



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

A report on

Ysgol Glan Aber C.P.

**Boot End
Bagillt
Flintshire
CH6 6LW**

Date of inspection: February 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Glan Aber C.P.

Name of provider	Ysgol Glan Aber C.P.
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Not applicable
Number of pupils on roll	155
Pupils of statutory school age	109
Number in nursery classes	22
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%)	50.0%
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%)	24.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2011
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/07/2014
Start date of inspection	27/02/2023

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 Glan Aber is a warm and inclusive school, which promotes a positive atmosphere and caring ethos successfully. Pupils enjoy learning and they are enthusiastic during lessons and tasks. This is due to the very strong working relationships that they have with their teachers and other staff. This helps pupils to make good progress from their different starting points in developing their literacy, numeracy, digital and social skills.

Learning is particularly successful where the teaching is consistent and of high quality. Pupils thrive where they receive feedback that is purposeful and challenges them to perform at their best. However, where inconsistencies occur, the teaching and feedback do not help pupils to improve their work effectively.

All staff display positive attitudes towards pupils, and they support and care for them diligently. This encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own well-being and behaviour extremely well. This contributes to their eagerness to learn and their resilience to persevere with tasks.

Overall, the school environment promotes beneficial learning opportunities. For example, staff use the stimulating woodland area purposefully to engage pupils in activities. However, the outdoor provision is not consistent and equitable for all younger pupils.

Leaders evaluate the school's work to plan for improvements thoroughly. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership and is determined to succeed for the benefit of pupils and the community. The senior leadership team, staff and governors share his purposeful vision. They work together well to ensure that the school is inclusive and that it promotes positive learning opportunities. However, the shared responsibilities of individuals on the senior leadership team are not defined clearly enough.

The headteacher ensures that the self-evaluation processes lead to the most important targets for school improvement. He supports the improvement strategies well by providing staff with beneficial opportunities to develop their expertise through worthwhile professional learning. This contributes to a positive whole-school ethos, where staff and pupils feel valued for their contributions to school life.

Recommendations

- R1 Address the site safety issue, identified at the time of inspection
- R2 Ensure that the quality of teaching and the feedback to pupils' work is consistent across the school
- R3 Define the responsibilities of senior leaders with greater clarity
- R4 Ensure that learning experiences in the outdoor learning areas for younger pupils are resourced equitably across all classes

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils enter the school with literacy, numeracy and social skills that are much lower than the expected level for their age. As they move through the school, many pupils make strong progress from their low starting points. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals make progress at least in line with their peers, and most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress in their learning and achieve well.

Many pupils listen well to adults and each other. The youngest pupils' oracy skills are developing successfully and, by Year 2, they speak confidently about their work and experiences. For example, pupils in the nursery class communicate purposefully with each other when planning and building different types of vehicles with three dimensional shapes. Many older pupils develop effective oracy skills in English. They communicate sensibly and contribute enthusiastically to class discussions, expressing their views maturely. For example, Year 6 pupils explain their findings eloquently following research on the impact of climate change on different countries around the world.

When speaking Welsh, most of the youngest pupils develop suitable vocabulary and respond to commands and greetings appropriately. By Year 2, many pupils use basic phrases confidently, for example to express their feelings or when discussing the weather. By Year 6, many pupils recall relevant vocabulary and sentence structures appropriately. As a result, most pupils develop satisfactory Welsh oracy skills.

Many pupils' reading skills are developing well. Nursery and reception pupils show an interest in books and other reading materials and they enjoy sharing and handling them as developing readers. Many Year 1 pupils become familiar with the relationship between letters and sounds quickly and they use an appropriate range of phonic strategies to read familiar and unfamiliar words confidently. By Year 2, they use their reading skills well, for example when reading story books, pamphlets and instructional cards. Many older pupils read intelligently in various contexts. They vary their tone of voice and use punctuation correctly to show their understanding. They develop their advanced reading skills purposefully to gather information from different sources. This includes finding relevant information on the challenges faced by migrants travelling by sea on the Windrush from the Caribbean to Britain during the 1960s.

Many pupils develop effectively as writers. By Year 2, many pupils use punctuation and grammar accurately and use adjectives and similes purposefully whilst describing the feelings of different characters. As pupils progress from Year 3 to Year 6, many write more independently in a wider range of genres. For example, Year 4 pupils write persuasive letters on the impact of flooding and the need for flood defences around coastal areas. Many pupils edit their work appropriately and use more sophisticated vocabulary to improve their final drafts. Their final pieces of work are generally of a good standard reflecting the positive progress they make from their individual starting points.

