



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gynradd Brynsaron**

**Saron  
Llandysul  
Carmarthenshire  
SA44 5ET**

**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 Gynradd Brynsaron

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Name of provider   | Ysgol Gynradd Brynsaron        |
| Local authority  | Carmarthenshire County Council |
| Language of the provider   | Welsh                          |
| Type of school   | Primary                        |
| Religious character  | None                           |
| Number of pupils on roll   | 48                             |
| Pupils of statutory school age   | 34                             |
| Number in nursery classes (if applicable)  | 0                              |
| Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average<br><i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 23.0%)</i> | 8.3%                           |
| Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a)<br><i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 16.1%)</i>               | 32.5%                          |
| Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home  | 44%                            |
| Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language   | 0.0%                           |
| Date of headteacher appointment  | 07/11/2022                     |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)  | 11/02/2014                     |
| Start date of inspection   | 06/02/2023                     |
| One of the school's experienced teachers is currently the acting headteacher until the new headteacher takes up the post in a few weeks.   |                                |

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

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: [mylocalschool.gov.wales](https://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

The acting headteacher has a thorough knowledge of the school's procedures, understands the needs of all pupils well and uses this to provide it with a firm direction. She has strong support from the governors, the whole staff, pupils and parents, which ensures that a strong sense of family and teamwork continue to be firm elements of school life.

One of the school's main features is its caring, respectful and familial ethos. All members of staff, whatever their role, feel like a core part of the community and are always willing to listen to pupils' concerns and respond appropriately, where necessary. They respond well to the needs of nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN).

Nearly all pupils are happy, well behaved and take pride in belonging to this school. Most, including those who have been identified as having ALN, make sound progress in nearly all aspects of their learning. However, a minority of pupils' reading strategies, vocabulary and language patterns are limited. This limits their enjoyment of reading, their ability to gather information from print and their ability to express themselves completely fluently in Welsh.

Teachers provide a broad and interesting curriculum for pupils and consider their views sensibly about what they would like to learn in relation to the themes. This gives them ownership of their work and encourages them to give of their best. However, they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their digital skills across various areas of the curriculum or ensure that they always understand what they need to do to improve their work.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of their Welsh identity, heritage and culture very well. It takes advantage of rich opportunities to encourage pupils to celebrate their Welshness through a range of purposeful activities that nurture their knowledge, understanding and pride meaningfully and effectively. By building on this, it also gives robust consideration to teaching pupils, not only about their local area and Wales, but also about Brynsaron's place in a wider context.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Raise the Welsh oracy standards of older pupils to enable them to express themselves completely fluently
- R2 Strengthen strategies to enable pupils to better understand what they need to do to improve their work
- R3 Develop pupils' independent reading skills
- R4 Increase appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their digital skills across various areas of the curriculum

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Learning

On entry to the school, most pupils' social skills are in line with what is expected for their age. A few pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are less developed on entry. However, most, including pupils who have been identified as having additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress in nearly all aspects of their learning.

Many pupils' oracy skills are developing appropriately across the school. By Year 2, many discuss their tasks and express their feelings suitably. At the top of the school, most develop their oracy skills with increasing confidence in both languages. They show a willingness to talk about their tasks and learning experiences by using appropriate language with a good awareness of audience, for example when explaining their roles and the achievements of the school council – Barn Brynsaron. However, the vocabulary and language patterns of a minority of pupils limit their ability to express themselves completely fluently.

Most pupils' listening skills are developing very well across the school. They listen attentively to adults and their peers and follow instructions correctly and knowledgeably.

A majority of the youngest pupils develop early reading skills appropriately. By Year 2, they use phonic strategies increasingly effectively to build simple words, for example when reading and interpreting an information leaflet about past and present fairs.

In the school's older years, many pupils develop reading skills with increasing fluency in Welsh and English. They discuss the content of their books knowledgeably and use appropriate strategies to help them to read unfamiliar words. More able pupils refer knowledgeably to elements such as authors and illustrators and discuss the differences between fictional and factual texts. However, the ability of a minority of pupils to use reading strategies independently is limited, for example when finding information from sources such as information sheets and the internet.

