield effectively.

The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop secure values and establish their spiritual and moral beliefs. Through classroom activities and regular assemblies, pupils are given an opportunity to reflect on the difference between right and wrong, for example by recounting the story of the 'Coat of Many Colours'.

Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility on different committees, such as the digital wizards and the school council. These have a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and on the school's day-to-day life. As a result, many pupils have a good understanding of the way in which their joint actions contribute to the wider benefit of the community. Through numerous activities to support a charity that is important to the school, a peace area has been constructed in order to give pupils an opportunity to reflect during break times and lunchtime. This has a very positive effect on pupils' understanding of the needs of people who are less fortunate.

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

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

In the very short time since being appointed, the headteacher has developed a clear vision for the school, which is based on creating a caring environment in which pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of its work. She has shared this vision successfully with staff, governors and parents.

The headteacher has refined the school's management procedures appropriately to reflect its current requirements. All members of staff have a suitable understanding of their new roles within the school and lines of accountability are clear. The assistant headteacher has begun to work closely with the headteacher on whole-school issues and is developing her strategic role further. Staff communicate with each other effectively and work closely as a team. However, due to changes in the staffing structure and the reorganisation of responsibilities, the new arrangements have not had enough time to become embedded or have a positive effect on maintaining and improving provision and raising standards.

The headteacher ensures that there are purposeful opportunities for the professional development of teachers and support staff. Staff development procedures are linked directly with their performance management objectives, and all staff receive relevant training. They receive internal training and opportunities to work with other schools to observe good practice. These valuable opportunities have led to adapting long-term planning and are beginning to strengthen the pupil's voice on the way in which they would like to learn.

The school's current self-evaluation procedures lead to a fairly accurate evaluation of its current performance and identify important areas for improvement. Staff, parents and governors contribute appropriately to these procedures, which use a range of first-hand evidence, such as data analysis, lesson observations, learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' work. However, over time, staff have not measured the effect of provision on pupils' standards purposefully enough. Recent monitoring reports are very honest and identify that expectations and academic standards vary across the school and have an effect on the accuracy of data over time. As a result, weekly staff meetings now place a clear focus on the school's priorities. There is now a clear focus on looking at data and the system for tracking pupils' progress in order to develop staff's understanding of pupils' outcomes and increase their accountability for the progress of pupils in their class. Beneficial opportunities are also arranged for teachers from the same stage to plan jointly and scrutinise each other's books.

In turn, the priorities in the school development plan derive directly from evidence gathered from the self-evaluation procedures. Actions allocate responsibilities clearly, including responsibility for monitoring and evaluating their effectiveness. However, these procedures have not had time to reconcile weaknesses in teaching and planning across the school, nor to improve all pupils' skills.

The school responds suitably to national and local priorities. Staff have developed a stimulating outdoor area for pupils and the principles of the foundation phase are strong. The school has appropriate plans to develop the digital competence framework and promote Welshness. The headteacher has begun to place an effective focus on improving pupils' attendance, which has already begun to improve.

Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school's work and fulfil their roles conscientiously. They have appropriate knowledge of the running of the school from day to day, and have begun to develop their understanding of the school's data. They now conduct learning walks more often, which enriches their understanding of what happens in classes. They provide a purposeful challenge in terms of the effect of funding on standards and provision. However, they do not yet hold the school to account rigorously enough for its performance.

The headteacher and governors manage the budget carefully and ensure that expenditure links directly with plans for improvement. The school makes appropriate use of the pupil development grant to improve the literacy and numeracy skills and wellbeing of those who are eligible to receive it. The school has a range of resources of suitable quality to promote pupils' learning experiences. Outdoor learning areas include a range of purposeful equipment to develop pupils' social and physical skills successfully.

## 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](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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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