



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

A report on

Brynford C.P. School

**Brynford
Holywell
Flintshire
CH8 8AD**

Date of inspection: December 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Brynford C.P. School

Name of provider	Brynford C.P. School
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	82
Pupils of statutory school age	60
Number in nursery classes	12
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 Primary is 23.0%)	7.0%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 16.1%)	13.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	March 2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	28/01/2014
Start date of inspection	05/12/2022

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

Pupils enjoy their time at Ysgol Brynffordd very much. This is because their teachers plan interesting activities for them which makes learning exciting and fun. Leaders place a high priority on developing pupils as independent, creative, and ambitious learners. As a result, most pupils make strong progress and achieve well. They are enthusiastic and eager to try new things. They are curious and confident learners from an early age.

Nearly all pupils behave well and show very positive attitudes to learning. They are caring, tolerant and respectful towards each other and adults. They say that they feel safe, secure, and happy in school. They know that staff in the school care for them and that they can turn to them when they face challenges or have difficulties. Staff have worked hard to create this calm and nurturing ethos, which contributes to effective learning at the school.

The school provides a rich, broad and balanced range of learning experiences and additional provision that meets the educational and wider needs and interests of pupils well. Teachers take good account of pupils' ideas when planning the curriculum and this helps to ensure that most pupils display high levels of interest and engagement in their work. Most teaching is purposeful and enables pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills in real life contexts. Classrooms and outdoor spaces are productive, active learning environments where pupils enjoy plenty of opportunities to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups.

The headteacher and governors provide efficient and supportive leadership. This has been particularly important during the pandemic. Staff work well together and as a team they share responsibilities sensibly. As a result, there is an effective whole school ethos and sense of teamwork where staff feel valued for their contribution. The school is good at identifying the areas of its work that are most effective and those aspects that need to be improved. This enables leaders to set clear, ambitions for the direction of the school.

Recommendations

- R1 Provide opportunities for pupils to make decisions about how they organise and present their work and to decide for themselves how they respond to learning tasks
- R2 Provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R3 Strengthen provision for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils make good progress in their learning during their time at the school. The pandemic has slowed this progress for a minority of pupils, particularly in the development of their Welsh language skills. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress from their individual starting points and achieve well against their personal targets.

Most pupils develop their language and communication skills well. Younger pupils listen with increasing interest and sustained concentration for extended periods of time. They communicate their needs and thoughts confidently during activities and play sessions, for example when discussing their work on creating a snack box to sell at the Christmas Fayre. As they move through the school, most pupils become increasingly articulate. Older pupils listen purposefully to gain information, for example when discussing the relative merits of wearing school uniform. They volunteer opinions, giving reasons for their answers and discuss their work thoughtfully in pairs and in groups and communicate well to achieve tasks, for example when working with natural materials in the outdoors.

Nursery and reception pupils enjoy listening to stories and retelling them to their friends and adults. They begin to recognise and name a range of sounds and use this knowledge to start to read simple but stage-appropriate texts. By Year 2, many pupils read confidently, and they are happy to tackle unfamiliar words with a variety of strategies. As pupils move through the school, they build on this progress and develop a good range of strategies to become fluent readers, including knowledge of phonics, word families, syntax, and prior knowledge of context. By Year 6, many read texts with few visual clues, independently and with concentration for sustained periods. They select the main points from texts and identify how information and evidence are used to support them. Many 'read between the lines' successfully using inference and deduction. They apply their reading skills effectively to support their understanding in different learning areas, for example when undertaking research into the life of Anne Frank and her diary.

From a young age, many pupils show enthusiasm for writing when experimenting with mark-making. They go on to write with increasing independence and fluency. By Year 2, many write an increasing range of sentences effectively, and develop their ideas creatively and imaginatively when writing a harvest poem, for example. As they progress through the school, pupils develop a good understanding of the characteristics of different genres. Many write perceptively for a wide range of purposes. They choose words carefully to enhance their writing for the reader, for example when writing about an evacuee's experiences during World War 2. By Year 6, many pupils plan, draft and improve their work thoroughly to produce high quality, well-structured writing, for example when writing a letter to the Prime Minister about the impact of hunger across the world.

The development of pupils' Welsh language skills has been hampered in part by missed learning opportunities arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. Many pupils in the nursery and reception classes respond appropriately to class instructions by the

teacher and by Year 2, many pupils use simple greetings and respond appropriately to questions about the weather, for example. Many pupils in Years 3 to 6 answer with basic responses during discussions with teachers and each other, for example when sharing personal information. However, their Welsh language skills are not as advanced as might be expected. Consequently, pupils do not use their Welsh language skills confidently enough in other areas of the curriculum and around the school.