The early writing skills of most of the youngest pupils are developing appropriately. By Year 2, they write simple sentences with increasing independence and give due attention to basic punctuation. They develop their understanding and ability to write in different forms, such as a letter to Aled Afal or instructions on how to make a sandwich.

Most older pupils write in different styles across the curriculum and demonstrate a good understanding of grammatical rules, purpose, genre and audience. They produce interesting pieces of extended writing and the best show an understanding of the importance of structure and demonstrate imagination and originality when creating monologues and autobiographies.

Most pupils make good progress in their mathematical skills. They build methodically on their sound early understanding of place value and number bonds and increase their confidence by using the four rules. Most have a sound grasp of measuring skills

and use scales appropriately to solve relevant problems that are associated with the current theme work. They link their numeracy skills skilfully with other skills that are relevant to the theme and use a variety of media to express themselves successfully in stimulating contexts. One notable example, which has been a useful and exciting opportunity for all the school's pupils to combine their knowledge of their local area with their numeracy, creative and well-being skills to create a complete composition, has been the cog project. Following a visit to the National Wool Museum, which is a stone's throw from the school, pupils have worked with a local artist to use their knowledge of fractions and angles to make creative and colourful murals. This work conveys the important message that each pupil makes a direct contribution to ensure that the school is a happy and productive place, in the same way that each cog needs to work to enable a machine to turn smoothly.

A majority of the youngest pupils develop their digital skills appropriately by using a range of programs purposefully. For example, they create a graph to show the favourite sandwich filling of pupils in the class and input instructions into a programmable toy independently.

By the end of their time at the school, many older pupils develop a number of digital skills fairly confidently. For example, they use familiar multimedia programs to present information about their favourite heroes. They develop their coding skills to draw a triangle with particular features and produce purposeful graphs by using data gathered on the heart rate. However, they do not apply their digital skills sufficiently across all areas of the curriculum.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Nearly all pupils show obvious pride in their school and are extremely happy in the welcoming, caring and familial environment. They treat each other and adults with care and respect, including those who visit the school.

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and are confident that the staff listen and respond promptly to any concerns they may have. Most have a sound understanding of procedures for staying safe online.

Nearly all pupils behave very well during lessons and break times and the oldest pupils support the youngest maturely and with care. They develop a sound understanding of the importance of being moral and principled citizens. They develop the ability and confidence to discuss their feelings openly and to show empathy towards others, including vulnerable people or those who are in distress. A good example of this is the conscientious way in which pupils lead fundraising activities towards charities that are relevant to them, such as supporting conditions like cerebral palsy and cancer.

Most pupils understand the importance of making choices that affect their health, well-being and fitness. They understand the need to eat healthily and keep fit and commit to physical activities such as '*Chwysu Chwarter*' and the range of games that are led by the Bronze Ambassadors during break time.

Pupils appreciate that their voice has a central place in the life and work of the school. They acknowledge that adults listen to them through activities such as 'Barn

Brynsaron' and welcome opportunities to suggest ideas about what they would like to learn within the themes. They value and respect the contributions of others politely and maturely, listen attentively to them and accept different opinions in a reasonable and balanced manner.

Nearly all pupils enjoy their tasks and develop positive attitudes to learning from their earliest time at the school. They work well together and face new and unfamiliar challenges with curiosity, resilience and increasing confidence. Overall, most concentrate for extended periods and contribute productively to their learning activities.

Many recall and build on their previous learning appropriately. They develop independent learning skills with increasing confidence by using and applying a wide range of skills successfully across the areas of learning. For example, they use their understanding of the features of graphs to show the effect of exercise on the heart rate in science lessons.

Across the school, most pupils persevere well with their tasks. They work productively within time constraints and understand that they need to try to solve problems themselves by using strategies such as ask a friend or referring to other resources, before seeking support from an adult. Most show pride in their work and present it neatly and methodically.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

There is an effective working relationship among the school's staff, which fosters a happy and inclusive learning environment for pupils. Teachers and assistants know the pupils' needs very well. As a result, they provide them with extensive learning experiences in a stimulating and supporting learning environment. The classrooms and public areas are colourful, interesting and engaging places in which pupils of all ages and abilities are able to learn productively. The outdoor areas are used appropriately to develop pupils' skills and knowledge further. For example, the youngest pupils develop their numeracy skills effectively outdoors by throwing balls at numbered cans on a stall at the fair and calculate the total to review their understanding of number bonds.

