



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

A report on

Ysgol Llywelyn

**Trellewelyn Road
Rhyl
Denbighshire
LL18 4EU**

Date of inspection: June 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Llywelyn

Name of provider	Ysgol Llywelyn
Local authority	Denbighshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	706
Pupils of statutory school age	530
Number in nursery classes	89
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in [SECTOR] is [xx]%)	28.4%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in [SECTOR] is [xx]%)	19.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	04/12/2012
Start date of inspection	06/06/2022

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 SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Ysgol Llywelyn provides a high level of support, care and guidance for its pupils and staff. As a result, nearly all pupils are happy at school and feel valued. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and are particularly keen to chat to visitors about their work and school life. The headteacher and leadership team create and maintain a strong culture of teamworking, and as a result all staff take advantage of opportunities to develop new ideas, such as experimenting with approaches to delivering the Curriculum for Wales. Leaders have a strong overarching vision for the school based on the mission statement, 'believe, achieve and shine'. They use a wide range of activities to evaluate the school's work, often identifying key priorities appropriately, although plans to tackle the school's main areas for development are not always clear enough to deliver rapid, focused, and consistent progress.

Nearly all pupils make good progress in learning during their time at the school. On the whole, they develop their early literacy skills well and take advantage of suitable opportunities to write for different purposes across the curriculum. Most pupils develop numeracy skills appropriately, and in the foundation phase they apply these skills effectively in different contexts. Many develop Welsh language skills appropriately and have a positive attitude towards speaking Welsh. Overall, pupils' digital skills are underdeveloped, despite a recent investment in information and communication technology (ICT) equipment. Many develop creative and physical skills well. They benefit from outdoor resources such as a bicycle track and highly engaging school forest and garden areas which are an exceptional feature of the school's provision.

Teachers and their assistants provide activities that engage pupils well. Recently, they have introduced 'inspiration days' to introduce new topics that capture pupils' imaginations well. For example, younger pupils had a visit from a creature in the woods who left footprints. They tracked him down to the school garden and helped build a den for him. Teachers throughout the school are beginning to develop opportunities for pupils to develop independent skills in different contexts, such as when accessing different areas of the class and outdoor areas in the foundation phase, or when responding to 'enquiry days'. However, some of this work is at an early stage.

Teachers track pupils' progress accurately as they move through the school, and the school arranges suitable additional support for pupils as required, including a range of interventions that supports their educational and social development. On the whole, teachers provide suitable feedback for pupils, although they do not always provide frequent enough opportunities for pupils to improve or develop their work in light of the feedback they have been given.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the impact of strategic planning on pupils' outcomes
- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their digital skills
- R3 Improve provision for developing pupils' independent learning skills
- R4 Provide pupils with more frequent opportunities to improve their work in light of feedback

What happens next

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to outdoor learning for dissemination on Estyn's website. The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time at Ysgol Llywelyn most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make good progress from their individual starting points.

Overall, pupils develop their literacy skills well. Younger pupils enjoy looking at books independently, for example reading the story, of the 'Frog and the Princess' out loud in the outdoor reading area for pleasure and acting out the parts with a friend. Most pupils make strong progress through the phonic scheme and use these skills well to read a range of simple words and sentences. As they progress through the school, they read work and texts with accuracy and fluency and gain a good understanding of a range increasingly complex vocabulary. As a result, most become confident readers by the time they leave the school.

Many pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. The youngest pupils take advantage of a suitable range of opportunities through their play to develop their mark making skills across the areas of provision. For example, they paint with coloured water in the outdoor area and write cards for their friends. Older pupils apply their writing skills suitably through their topic work. For example, they write newspaper reports for the Rhyl Times, and poems about the harvest. Nearly all pupils across the school present their work to a high standard with a neat handwriting style.

Nearly all pupils talk about their work and things that are of interest to them with enthusiasm. Most display good listening skills and enjoy joining in with discussions. However, a very few pupils in the older age-groups do not always listen attentively enough to teachers or to the views and opinions of other pupils. Pupils who access additional support through the specialist provision at the school make strong progress particularly in their language and literacy skills.

Many pupils develop suitable Welsh language skills during their time at the school. Younger pupils enjoy joining in and singing Welsh songs and rhymes. Most pupils read and respond to a range of simple questions when using the 'helpwr heddiw' (today's helper) cards during morning registration time. As pupils move through the school, many respond suitably to questions about where they live, their family, and their likes and dislikes, using crib cards to assist them where required.