Many pupils develop their mathematical skills well. From an early age, pupils build a useful range of mathematical skills and enjoy maths challenges, undertaking counting games and matching activities enthusiastically. By Year 2, many have a secure grasp of number facts to 100, they recognise shapes, use money in their play and are developing confidence in telling the time. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 work well with the four rules of number, shape and measure and develop sound data handling skills. Many apply their developing numeracy skills well to solve problems, for example when discussing the cost of various fast foods. By Year 6, many pupils use a wide range of methods competently to calculate in their heads and on paper when solving problems. They describe their thinking and reasoning well, and explain how they have reached conclusions, for example when calculating the potential profit and loss when creating Christmas decorations to sell at the Christmas Fayre. Generally, however, pupils across the school do not use their numeracy skills at a similar level in other areas of the curriculum.

During lockdown periods, teachers used a range of technologies well to support pupils' home learning. This had a positive impact on pupils' digital skills. From an early age, pupils now apply those skills in a range of creative contexts to support their wider learning. By Year 2, many use tablet computers confidently to record their learning, for example when using an animation program to tell the story of their red dragon. They successfully control a digital toy to move to specific locations on a map. Many pupils in Years 3 to 6 use their digital skills well to support independent research and to write, edit, re-draft and present their findings. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils research and present information about various animals to support their work on Africa. By Year 6 many pupils use a broad range of applications and programmes confidently, for example to share various features of their village with pupils from other schools.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and are polite and courteous to each other and visitors. They listen carefully to what their friends and teachers say and respond to their ideas considerately. Most pupils collaborate well when working in pairs and groups. They play co-operatively, take turns and support each other well, when playing games and socialising at break times.

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and move around the school sensibly. They say that they feel safe in school and free from issues of bullying. They feel well supported by staff, know where to turn if they need support and are confident that staff will listen and deal appropriately with any concerns.

Most pupils show very positive attitudes to their learning. They talk enthusiastically about their work and engage positively with the class topics. From an early age,

pupils settle quickly as part of the morning routine of choosing tasks in different areas of provision. They move around the school sensibly and purposefully. Many engage well with their tasks and work suitably in pairs and small groups. Most pupils concentrate well, avoid distractions, and complete their tasks. By Year 6, many pupils are ambitious, confident, and independent learners, able to plan and carry out tasks with limited support.

Nearly all pupils take part in planning their termly topics. This results in pupils displaying high levels of interest and engagement in their work. They show an increasing ability to plan jointly and to express an opinion about what they are learning. Pupils, from an early age, are encouraged to reflect on their learning. Many pupils respond well to feedback from staff and their peers to improve their work and develop their skills further. Older pupils make increasing use of self- and peer assessment and are keen to make changes to their work. This improves their self-confidence and supports their progress as they move through the school. As a result, by Year 6, most pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are progressing with their learning.

Many pupils make good use of opportunities to develop their leadership skills through a range of roles and pupil voice committees, for example the school council and eco committees. While undertaking these roles, many pupils present themselves with confidence and can explain where their work has made a difference to school life. For example, they talk enthusiastically about the influence of the eco committee in saving energy and developing the school grounds. They understand how these initiatives help the environment. The Digi Leaders are very enthusiastic about their activities and their responsibilities, for example in supporting the 'Walk on the Wild Side' theme based on the coastal path.

Pupils demonstrate a broad understanding of cultural diversity, for example by learning about different religions. They are beginning to understand some of the ethical issues facing the world, such as the problems caused to the environment by waste and hunger in areas around the world. They are proud of their efforts in support of national and local charities such as the local church food club. These initiatives have a positive effect on their awareness of the needs of others in their community and the wider world and helps pupils to develop as ethical and responsible citizens.

Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when online, for example they know they shouldn't share their passwords. Many pupils understand the importance of looking after their own well-being. Nearly all pupils know the importance of keeping healthy and fit. They talk knowledgeably about healthy food choices for snacks and the need to drink water regularly. They appreciate the importance of taking regular exercise, involving themselves actively in a range of activities, such as the daily mile, during the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has a clear shared vision for learning that reflects the principles and culture of the Curriculum for Wales and is working well to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. The school's vision reflects the context of the school

well and staff plan effectively for pupils to learn about their local area, for example through their work on the coastal path.