The school has begun to plan appropriately in line with the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. There are robust steps in place to ensure that the school's curriculum meets the principles and expectations of the new curriculum. For example, teachers adapt their themes successfully based on pupils' ideas. Staff use these suggestions skilfully to plan a comprehensive range of valuable experiences and activities across the curriculum. As a result, stimulating themes such as '*Y Ddraig*' ('The Dragon') and '*Arweinwyr Arwrol*' ('Heroic Leaders') promote pupils' enthusiasm and encourage them to engage with their learning effectively.

A prominent feature of the school's work is the way in which teachers and practitioners encourage pupils to take pride in the Welsh language and Welsh culture and heritage. By planning rich themes such as 'Cynefin', teachers develop the pupils' awareness and sound understanding of their neighbourhood by providing them with live and meaningful experiences. They plan a variety of interesting activities and rich experiences for them, which reflect the nature and context of the school and its place

in the local community very successfully. For example, a range of varied visits are organised to places of interest both locally and further afield, such as the local wool museum and the nearby castle in Newcastle Emlyn, to stimulate the term's work.

Staff design a curriculum constructively and cohesively based on their knowledge and understanding of pupils' skills. This ensures appropriate continuity and progression in their learning. The learning experiences are varied and purposeful and develop comprehensive opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills appropriately in most of the areas of learning and experiences, particularly their literacy and numeracy skills. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their digital skills across the curriculum.

The school tracks pupils' progress purposefully and makes appropriate use of a variety of assessments to ensure that they receive the support they need to succeed. Teachers set appropriate objectives at the beginning of lessons and are beginning to use success criteria to ensure that pupils understand the requirements of tasks. They use questioning techniques skilfully to help pupils understand new concepts and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills further. During learning sessions, most teachers and other practitioners respond proactively to pupils' learning. In the best examples, they give them valuable feedback on the standard of their achievements. However, the school's overall procedures do not always ensure that pupils understand exactly what they need to do to move to the next step in their learning.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school is an inclusive, caring and stimulating community that nurtures shared values based on respect and empathy. It provides a firm foundation to prepare pupils to be the responsible citizens of the future. The continuous emphasis on promoting safety, equality, diversity and equal opportunities, along with valuing the contributions of all individuals, are a central element of the vision of the school's leaders. This contributes directly to ensuring that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Staff provide effective support to promote pupils' well-being, mental and physical health. This element is a strength within the provision. Strategies such as the weekly well-being sessions and the use of the '*Cwtsh Hapus*' and '*Cwtsh Caredig*' have a very positive influence on pupils' well-being and commitment to their learning.

Staff have a thorough awareness of pupils' needs and cater for them successfully. Pupils have a one-page profile that identifies specific information about their needs and robust progress-tracking procedures identify their progress in relation to their starting points. As a result, the school provides purposefully to support the well-being and needs of all pupils, including those with ALN, for example by providing a specific range of appropriate and effective intervention programmes.

The school has a close and productive link with a range of external agencies, such as the local authority's speech and language team, educational psychologist and behaviour team. It takes full advantage of their expertise to support ALN provision continuously. As a result, staff identify the needs of this cohort of pupils thoroughly and provide for them effectively.



The school's culture promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very purposefully. The caring and inclusive ethos, in addition to the varied range of rich experiences that are provided, are an effective means of promoting pupils' understanding and development in these aspects. These include mindfulness sessions in both classes, collective worship sessions, religious education lessons and the regular opportunities they are given to attend the local chapel for particular celebrations during Harvest and at Christmas time.

There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to have their say and provide beneficial comments about the school. The school council, Barn Brynsaron, provides them with valuable opportunities to lead charitable events, such as an afternoon tea to raise money for different charities. Pupils are also given opportunities to feed their ideas into plans for the classes' themes. This is a powerful means of promoting pupils' interest and ownership of their learning.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of their Welsh identity, heritage and culture very well. Opportunities are taken to share and celebrate the Welsh language and Welshness through a range of appropriate activities that foster pupils' knowledge, understanding and pride meaningfully and effectively. These include the Welsh person of the week, activities to support the Welsh football team in the World Cup and learning about Hen Galan and the tradition of the Mari Lwyd. The classes, Cloddi and Siedi, are named after two local brooks, which again raises pupils' awareness of their local area.