Across the school, most pupils make suitable progress in developing their numeracy skills. Many younger pupils apply their numeracy skills effectively to different contexts. For example, they use their knowledge of compass points to navigate a simple grid and sort different types of dinosaurs using a Venn diagram. On the whole, as they progress through the school, pupils receive fewer opportunities to apply numeracy skills to different authentic contexts, and as a result they do not apply their consistently skills in work in other areas of the curriculum.

Pupils' digital skills across the school are at an early stage of development. Many younger pupils successfully use QR codes to access stories, and a minority are beginning to use simple painting and data handling software with some confidence.

When given the opportunity, a majority of older pupils convey information well through a digital presentation. For example, they present their ideas about how they can have a positive impact on environmental issues in their school and local environment. Pupils use search engines to find relevant facts and import simple graphs they have produced. However, on the whole, pupils' digital skills are underdeveloped.

Many pupils develop their creative skills well through a range of activities across their topic work. They present their drawings, paintings and other forms of media to a good standard, for example when recreating artwork by Edvard Munch. Many younger pupils enjoy taking on roles in their play using a variety of hats and costumes in the role play area. A few pupils use their imagination well to compose music and songs in the outdoor music area using instruments such as drums and shakers. Older pupils recognise and talk about music in broad terms, using appropriate musical language such as tempo, dynamics, rhythm and pitch. For example, they listen to and appraise the musical piece La Mer by Debussy skillfully.

Nearly all pupils develop their physical skills well across the school. Younger pupils successfully use a range of tools in their play such as when playing with playdough or making mud cakes in the outdoor area. Many develop physical skills well when climbing on the trim trail in the outdoor area, or using large blocks to build a wall, or when kicking a football and chasing it with their friends. Many develop fine motor skills well, for example when using small brushes to clean the 'sea animals' in the muddy water area before transferring them to clean water. All pupils have the opportunity to learn how to ride a bike by the time that they leave the school, using the school's own bike track and stock of bicycles, and as a result nearly all pupils ride bikes independently. Pupils develop their physical skills effectively in the school's woodland and garden areas. For example, they use tools to make resources out of wood for other children to use like 'tic tac toe' game boards and counters.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Most pupils feel secure in school and are confident that adults will listen to their concerns and support them in resolving any problems. They behave well in classes, outdoors, and when they are moving around the school. The school's embedded "tocyn" (token) reward scheme encourages most pupils to behave appropriately, and to try hard in different areas of school life, such as speaking Welsh.

Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude to their learning. In lessons, most pupils are attentive to their teachers and are eager to do well. They are interested in the topics that they learn about, engage with the tasks provided for them with enthusiasm, and work on tasks for sustained periods appropriately. When given the opportunity, many enjoy learning independently through challenging tasks or projects. However, such opportunities are inconsistent, and as a result a few pupils find it hard to persevere or look for new solutions when they face difficulties. Many pupils value the feedback they receive from adults and are beginning to respond suitably when provided with the opportunities to do so. Most respect the contributions of others during lessons, but a very few find it difficult to concentrate when their teacher or friends are speaking, or when they are not engaged with active enough roles during lessons. In a few of these cases, pupils make effective use of specific strategies and interventions to support them to self-regulate their emotions, for example by asking

for reflection time in the 'cwtch' area or by attending specific sessions that help them to express emotions.

Nearly all children take part in purposeful play opportunities at breaktimes and demonstrate appropriate concern for other pupils. For example, Year 4 pupils choose to play parachute games that encouraging effective co-operation and teamwork. Pupils successfully operate a buddy system through a carefully planned resource that supports the school's clear anti-bullying ethos. They take pride wearing their high-visibility jackets in this role and help staff and other pupils throughout the day. Most know what to do if bullying or inappropriate behaviour takes place, and how they can help. Posters around the school and specific lessons help to ensure that pupils have a sound understanding of e-safety and how to keep safe online.

Pupils take advantage of many opportunities to develop their physical skills, through timetabled physical education lessons and outdoor learning activities, including during residential trips for older pupils. When given the opportunity, many pupils benefit from using the school's range of play and exercise equipment, which helps them to keep fit and enjoy being active.

All pupils benefit from weekly timetabled access to the school's outdoor forest provision. As a result of the range of stimulating activities, they develop confidence and resilience, persevering with tasks and challenges, such as sawing wood to make resources or working together to build dens. By assuming responsibility for the forest and garden areas and helping to maintain other outdoor resources, nearly all pupils develop a sense of respect for their local environment and of issues around sustainability. This is a significant strength of the school and has a notable positive effect on the behaviour of the very few pupils who find it difficult to manage distractions when they are learning indoors.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise. The majority of pupils choose healthy fruit snacks at break times. The Bronze Sports Ambassadors play an active role in promoting healthy eating and this has strengthened links between home and school. For example, they promote a vegetable each week across the school to encourage families to cook at home and share their mealtime creation via the school's online communication platform.

