



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

A report on
Ysgol G.G. Bodringallt

Bryn Terrace
Ystrad
Pentre
RCT
CF41 7RX

Date of inspection: March 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol G.G. Bodringallt

Name of provider	Ysgol Gymraeg Bodringallt
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Language of the provider	Welsh-medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	134
Pupils of statutory school age	89
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	33
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 21.3%)</i>	28%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 20.6%)</i>	33.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	31.5%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	September, 2014
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	25-06-2013
Start date of inspection	14-03-2022
Additional information	

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- (a) The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the school's SEN/ALN register.

Overview

The headteacher leads the school well and provides strong strategic leadership. His vision is based on supporting pupils' well-being and helping them to make progress in developing their skills, permeates throughout the life of the school. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements are implemented highly effectively and all partners have a say in identifying strengths and developing specific aspects for improvement. The headteacher is supported skilfully by a hard-working team of staff who support pupils well and provide interesting learning activities. Members of the governing body have a strong knowledge of the school and support staff effectively.

Teachers and learning assistants have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide constructive support for them to develop their skills. They support pupils well, for example during 'Llun Lles' ('Well-being Monday') sessions, which helps them to fully engage in their learning. On the whole, teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing and digital skills consistently across the curriculum. However, pupils are not always given enough opportunities to make increasingly independent choices about their learning.

One of the school's most notable qualities is the tireless support that is provided for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. This strengthens pupils' pride in their school and of their wider community. Pupils are motivated and encouraged to speak Welsh spontaneously through support in a variety of meaningful activities.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are a strength. Most listen carefully to instructions and apply themselves fully to their learning. They work together diligently on tasks and respond effectively to the staff's high expectations. Despite the pandemic, many pupils continue to make consistent progress in their skills, including their Welsh language skills.

Recommendations

R1 Expand provision to support pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum

R2 Extend planned opportunities for pupils to make choices about their learning increasingly independently

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the inspection's recommendations.

Main findings

Learning

During their time at the school, many pupils make strong progress in their skills from their starting points. They deepen their understanding and acquire information skilfully in an interesting variety of learning contexts. One of the school's strengths is that by the end of their time at the school pupils communicate with increasing confidence in Welsh and English.

Most pupils develop their listening skills successfully, responding skilfully to presentations, for example as adults give them instructions to create a graphic score when composing creative music. Despite time lost due to the pandemic, adults continue to have high expectations regarding pupils' Welsh speaking skills. These expectations support pupils to speak the language with increasing accuracy. Adults' consistent use of language immersion techniques across the school are a means for pupils to develop their vocabulary and familiar patterns skilfully, for example when the youngest pupils discuss the features of recycled materials. Most of the oldest pupils recall facts, for example about the history of the collieries, and use suitable language to present information effectively. They understand the difference between the features of formal and informal language orally and in writing and use them with increasing proficiency when discussing river pollution and present the information in a formal letter. Many pupils' speaking skills are developed purposefully in interesting activities, for example when using specific vocabulary as part of a scientific experiment about energy, and pupils apply the language skilfully when designing and creating windmills.

Many pupils improve their reading skills consistently in both languages as they move through the school. Most of the youngest pupils build their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds and make progress in their early reading skills successfully. Older pupils use reading methods skilfully while gathering, interpreting and presenting information, and gain the confidence to present facts to their friends. As pupils improve their reading skills, many present information meaningfully and intonate naturally, for example while reading a personal prayer in a school assembly. The oldest pupils refine their higher order reading skills and gather information skilfully, for example when gathering and collating information about insects. Many pupils develop their thinking skills successfully while reading text and prioritising personal qualities as they deepen their understanding of the importance of being principled with friends.

Many pupils refine their writing skills with increasing confidence in Welsh and English as they move through the school. The youngest pupils make progress in their early writing skills successfully by creating short questions to ask a child about the Ystrad area and practise their skills purposefully on the graffiti wall in the outdoor classroom. As pupils move through the school, they share facts about famous Welsh people effectively and present this information in a suitable variety of forms. They deepen their understanding and knowledge of language consistently by varying the style to correspond to different genres, for example by adding interesting adjectives when describing Betty Campbell and Shirley Bassey. Many older pupils write appropriately and use interesting vocabulary and idioms. Pupils have regular opportunities to

improve their work and this enriches and reinforces their skills successfully as they learn how to use suitable techniques. On the whole, a majority of pupils apply their extended writing skills appropriately across the areas of learning.