Many pupils apply their mathematical skills effectively across the curriculum. For example, by Year 1, many pupils partition two-digit numbers well using stick bundles, pinecones and pebbles as stimuli. Older pupils develop their numeracy skills successfully and plot co-ordinates to represent star constellations, such as Ursa Major and Orion. Many of them use a wide range of skills, such as managing a budget to prepare for a party and weighing ingredients for nutritious meals. They also use line graphs intelligently to compare the increases in migration across the world over the last 30 years.

Many pupils have good digital skills, which they apply across the curriculum successfully. For example, many younger pupils program robots to travel around a course efficiently. Many older pupils manipulate text effectively, such as adapting and creating fact files. They prepare presentations confidently, for example, by creating and formatting persuasive posters on deforestation. However, many pupils do not understand how to interrogate databases and spreadsheets accurately.

Most pupils develop their artistic and creative skills well. This is particularly true of the youngest pupils, who create art and role-play in a wide variety of contexts. For example, reception class pupils co-operate well and follow recipes to create dirt pizzas in the outdoor kitchen area. Across the school, most pupils embrace the opportunities to experiment freely to develop their creativity, such as Year 6 pupils using water colours independently to emulate the artwork of a Syrian refugee.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

The professional relationships between staff and pupils are strong. This enables most pupils to learn and develop as well-rounded individuals. Most pupils show pride in their school and feel safe within its inclusive and caring ethos. They feel that adults in the school listen to their views effectively and take them into account when considering decisions that affect them.

Most pupils are courteous and welcoming to adults and visitors. They behave well in class and around the school. Most pupils show care for each other and respect the contributions of their peers. For example, older pupils work effectively together to emulate the work of a famous artist when designing their own artworks using natural materials in the outside area. Additionally, during playtimes, younger pupils show high levels of consideration and kindness when they share items of equipment willingly amongst each other.

Most pupils develop well as capable and aspirational learners. They have positive attitudes to learning, show interest in their work and talk confidently and enthusiastically about school life. Most pupils listen attentively to teachers' instructions and concentrate well on their work during lessons. They collaborate very successfully in pairs and in groups, and most make worthwhile contributions to class discussions. As a result, they demonstrate a high level of respect for the contributions of others.

Most pupils draw on strategies to support their emotional well-being effectively. For example, older pupils explain sensibly how to resolve challenging individual tasks by using different methods purposefully that help them when their work gets difficult.

Nearly all pupils appreciate the access they have to the Sunshine Room to support their well-being needs at any time during the school.

Most pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of children's rights. For example, members of the pupil voice groups emphasise that they have 'pupil power' and that their rights should be heard. As a result, nearly all pupils show a strong awareness of the importance of their contributions towards creating a caring society and they develop effectively as ethical, informed citizens. They are fair and caring in their interactions with others, such as when pupils from the Well-being Council support local members with craft activities such as preparing cards and making Welsh flags to celebrate St David's Day.

Nearly all pupils participate willingly and express imaginative opinions when offering ideas about the school's curriculum. The inclusive pupil voice groups allow pupils to take an active part in school life and their representatives demonstrate a range of leadership skills, such as decisions on saving energy around the school. They fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and representatives are proud of their valuable contributions and achievements. This includes the Criw Cymraeg who lead whole school assemblies on matters that are important to them, such as developing the use of Welsh around the school.

Older pupils develop well as enterprising and creative contributors and participate in worthwhile activities effectively, such as projects on the workplace. This helps to raise their awareness of careers and work-related experiences through workshops and tasks to promote their independence and group work. Through a partnership with a nearby university, pupils learn how to manage salaries, which supports them to solve problems in practical ways, and develops their life-skills effectively.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and they can discuss the benefits confidently. They understand the benefit of physical exercise on their health, such as participating in daily physical tasks like the daily mile and using the rope trail. As a result, most pupils have a secure knowledge of the importance of good physical and mental well-being.

Nearly all pupils have a strong understanding of using the internet sensibly. They remind each other thoughtfully that they should not share passwords. Additionally, through their work with the local police liaison officer, they know how to react if faced with threats to their emotional well-being, such as cyber bullying.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school provides a broad and balanced range of learning experiences that align to the vision and principles of the Curriculum for Wales. The planning engages most pupils' interests well and motivates them to persevere and succeed in all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers and support staff work together diligently to provide activities that meet the needs of pupils effectively. The classrooms and most of the outdoor learning areas are stimulating and promote the development of many pupils' skills well.