Pupils throughout the school take on roles of responsibility purposefully. For example, members of the school parliament 'Y Senedd' engage with their roles purposefully and with a strong sense of responsibility. Pupils are involved in many aspects of decision making at school. For example, the Health and Well-being Parliament decide the theme for the termly health and well-being days, such as hosting a 'bike and hot chocolate day' to raise the profile of cycling. Such days have a positive impact on pupils' well-being and that of others, through charity fundraising. This has enabled most pupils to develop a strong degree of empathy towards others.

Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not report pupils' rates of attendance during the academic year 2021-2022. Inspectors will, however, consider the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of inspection area 4 (care, support and guidance).

Teaching and learning experiences

Teachers throughout the school provide a range of effective learning opportunities for pupils and are supported well by teaching assistants. At the beginning of lessons, they provide clear explanations to pupils and use questioning carefully to support them to develop their knowledge and understanding. They prepare activities that provide different levels of challenge for pupils, based on the school's coloured dragons scale. They consult pupils on what they would like to learn and incorporate these ideas into topic planning. Teachers plan and deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that provides pupils with valuable opportunities to learn about a range of topics. When planning these topics, teachers are particularly skilled at drawing links between the different areas of learning so that pupils have a broad range of experiences, although they do not always plan carefully enough for skills progression.

They develop pupils' understanding of local and Welsh heritage suitably, for example when learning about Rhuddlan Castle, recounting the story of Saint David and sketching the landscape of Llanddwyn Island. Staff provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills, for example by providing regular opportunities for pupils to practice key vocabulary and syntactical phrases. Pupils receive appropriate opportunities to learn about other cultures, for example as they learn about the Diwali and Holi festivals. Staff and governors are developing the school's vision for the Curriculum for Wales appropriately. Weekly practical learning experiences in the forest and garden areas are particularly effective and have a positive impact on pupils' well-being and engagement in learning. For example, staff provide opportunities for pupils to use a range of tools to make wooden number lines and simple sorting games that promote social communication, and pupils benefit from learning about beekeeping as they help to look after the hives.

In a minority of cases, staff tend to over direct pupils as they respond to tasks, and do not provide enough opportunities to develop independent learning skills. For example, in the foundation phase, teachers do not consistently plan activities in the areas of the classroom and outdoors that provide a suitable level of challenge for pupils when working independently. Throughout the school the recent initiative to improve independence by introducing inspiration and enquiry days is at an early stage and the impact is inconsistent. In the best examples, teachers create a sense of enthusiasm about a new topic skillfully, for example by dressing up as a tour guide and using technology to take pupils on an imaginary tour around London, or by arriving in the class dressed ready for a holiday with their suitcase. Where the teaching is at its strongest, they develop the theme over time, planning challenging activities that pupils can work on interpedently, for example planning a holiday taking into account various criteria including budget.

Staff track pupils' progress as they move through the school robustly. They make skillful use of various assessments in order to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. In the best examples, teachers provide pupils with valuable verbal feedback that helps them to extend their learning and provide suitable written feedback where appropriate. However, in a few cases, comments are less useful in supporting pupils to move to the next step in their learning and pupils do not always receive enough opportunities to refine and improve their work in light of feedback. Teachers provide parents with valuable information about how their child is getting on

at school in their end of year reports that include a useful 'at a glance' synopsis as well as more detailed information about each area of learning.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a supportive and caring community with a clear inclusive approach to education. The school's staff promote the importance of good behaviour, courtesy and respect successfully. A recently introduced anti-bullying programme is having a positive effect on pupils' understanding and awareness of how their behaviours affect others. Staff encourage pupils to engage in the creative arts and provide valuable opportunities to develop empathy and compassion. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the school choir performed online for residents of a local care home, and pupils sent them letters.

The school has effective arrangements in place to promote healthy living and pupils' well-being. The opportunities that staff provide for pupils to develop life skills and a sense of well-being within the forest outdoor and garden areas at the school is one of the school's main successes. The school offers many opportunities for pupils to be physically active in a wide variety of extra-curricular sport activities as well as by taking part in whole school events to raise money for charities, such as during a recent running event.

Collective worship sessions promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils have a sound understanding and appreciation of their heritage and culture, with suitable opportunities to celebrate Welsh traditions and learn about the local area. Staff encourage pupils to consider the views of others sensitively and to acknowledge and respect equality, diversity, inclusion and the importance of values such as tolerance. For example, pupils in Year 2 show caring attitudes when taking care of a toy guide dog, learning about how they are used to support individuals with visual impairment. Older pupils benefit from opportunities to contribute to assemblies, for example when marking Black History Month by performing their own 'I have a Dream' speech to promote equality based on Martin Luther King's iconic words.