Many pupils' mathematics skills are developing effectively. Most of the youngest pupils develop their mathematics skills consistently, for example by classifying odd and even numbers while playing a game. As pupils move through the school, most deepen their understanding of non-standard and standard units and apply their number skills consistently across the areas of learning. Many of the oldest pupils compare units of measurement successfully and use information effectively, for example by collecting and analysing databases when comparing the weight of coal from the Lower Dinas, Nyth Bran and Cymmer collieries. They develop their number skills and draw and analyse various graphs effectively and present them with increasing accuracy. They do this skilfully by using different practical and digital methods.

Many pupils' digital skills improve consistently as they move through the school. The youngest pupils use a range of communication programs confidently, for example when using devices to present a script and evaluate each other's contributions successfully. Many of the oldest pupils develop their production skills skilfully and use different apps to improve their skills as they present facts about Wales. By doing so, they incorporate images and sound creatively to present information in a way that is attractive to the audience. Year 6 pupils improve their data input skills and develop their understanding of digital communication through an appropriate range of activities. For example, pupils measure the length of shadows during different times of the day and enter the data into a digital table to present it in various spreadsheets and databases correctly.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils respond positively to the school's inclusive provision, which is an integral part of the headteacher and staff's vision. This has been a priority since the pandemic and continues to have a highly positive impact on almost every pupil's well-being, for example as they take part in 'Llun Lles' ('Well-being Monday') activities. Through this, pupils develop their understanding of the importance of taking care of their mental and emotional well-being as they prepare to learn for the rest of the week.

Shared values and morals help pupils to feel safe and they know who to approach if anything is worrying them. They are respected and treated fairly by adults, which contributes positively to developing a working relationship based on respect and trust. Pupils are proud that teachers celebrate their talents purposefully in the learning environment, for example on the Bodringallt Heroes mural.

Most pupils are pleased that adults listen to their views and consider them in decisions that affect them. Nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, are willing to undertake leadership roles and responsibilities, and play a full part in the life and work of the school. Pupils who are members of various committees as part of the Senedd make decisions that also make an effective contribution. For example, members of the eco and well-being council plant fruit and vegetables in the garden for harvesting and for use in cooking. They also present information to their friends about the importance of hygiene when cooking and the

importance of staying healthy. Through the work of the school council, for example in promoting online safety, most pupils have a sound understanding of staying safe.

Most pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning and develop as ambitious learners. They show an interest and enjoyment in what they learn, both individually and in groups. Nearly all pupils work diligently with their friends and adults and support each other freely. They concentrate consistently for extended periods. Most discuss their work confidently and are willing to listen to the views and ideas of others. Nearly all pupils show respect towards their work and resilience and motivation in their learning.

Many pupils respond positively to the suitable opportunities provided for them as they begin to influence what and how they would like to learn. From an early age, they respond consistently to oral feedback provided by friends and staff. As a result, they skilfully gain confidence in responding and developing their work.

Most pupils mature into healthy and confident individuals, who understand how to make the right choices in terms of diet, physical exercise, and emotional well-being. Members of the health and well-being council promote healthy eating by monitoring the contents of lunchboxes regularly and encouraging pupils to make healthy choices. Nearly all pupils enjoy the activities available to them during break times, and these successfully develop their social skills. Many pupils participate in the interesting range of additional clubs offered.

Nearly all pupils' behaviour is consistently good in the indoor and outdoor classrooms, and while playing together on the yard. They treat adults and visitors with respect and courtesy. They have a consistent understanding of the school's sound principles and morals. They contribute enthusiastically in assemblies that promote important qualities, such as their understanding of fairness, equality and sustainability. This can be seen permeating purposefully throughout the school's ethos, 'Cariad, Cwrteisi, Cymreictod' ('Love, Courtesy, Welshness'), and pupils are proud to belong to the school family.

Following the pandemic, inspectors do not report on pupil attendance rates during the 2021-2022 academic year. Instead, the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance is reported on as part of Inspection Area 4.

Teaching and learning experiences

Learning experiences across the school motivate and challenge most pupils effectively and support them to make consistent progress in lessons and over time. All members of staff effectively provide learning activities for specific groups of pupils, including pupils with additional learning needs and those who are more able.

The school's curriculum is based on provision that offers rich and constructive opportunities for pupils. Interesting activities support many pupils to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in Welsh and English, numeracy and digital, and support them to make progress. On the whole, the majority of activities support pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum, for example through the 'Medrau Moethus' (Rich Skills) method. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their extended writing and digital skills across the curriculum are limited overall.

Across the school, teachers gather pupils' ideas by asking 'big questions' within a specific theme. Pupils place their questions on the 'crochan creu' ('creation cauldron') and the 'coeden cwestiynau' ('question tree'), which provide purposeful opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers of younger pupils integrate all areas of learning and experience by implementing the foundation phase principles effectively, for example by providing creative and physical activities in the outdoor classroom. By doing so, they spark and sustain pupils' interest throughout the school successfully and encourage them to engage with and enjoy their learning. Teachers use methods effectively, particularly when teaching literacy and numeracy skills, in addition to providing opportunities for pupils to develop them appropriately across the curriculum. A notable example of this is that teachers have used the discovery of an ancient crocodile skeleton on the school grounds recently as a unique prompt for an interesting range of learning activities.