On the whole, teachers ensure that pupils engage in a diverse range of experiences to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. This

includes the planning of valuable activities to support pupils' interests, such as providing them with opportunities to take part in personal enquiries. For example, pupils write letters to David Attenborough to express their views and concerns on environmental matters, following their visit to an aquarium.

Teachers plan thoroughly to help pupils make good progress in their literacy skills. For example, older pupils write critically about current issues that affect their lives, such as the energy crisis and greenhouse gases. The planning to develop pupils' numeracy and digital skills leads to purposeful tasks that develop pupils' skills in real-life situations. For example, younger pupils buy tickets and refreshments with real money from the Bagillt Theatre shop in their role-play area and older pupils collate and display information on the range of recycling materials collected from around the school. This thoughtful planning of experiences has a positive effect on pupils' values and attitudes to learning.

Teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, pupils produce informative reports on the history of the Welsh Princes and study a diverse range of poetry and myths, including younger pupils designing their own lake monsters, based on 'Yr Afanc'. Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills is appropriate. Staff model a range of greetings, instructions and questions in Welsh and the school provides suitable enrichment programmes to further develop pupils' Welsh oracy.

Most of the teaching is effective. The lively pace of most lessons engages pupils' interests well and motivates them to learn to the best of their abilities. However, the quality of teaching is not as effective where the delivery of lessons lacks stimulation and pupils' engagement is not as purposeful. Where the teaching is vibrant, teachers adopt imaginative teaching methods to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum. For example, teachers encourage younger pupils to provide informative narratives to accompany their work about worms. Additionally, teachers stimulate older pupils effectively to make motivational speeches about looking after the environment. Additionally, they support and challenge pupils effectively to solve problems. For example, the youngest pupils experiment with the flow and volume of water using jugs, buckets and guttering effectively and staff challenge older pupils to identify a range of ways to construct electrical circuits independently.

The working relationship between staff and pupils is strong and, as a result, nearly all the teaching impacts beneficially on many pupils' learning. Staff know pupils well and provide stimulating activities to meet their needs, including those who are identified as needing additional support with their work. Support staff provide these pupils with purposeful guidance and know when to intervene and when to allow them to work independently. Additionally, the teaching of personal and social education develops pupils' understanding of their well-being successfully. For example, pupils draw on specific strategies as support techniques when faced with more challenging work. This scaffolds their learning and emotional well-being effectively.

Most teachers provide verbal feedback during lessons, which encourages pupils to remain on task and focus on improving aspects of their work. However, the quality of teachers' written feedback is inconsistent. Where it is effective, pupils are clear about what they need to do and how to improve their work. While teachers use praise extensively to encourage pupils, occasionally they do not explain why they consider

pupils' work to be of a certain standard, which makes it difficult for pupils to improve. As a result, it does not support pupils to identify the next steps in their learning well enough. School reports to parents provide detailed information about their child's progress and attitudes to learning.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a very warm and caring community, and staff encourage pupils to embrace its supportive and friendly ethos effectively. The strong professional relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are a strong feature of the school. For example, older pupils work as digital leaders to support younger pupils to design animations about Santes Dwynwen.

Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and they respond with sensitivity to their emotional and social needs. This supportive provision helps most pupils to settle well to school life and contributes significantly to their happiness in school, such as through the purposeful use of the Sunshine Room.

Provision for pupils identified as having ALN is thorough. The ALN co-co-ordinator works conscientiously, in partnership with staff members, to ensure that there is good identification, tracking and support for individuals and groups of pupils from an early age. Pupil progress reviews result in staff members having a deeper understanding of the needs of pupils. Staff interact beneficially with a range of services to secure additional, timely resources and to offer specialist support to pupils with a range of learning, emotional and social needs. These arrangements ensure that most pupils that benefit from additional support make good progress in relation to their stage of development.

The school develops meaningful opportunities for pupils to participate in making decisions to improve their experience in school. Staff encourage all pupils to take on leadership roles effectively on a variety of worthwhile groups. This provision broadens their understanding of the importance of active citizenship and the importance of individuals' contributions to support and promote a purposeful society. For example, members of the School Council lead assemblies to explain the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They also evaluate the day-to-day practices of the school thoughtfully, such as considering the effectiveness of its behaviour policy.

The school has a beneficial range of opportunities that help pupils to develop a good understanding of their Welsh heritage. For example, the school promotes a 'Wondrous Wales Week', where each year group study different Welsh artists and aspects of the landscape of North Wales, which include local places of interest. The school promotes Welsh culture effectively, for example through folk dancing activities as part of Saint David's Day celebrations. This provision allows pupils to engage willingly with the culture of Wales and to feel proud of the school's inclusive ethos within its Welsh community.