Across the school, learning experiences promote the school's vision successfully and teachers provide a stimulating and imaginative curriculum for all pupils. They approach curriculum design in a reflective and collaborative way and work together effectively to identify how they expect pupils to make progress across the curriculum and the learning they want them to achieve. This helps them to develop a shared understanding of progression in pupils' learning across the age range. They regularly reflect upon the effectiveness of their approach to the curriculum to ensure that it builds systematically on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and skills.

The planning ensures a suitable balance of activities led by staff and opportunities for pupils to work independently in the learning areas both within the class and the outdoor area. Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to influence what they learn, for example pupils complete concept maps to explore ideas for topics and share questions about what they would like to learn. As a result, most pupils show enthusiasm and interest in all aspects of their work.

Teachers plan a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their oracy, reading and writing skills, for example in their work on landfill sites. They provide worth-while opportunities for pupils to apply their higher-level reading skills, for example when undertaking research using the 2021 census. Across the age range, teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to develop and apply their digital skills to support their wider learning. They challenge pupils to utilise their research skills, for example to support their learning about Africa. Teachers plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills. They do not, however, plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply numeracy skills at an appropriate level across the curriculum.

Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the language, culture and heritage of Wales as well as opportunities to learn about their locality including the nearby coastal path. Staff promote the advantages of learning Welsh effectively and Welsh is promoted well visually across the school. Most teachers use basic Welsh vocabulary appropriately in the classroom, for example to give instructions to their pupils. Generally, however, they do not make the most of opportunities to model the language or encourage the pupils to speak, ask and answer questions in Welsh.

All staff develop positive working relationships with pupils and create a warm, purposeful, calm, and supportive learning environment. They know the pupils very well and encourage them to do their best. This contributes to a positive working environment where pupils feel listened to and can ask questions if they need help with their learning.

All teachers have good up to date subject knowledge and use a variety of effective teaching methods which motivate pupils to learn. Support staff work alongside teachers skilfully and contribute effectively to pupils' learning. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well, ensuring that most pupils are engaged and remain on task during lessons. Across the school, teachers build on pupils' prior learning appropriately.

They ensure there is a suitable pace to learning in nearly all classes. In most classes, teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. They use questioning well to move pupils' learning on and support understanding, according to the needs of pupils. This ensures that most pupils are appropriately challenged. In the few classes, where the teaching is less effective, teachers tend to guide activities too much which limits opportunities for pupils to decide for themselves how they organise and present their own work effectively.

All teachers provide clear instructions, and this ensures that pupils know what they need to do to be successful. Across the school, teachers provide their pupils with effective feedback and intervene sensitively at appropriate times during the lesson to support pupils and to provide effective feedback as they work. Staff utilise school assessments effectively to identify next steps for learning and plan appropriate provision and support, for example by ensuring good quality literacy and numeracy intervention.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring community, where staff and pupils show a high level of respect for each other. Staff know the pupils, their backgrounds and the local community very well and are committed to meeting their individual needs. They place a high priority on the well-being of pupils and ensure that the school provides a nurturing environment in which pupils feel safe, happy and cared for. This strong focus on improving pupils' well-being is a key aspect of the school's provision and contributes significantly to pupils' happiness and well-being. This has been particularly beneficial during the pandemic. Staff ensure that pupils have time to talk if they are anxious or unhappy and, consequently, pupils feel comfortable in talking about any personal concerns they may have.

The school has an inclusive ethos and has well-developed and effective systems to support pupils with additional needs. Staff monitor pupils' progress effectively and have worked well to introduce the new national additional needs arrangements. There are clear processes to identify pupils in need of support, to plan interventions and evaluate the impact of this work. As a result, these pupils gain confidence and show renewed enthusiasm towards learning as well as showing a marked improvement in social skills as they work towards their personal targets. Support staff provide quality support for programmes to develop pupils' emotional well-being, and their literacy and numeracy skills. Staff involve pupils, parents and the views of outside agencies to plan pupils' next steps in their learning effectively.

The school's environment and collective worship promote pupils' moral, ethical and spiritual and moral development successfully. Staff provide regular planned opportunities for pupils to find out about the characteristics of different religions and to reflect on fundamental questions and on their own beliefs or values. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' awareness of children's rights. As a result, nearly all pupils have a clear understanding of fairness, equality and inclusion within their daily lives. Staff encourage pupils to consider other people's view sensitively, acknowledge and respect diversity and the importance of values such as respect, tolerance and caring.

Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and imaginative skills. They encourage pupils to reflect on the work of famous artists and provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to emulate the work of environmental artists using natural materials in the outdoors. They provide regular dance and role play opportunities as part of the curriculum as well as opportunities for pupils to participate in dramatical productions and shows. This enables pupils to use and develop creative skills, as well as build their confidence. Staff provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial skills, for example where pupils engage enthusiastically in making decorations to sell at the Christmas Fayre.

Parents appreciate the communication and guidance provided by staff regarding their children's learning and well-being. Regular communication and 'check ins' with families during periods of lockdown further strengthened the strong relationships that exist between the staff, pupils, and parents. Parents are regular visitors to school and are often invited and involved in various activities and events alongside their children. They are consulted on issues that help them to support their children's learning at home.

The school promotes collaborative working with its local community and actively seeks opportunities for the pupils to benefit from building relationships with different establishments and activities, such as the local church, police liaison officer, singing carols, working collaboratively with other local schools, 'Friends of Brynffordd' committee, and a local cricket event.

The school ensures that pupils are given worthwhile opportunities to become members of various councils. Staff ensure that these groups meet regularly and provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to make decisions about how to improve their school. All teachers regularly seek pupil opinions on class topics and how to develop their learning environment.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Teachers provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to learn about making healthy lifestyle choices. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to benefit from physical exercise such as running a 'daily mile'. These effective arrangements motivate pupils to keep fit and deepen their understanding of healthy living.

The safeguarding culture is robust, and all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in contributing to pupils' safety and well-being. There is effective provision to support pupils to keep themselves safe when working online. The school has sound strategies in place to promote good pupil attendance including daily monitoring, regular communication with parents and follow up work supported by the local authority.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides effective and thoughtful leadership, which ensures that the school has a clear strategic direction and a culture that promotes continuous improvement as well as a positive learning environment. She has a clear vision that is based on ensuring that the well-being of pupils and staff is at the heart of the school community. The headteacher's efficient and caring leadership through the pandemic has been reassuring for staff, governors, pupils and parents.

The headteacher sets high expectations for herself, staff, and pupils. She is well supported by the senior teacher. They model professional values and behaviour that contribute well to effective collaboration and result in a strong team ethos among staff. Leaders ensure valuable opportunities for all staff to develop leadership responsibilities. This ensures that staff at all levels understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. They model and promote values and professional behaviour that contribute positively to improving the school. This ensures that the school vision 'Every child, every chance, every day' is fully realised in the work of the school.

Leaders know the school well. They have developed appropriate processes to evaluate its performance and to plan for improvement. Arrangements to monitor and evaluate the school's work are well embedded and allow leaders to clearly identify aspects that are most in need of improvement. For example, since returning to school following the pandemic, leaders have identified the need to ensure that pupils make more consistent use of their numeracy and Welsh language skills.

Among leaders and staff there is a strong awareness and commitment to address local and national priorities successfully. Leaders at all levels have created a positive safeguarding culture, where pupils feel safe and valued. Staff work collaboratively to implement the Curriculum for Wales and additional learning needs reform. Thoughtful and well-considered planning ensures that the school addresses these priorities successfully. Short-term and longer-term goals are realistic and focus predominately on pupil outcomes.

Leaders create a positive culture and ethos to promote and support the professional learning of all staff. This links clearly to the school's improvement priorities and the professional needs of the staff. Leaders keep a detailed account of the professional learning activities attended by staff and the impact of these is measured accurately to understand the impact on pupils. Leaders identify best practice in the school and ensure that other members of staff benefit from it. For example, they encourage collaboration with other schools in developing strategies to improve pupils' digital skills and have started to share and develop professional practice in joint staff meetings and presentations.

Governors understand their roles well and carry out their responsibilities conscientiously and successfully. They contribute purposefully to setting the school's strategic priorities and have a clear understanding of the provision, and its impact on pupils' learning. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge and hold the school to account on behalf of the local community in their role as critical friends. The governing body ensures that the food and drink provided by the school complies with legislation and has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

The school manages its finances efficiently and deploys them sensibly in line with the priorities in the school improvement plan. They make purposeful use of additional grant funding, including the pupil development grant which is used wisely to provide focused support to help and encourage pupils' learning and well-being. Staff use the school's resources effectively to provide an engaging learning environment that supports teaching and learning and strengthens pupils' physical and mental well-being. They make regular use of the extensive school grounds, which include a well-

developed forest area to provide stimulating and creative opportunities for outdoor learning. However, current outdoor provision for Years 1 and 2 is limited.

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' 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:

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

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