The quality of provision for developing Welsh communication skills in formal and informal teaching activities is a strength. This has an encouraging effect on restoring most pupils' standards of Welsh oracy following the period of remote learning. Staff also provide wider opportunities for them to use their Welsh language skills in a variety of additional experiences, including guitar and ukulele sessions. Provision is enriched further as pupils also take advantage of a variety of extra-curricular clubs and deepen their learning by going on educational trips, for example to the local village, to Pontypridd, and to Cardiff.

The school's vision for the Curriculum for Wales is developing effectively. Consistent priority is given to supporting pupils' well-being, providing a wealth of meaningful learning experiences that help to develop their skills, and promoting the sense of belonging to the Bodringallt family. Staff explore and reflect effectively on the features of the curriculum. For example, teachers provide rich learning opportunities that embody the four purposes and encourage pupil voice skilfully in a series of activities across the areas of learning under the theme 'Dilyn yr afon' ('Following the river'). They provide opportunities for pupils to develop their skills effectively and enrich their experiences by delivering problem-solving and creative activities. For example, they measure the speed of objects travelling at water currents of different strengths in a river they have created. Through this, pupils become engrossed in their learning and develop their skills cohesively.

All members of staff have a highly positive working relationship with pupils. They work together effectively as a team providing a wide range of activities that support pupils to make progress in their key skills and emotional well-being. The attractive learning areas in the indoor and outdoor classrooms are used purposefully to encourage pupils to work productively and enrich their learning experiences. A minority of adults lead the learning activities consistently, which in turn impedes pupils' ability to make increasingly independent choices about their learning. Overall, provision does not support pupils effectively enough to make independent choices about their learning.

Teachers and learning assistants have high expectations of pupils and treat them all with respect. They share clear learning objectives and support pupils effectively by ensuring that activities have a suitable pace. They make regular use of learning techniques and resources to engage pupils' interest and support them to achieve well, for example by providing a recording of a reading text as they gather information

about famous Welsh people. Pupils' achievements are honoured as their work is attractively celebrated around the school, for example on the 'Seren yr Wythnos' (Star of the Week) and 'Balchder Bodringallt' ('Pride of Bodringallt') murals.

Teachers provide valuable teaching and assessment opportunities that support many pupils to make progress in their learning. Staff's oral feedback is a strength and helps many pupils to know how well they are doing and how to improve their work. Teachers develop pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively and monitor pupils' learning through regular use of probing and supportive questions. For example, teachers give pupils time to think before responding and provide opportunities for them to discuss their work with partners. Many pupils are also given purposeful opportunities to assess their own and their friends' learning by using 'Dringo'r (Bodring) Allt' ('Climbing the [Bodringallt] Hill'). Robust assessment arrangements to monitor individual pupils' progress and attainment are beneficial.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring and happy community that promotes good behaviour, courtesy and respect for all pupils. The constructive and friendly working relationship between staff and pupils is a strong feature of the school. This is reflected in nearly all pupils' positive attitudes towards the school's life and work.

Teachers and learning assistants promote the Welsh language and embed Welshness for pupils highly successfully. They engender pupils' pride in their identity, heritage, and culture through interesting activities, for example as pupils sing the school anthem, 'Bodringallt Bodringallt', with gusto. School assemblies contribute positively towards developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of different religions and their moral and spiritual development.

Staff support pupils' mental and emotional well-being highly effectively following the lockdown periods of the pandemic. For example, most pupils value the self-selection sessions, which include yoga and learning a foreign language, during 'Llun Lles' ('Well-being Monday') sessions. They also enjoy taking part in the 'nodyn neis' ('nice note') methods when discussing their friends' important attributes. This enables nearly all pupils to show a willingness to work and develop positive relationships in the classroom and beyond.

Teachers foster shared values, such as honesty, fairness, justice, and sustainability successfully. This supports pupils to understand the needs and rights of others as members on the school, locally in the community and further afield. Children's rights are promoted by discussing important morals and values in presentations and through important messages on purposeful displays around the school.

Leaders take advantage of a variety of opportunities to ensure that pupils contribute to decisions that have an effect on whole-school provision. Through the activity of the school Senedd, pupils have a positive influence on important decisions that affect them, for example by choosing and purchasing equipment to keep them entertained at break time.

Teachers and learning assistants support all pupils to take advantage of opportunities to influence what they learn by encouraging them to contribute probing

questions within their themes. Teachers encourage all pupils to take on responsibilities and contribute to the work of the school and the wider community.