The provision for additional learning needs is a strength at the school. Pupils receive purposeful and considered interventions within classrooms and at the school's internal provision rooms known as 'Access' and 'Y Cwtch'. Staff work together effectively to identify and address the additional learning needs of pupils at an early stage. They plan effective interventions to support pupils' needs as part of lessons and through withdrawal groups. Staff use research conducted by students from a local university and commissioned by the cluster schools to evidence and reflect on the impact of their interventions. A wide variety of nurture strategies support pupils' emotional well-being very effectively.

Staff prepare detailed individual education plans for pupils with additional learning needs and set appropriate targets. They use one page pupil profiles effectively to outline how best to support children. The school is preparing very well for the transition to new national additional learning needs arrangements.

The school engages closely and purposefully with outside agencies, including the Family Link team located on the school site. Staff diligently identify pupils who may benefit from additional support, such as young carers, and take beneficial measures

to assist them. Leaders are supported by the school's attendance officer to monitor pupils' attendance carefully, addressing issues of poor attendance and supporting pupils and families positively.

Pupils have a growing range of opportunities to develop leadership skills through various pupil voice groups. Members of these groups contribute effectively to whole school improvements, such as the school council's development of a visual reward token system. This has had a positive effect on pupils' effort, behaviour and attitude to the Welsh language on a day-to-day basis.

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Teachers plan activities that develop pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe from harm, effectively. For example, they teach children about internet safety and develop their understanding of appropriate and inappropriate relationships. They work effectively with charities and the police to deliver these messages in an engaging manner, and tailor the support for individual needs as appropriate, for example by arranging additional sessions.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior management team provide effective leadership that in turn allows pupils and staff to develop in a supportive and caring environment. Leaders are committed to developing pupils who are 'ready, responsible and respectful'. They create and maintain a strong team ethic, where everyone's opinion is valued. Leaders facilitate the work of the staff well-being committee who arrange activities that support staff mental and physical health.

Senior managers are ably supported by a committed governing body who have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They carry out their work diligently as a full governing body and as members of sub-committees. For example, having received a presentation from pupils about the benefits of a cycling track around the school grounds, governors approved plans and ensured that bicycles were available for pupils who may not own one themselves. With the support of the cluster Business and Finance Manager, leaders manage resources effectively. They make appropriate spending decisions, prioritising appropriately. For example, having identified the need to develop pupils' digital skills, they recently made a significant investment in ICT equipment.

On the whole, leaders identify areas requiring development accurately. They use a range of well-embedded self-evaluation activities that focus on first-hand evidence, such as book scrutiny and learning walks, as well as asking staff and pupils for feedback. However, strategic planning does not always prioritise these areas for development prominently enough, nor set clear enough actions and accountability measures to ensure rapid and consistent improvement.

Leaders consider national and local priorities appropriately when planning strategically. For example, they work alongside other schools in their cluster to prepare for the Curriculum for Wales, and prioritise ways to keep pupils safe, such as introducing an anti-bullying programme. Leaders provide ample opportunities for staff professional learning, often arranging training sessions as part of the Rhyl Learning Community group of schools. The Learning Community also works effectively with

other partners, such as a local university, for example to evaluate the impact of different interventions on pupils' outcomes. Leaders also facilitate regular collaboration amongst staff in the school. As a result, teachers have regular valuable professional discussions that help to enrich the provision for pupils, such as when they contribute ideas for each other's topics.

They place a clear emphasis on encouraging pupils to develop their Welsh language skills, for example by ensuring that they prioritise Welsh listening and speaking skills in lessons, issuing reward tokens to pupils for making a good effort to speak Welsh, and using Welsh phrases during school assemblies. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking, for example by allowing pupils to order school meals from a range of hot and cold options each morning.

Leaders communicate effectively with parents, for instance by using a dedicated app and sharing newsletters, and they make suitable adaptations to support parents' individual needs. They receive feedback from parents from occasional parent forum sessions and make changes to the provision as appropriate. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they reviewed the availability of reading books following requests from parents. Leaders also provide parents with valuable advice about how they can support their own children, for example by demonstrating how precision teaching packs can be used to support children to develop literacy skills at home. They also signpost parents to useful external services on a regular basis and work closely with the Family Links service based on the school site.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer 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/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) 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 undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- 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)

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2022: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 08/08/2022