The school provides effective opportunities for pupils to understand and respect spiritual and moral beliefs very well. In addition to Christianity, provision places a strong emphasis on learning about other religions, including festivals such as Diwali, Holi and the Chinese New Year, which sparks a curious response from nearly all pupils.

Provision fosters pupils' creativity effectively and provides broad and valuable opportunities for them to participate in performances and events as individuals and in groups. These opportunities include school shows, community concerts, eisteddfodau and Urdd activities.

The school encourages pupils to take part in a range of activities regularly that promote physical health and fitness. For example, daily fitness sessions are held during break times, along with swimming lessons and rugby sessions. All of these contribute effectively to realising the principles of the Curriculum for Wales to develop ambitious, healthy and confident individuals.

### **Leadership and management**

The school has appointed a new headteacher but they will not take up the role for a few more weeks. In the meantime, one of the school's experienced teachers is acting very conscientiously as the acting headteacher. She has a thorough knowledge of the school's procedures, understands the needs of all pupils well and has used this to provide robust and effective direction during the time she has been in charge.

The acting headteacher has strong support from the governors, the whole staff, pupils and parents, which ensures that a strong sense of family and teamwork

continue to be firm elements of school life. She conveys the school's vision successfully to these stakeholders. This is based on creating a happy, welcoming and safe environment for pupils and staff. It places an emphasis on developing enthusiastic, confident and independent individuals who take pride in the school, the local area and their Welshness. The fundamentals of this vision are clear across the school, where pupils are enthusiastic about their work and extremely proud of their school. All members of staff, including the cook and caretaker, play a core part in promoting these family values.

The school has appropriate procedures to gather evidence that enables leaders to identify what is working well and the areas for development. By implementing these regularly, leaders have identified the school's strengths and important areas for improvement in provision and teaching. As a result, they have introduced improvements that have already begun to have a positive effect on provision and pupils' standards. As a result, most pupils make appropriate progress in nearly all areas of learning and experience.

The school seeks parents' views through its self-evaluation procedures and provides specific opportunities for them to discuss issues they consider to be important. It also includes staff and pupils in the process. Conducting activities such as scrutiny of books, visiting classes and holding specific discussions in staff meetings has helped leaders to identify appropriate priorities for the development plan. The school plans its improvement activities to respond effectively to national and local priorities. For example, leaders ensure that the school promotes a robust culture of safeguarding, develops its strategies to introduce the Curriculum for Wales and responds appropriately to the requirements of the new ALN act.

Governors act suitably as critical friends. They understand their role, undertake their responsibilities well and discharge their statutory duties conscientiously. They are aware of the school's improvement priorities and have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. The governing body has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. It manages the school's current financial resources appropriately, including the Pupil Development Grant. However, there is a historic deficit in the school's budget, but the local authority is aware of this.

The acting headteacher, staff and governors have a close and productive relationship with parents. They ensure that they have effective lines of communication with them as a means of raising any issues that may affect their children's learning and well-being. The school sends a weekly newsletter to inform parents about specific activities. It also provides them with useful information about areas such as changes to the curriculum or support that they can give to their children, particularly if they have additional needs. The parents' association is very active and has recently funded changes to the outdoor area, in addition to contributing to the costs of educational trips to enable all pupils to attend.

The school has a robust partnership with the *cylch meithrin* nursery setting, which is now situated on the school's grounds. This facilitates arrangements for the children to transition smoothly and happily to the school and develops their spoken Welsh skills before they start.

The acting headteacher, in partnership with local authority officers and experienced leaders from nearby schools, provides valuable professional learning activities for all staff, particularly the two new teachers. Opportunities for staff's professional learning link appropriately with the findings of the self-evaluation procedures, the improvement priorities and the professional needs of individuals. This increases staff's understanding of effective teaching methods and supports them to use them to improve their practice and ensure that pupils make appropriate progress in their learning.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body/members of the management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- 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 (<http://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:

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