Through the school's frequent creative opportunities, including performances such as Parti Ponty locally and regional and national Urdd competitions, staff support pupils to gain the confidence to take part in an interesting variety of extra-curricular activities. These important opportunities support pupils to use their imagination and refine their creative skills while engaging successfully in the expressive arts, for example by emulating houses and creating primitive tools as part of their work on the Celts.

The school offers effective provision for pupils with additional learning needs, which includes purposeful support programmes. Leaders track the progress of these pupils in relation to the targets in their individual plans, and their progress from their starting points. Teachers make proactive use of services and partnerships to provide purposeful support for learners, including those with additional learning needs.

The school has a culture of pupil safety and wellbeing, and consistent approaches towards them; safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and pose no cause for concern. Leaders and teachers monitor pupils' attendance in an appropriate arrangement by working closely with parents and external agencies.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads the school confidently and promotes a strong vision while nurturing an inclusive and friendly community that encourages all pupils to engage and apply themselves well. The purposeful strategic direction sets clear expectations in all aspects of teaching and learning, and supports teachers and learning assistants to maintain and raise standards. Staff share this ambition with pupils and promoting shared values is an integral part of school life. The school's motto, 'Heb iaith heb ddim' (Without language there is nothing), permeates throughout the school. Through this, staff and pupils have a shared pride towards the Welsh language and their heritage and this is at the heart of the learning environment.

Leaders implement highly effective arrangements when evaluating and developing provision. For example, as a result of the pandemic, staff have recognised that pupils' well-being needs to be strengthened as they return to school full-time. Activities that meet pupils' well-being needs are provided successfully on 'Llun Lles' days (Well-being Mondays). Through these, most pupils engage successfully with their learning. As a result, pupils' social skills develop consistently and this supports them to maintain their interest and commitment to their learning.

Purposeful staff meetings are held to arrange and action activities to make progress towards agreed priorities. All members of the teaching staff are responsible for a particular area or aspect of the school's work, and they contribute effectively towards improving pupils' standards and progress. Learning assistants are key members of the school team and contribute consistently to improving pupils' standards of learning, well-being, and social skills.

The school has rigorous arrangements for evaluating pupils' progress and attainment, which in turn contribute effectively to improvements over time. The senior

Leadership team purposefully uses relevant information, in addition to the views of staff, parents and governors to identify strengths and priorities for the coming period successfully. Leaders provide regular opportunities for pupils to contribute to evaluating provision. For example, they have identified that a more attractive environment needs to be created for socialising during break times, and that the outdoor classroom needs to be made greener by planting vegetables and flowers in the Bodringardd area.

Teachers have strong relationships with parents which, in turn, supports many pupils to make consistent progress in their skills. They also share relevant information with parents, which fosters effective co-operation for the benefit and education of all pupils. The communication includes relevant information for parents about their children's progress and the school's daily activities.

Members of the governing body have a relevant understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement through the headteacher's detailed reports, regular visits to classes, book scrutiny and conducting learning walks. Through these, they have a strong awareness of the issues that require attention and the challenges the school faces. They support the school to manage and organise its resources effectively, which includes making good use of the pupil development grant. They co-operate with leaders and pupils to ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

Regular professional learning opportunities are provided for staff, which link effectively with the outcomes of the school's evaluation activities and priorities for improvement. The headteacher supports teachers to conduct research on an aspect of their classroom practice to identify its effect on pupils' attainment. A good example of this is that teachers have developed the 'discussion partner' method at the beginning of sessions to develop pupils' confidence in discussing, asking questions and expressing opinions. As a result, many pupils gain the confidence to contribute more proactively to class discussions, which also supports them to develop their Welsh language skills effectively over time.

Through various professional learning activities, all members of staff develop a sound understanding of the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. Teachers are taking part in a collaboration to develop a package of activities about humanities in their 'Milltir Sgwâr' (locality), which in turn has successfully deepened pupils' understanding of the features of the local river. The headteacher and staff are confident to share their practice within and across other schools in the cluster, locally and regionally.

Evidence base of the report

Before the inspection, inspectors:

- analysed the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and considered the views of teachers, staff and the governing body/management committee members through their questionnaire responses

During the inspection, inspectors:

- held a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- met the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- met pupils to discuss their work, listen to them reading and gain their views about various aspects of their school
- met groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives of the school council and eco-committee
- visited a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), undertook a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a variety of settings, including classrooms, support groups (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visited the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observed and spoke to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after school clubs
- attended assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- looked closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- considered the school's improvement plan and looked at evidence to show how well the school had taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinised a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, minutes of staff and governing body meetings, information on pupils' well-being, 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:

- reviewed the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, standardise 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)

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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