Staff place a strong emphasis on providing a rich and varied range of trips and visits that support the curriculum and engage pupils in their learning. For example, older pupils attend a local university as a world of work experience, which includes opportunities for them to attend interviews and study financial management.

Additionally, younger pupils visit a nearby zoo to enhance their 'Amazing Animals' topic and to study the habitats and life cycles of specific creatures.

Staff enable pupils to make strong contributions to the life of their community. They use the experiences positively so that pupils develop respect and understand that caring for others is important. As a result, pupils learn that acts, such as participating in charity fun runs, support their community and make a difference to the lives of families within their locality. The school uses collective worship purposefully to promote pupils' spiritual development effectively. For example, pupils support a local food bank through collecting donations in their harvest festival celebrations. These activities contribute well to pupils' understanding that supporting each other is important in society.

The school's processes for monitoring attendance are efficient and are beginning to improve attendance and punctuality of a few pupils. Staff communicate well with each other to support pupils and understand their roles in keeping pupils safe. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are appropriate and the inclusive ethos is strong. However, inspectors brought an issue relating to the safety of the school site to the attention of school leaders during the inspection.

Leadership and management

The headteacher works conscientiously with a newly established senior leadership team, staff, pupils, parents and members of the community to develop a shared vision and high aspirations for pupils at the school. This collaborative approach is successful and reflects the school's motto, 'Learning and Growing Together', effectively.

The headteacher leads the school diligently and ensures that staff focus directly on creating and promoting a nurturing and inclusive environment, where all pupils and adults feel valued. He encourages staff to model behaviours and values that will benefit the school community and the future lives of its pupils, such as promoting care, respect, kindness and creativity as essential features of daily school life. As a result, relationships throughout the school are positive and there is a shared commitment to improve the school's provision and pupils' outcomes.

Generally, staff have clear roles and responsibilities and most feel that they are an important part of the school improvement process. For example, they work in professional learning groups successfully to develop a shared understanding when designing the curriculum. They also tailor strategies well to evaluate pupils' progress in line with the needs of the school, such as developing pupils' Welsh oracy skills. However, the headteacher and governing body have not defined the delegated responsibilities of senior leaders accurately enough for all members of the team.

Leaders have established a range of thorough monitoring activities to identify the school's strengths and areas for development. They gather a broad range of first-hand evidence to inform their views of the school. For example, they consider the views of pupils and parents sensibly, and analyse information on how well the pupils are progressing thoroughly. The school uses the findings from the self-evaluation processes to inform the development of the school's improvement plan. This includes

addressing areas for improvement pupils' reading skills through a variety of literacy strategies.

Leaders and staff develop pupils' use of most of the school grounds creatively, particularly for the younger pupils. They have increased enclosed outdoor facilities, which has allowed pupils more opportunities to choose where and how they learn. For example, nursery, reception and Year 1 pupils learn to dress appropriately for learning first-hand about cooking and gardening in the school's outdoor kitchen and growing areas. However, the outdoor provision is not equitable for the younger pupils across all classes.

The headteacher and staff collaborate well with other schools and external partners, such as to plan for and implement the curriculum. Arrangements to promote professional development for all staff link well with the school's priorities for improvement, for example by leaders raising teaching assistants' awareness of the Curriculum for Wales' areas of learning and experience, and through implementing the new ALN arrangements.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They understand their roles and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, for example in areas such as financial management. They are proactive in updating their own knowledge of national priorities, such as the Curriculum for Wales and the impact of poverty on the local community. Link governors are assigned to each curriculum area of learning and experience and hold the school to account sensibly. For example, they recognise the school's progress over recent years and support the priorities to develop greater consistency in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

Governors have an accurate and detailed picture of the school gained through participating in activities such as listening to pupils and regular discussions and informative reports from the headteacher. They liaise closely with staff to ensure that there are suitable procedures to promote the importance of healthy eating and drinking among pupils. As a result, governors contribute a constructive and well-placed voice in moving the school forward.

Parents are kept well informed of school developments, for example through the use of electronic newsletters, the school app and the presence of staff at drop-off and pick-up times. Parents feel that the school is a safe and caring family environment. They appreciate how quickly leaders and staff respond to any concerns that they raise, and this is a strength of the school.

Leaders manage the budget prudently and allocate resources to meet the school's needs well. This includes the pupil development grant, which the school uses effectively to support pupils eligible for free school meals.

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:

Publications 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

This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).