



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

**A report on**  
**Ysgol Cynddelw**

**New Road  
Glynceiriog  
Llangollen  
Wrexham  
LL20 7HH**

**Date of inspection: July 2023**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About Ysgol Cynddelw

Name of provider	Ysgol Cynddelw
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh and English as it is a dual stream school
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	94
Pupils of statutory school age	67
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	16
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 23.0%)</i>	25.0%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 16.1%)</i>	16.4%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	62.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	23/02/2016
Start date of inspection	03/07/2023

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 ALN register of the school.

## Overview

Ysgol Cynddelw and Ysgol Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog are part of the Dyffryn Ceiriog federation. The headteacher is supported by a deputy headteacher at the Ysgol Cynddelw site and a head of site at Ysgol Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog. Ysgol Cynddelw provides Welsh and English-medium education for pupils in two separate streams.

With the enthusiastic support of the staff, the headteacher has created a clear and robust vision based on ensuring that pupils' well-being and the development of their Welsh language skills are at the forefront of the life and work of the schools in the federation. Leaders, including governors, have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They include staff in the self-improvement process effectively by developing their understanding of the standard of provision and progress in pupils' skills. However, self-evaluation processes do not always enable leaders to identify areas for improvement and the steps that are needed to develop provision further.

Leaders are extremely active in ensuring that all members of staff work together effectively to improve the quality of provision for pupils. Teachers plan jointly effectively to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of many pupils successfully. Teachers provide learning experiences that are effective in supporting pupils to make progress in their skills, particularly their Welsh oracy skills and digital skills. However, teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to apply their extended written skills or numeracy skills consistently enough across the areas of learning and experience.

Nearly all pupils behave exceptionally well. They treat each other, staff and visitors with respect. Pupils enjoy the range of stimulating and engaging experiences that are provided for them. They work together effectively in the learning areas and are willing to contribute to class discussions and share their ideas maturely and sensibly. When pupils are given an opportunity to do so, most concentrate well and engage conscientiously when responding to challenges in their work. However, teachers do not always provide enough purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in independent learning activities.

## Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that self-evaluation processes identify areas for improvement in a timely manner to support pupils to make progress in their skills
- R2 Provide activities that support pupils to extend their skills to the best of their ability by applying them in independent learning activities

## 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, the skills of many pupils in the Welsh-medium stream are in line with their stage of development, except their Welsh language skills, which are lower. In the English stream, on entry to the school, the basic skills and oral English skills of a majority of pupils align with their stage of development. In both streams, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals, make sound progress during their time at the school.

Across the school, most of the youngest pupils listen attentively to instructions from adults and each other's contributions. In the Welsh-medium stream, most of the youngest pupils speak confidently and use a suitable range of vocabulary and language patterns. They chat enthusiastically in the learning areas, for example when discussing the fairies' journey in the creative area. In the English-medium stream, many of the youngest pupils' English and Welsh speaking skills develop well. They speak by using simple Welsh vocabulary and language patterns with increasing accuracy, for example when discussing the weather and their favourite food. In both streams, most of the oldest pupils speak and share their ideas confidently in Welsh and English in an interesting variety of contexts. Across the school, most pupils take pride in the Welsh language and use it confidently in appropriate contexts.

Across both streams, most of the youngest pupils develop their reading skills effectively to identify sounds and letters. They build a sound understanding of basic vocabulary and use an appropriate range of methods to read familiar and unfamiliar words with increasing accuracy. By Year 2, many pupils discuss the content of text meaningfully and sensitively. The reading skills of many of the oldest pupils develop well. These include the English reading skills of pupils in the Welsh-medium stream. Pupils in both streams read intelligently in various contexts, for example when reading fictional books by describing the characters, the main topic and location of the story correctly. They vary their tone of voice and use punctuation purposefully to show their understanding. Many pupils also develop their higher-order reading skills appropriately to gather information from different sources, for example about the life and work of Marcus Rashford.

In both streams, the early writing skills of many of the youngest pupils develop well. They use simple sentence structures and include punctuation that is suitable for the text. For example, Year 1 pupils use vocabulary successfully to describe a water cycle. By the end of Year 2, many pupils write creatively in an interesting range of genres, for example when describing the daily journey of a child from Madagascar to get water for her family. As pupils move through the school, the writing skills of most of the oldest pupils in both streams develop successfully. They use varied sentences

correctly, including a range of interesting vocabulary to enrich their work. Many pupils vary the style and structure of their writing for different topics effectively. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 write a formal letter to a chocolate manufacturer to express their opinion appropriately on the effect of deforestation on the environment. However, teachers do not provide enough appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their extended writing skills in interesting contexts, particularly in the school's upper years.

Across the school, most pupils develop sound mathematics skills and use simple number strategies correctly. By the end of Year 2, many pupils calculate numbers up to 100 confidently. They recognise the names and properties of two and three-dimensional shapes confidently. In the oldest pupils' classes, most pupils' mathematics skills develop well. By Year 6, they have a sound understanding of place value up to a million, they recognise equivalent fractions and are confident in changing fractions to their simplest form. They calculate the perimeter and area of regular and compound shapes and triangles successfully. However, many pupils, particularly the oldest pupils in both streams, do not apply their numeracy skills to the best of their ability in an interesting variety of contexts.

Nearly all pupils across the school develop and apply their digital skills skilfully. By the end of Year 2, most pupils input images and sound skilfully when creating an animation to explain the importance of washing their hands regularly to prevent infection. The digital skills of many of the oldest pupils develop well; for example pupils in Years 5 and 6 use spreadsheets confidently to calculate the number of visitors and daily income of the animal park.

Across the school, the creative skills of nearly all pupils develop skilfully. For example, the youngest pupils develop their skills effectively by using a range of equipment and materials when creating pieces of art and craft to present at the Ceiriog Eisteddfod. The oldest pupils develop their performance skills creatively by composing songs and creating dances to perform in the school talent show, for example.

In both streams, most pupils' physical skills develop strongly by taking part in a variety of beneficial experiences and activities. For example, the skills of most of the youngest pupils develop successfully by making slime from different materials in the creative area. The oldest pupils develop their physical skills successfully by taking part in a range of activities that develop their ability to balance, for example by using the climbing equipment in forest school activities.

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

Nearly all pupils across the school are polite, friendly and treat their peers, staff and visitors with respect and care. Most enjoy coming to school and feel happy within its inclusive ethos. Pupils and their parents value the care that staff provide and are confident that staff respond immediately to any concerns they may have. Nearly all pupils behave excellently in lessons and during break times.

Through their awareness of the values that are promoted by the school, most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of moral and creative citizenship. They have a sound awareness of their rights, for example the right to relax and play, by

taking part in mass assemblies. Nearly all understand the importance of supporting others in society and are keen to organise fundraising activities for various charities. This has a positive effect on their understanding of the needs of others, both locally and nationally.

Most pupils converse maturely and enjoy sharing their experiences with adults. Members of the school council and eco council contribute their ideas well in an appropriate range of activities. For example, the school council raises money to buy new games for the breakfast club and organises a creative competition for 'Ysgol Cynddelw's Got Talent' day. The eco council also takes a prominent part in planning and creating hedgehog houses as part of the eco day celebrations. As part of their themes, pupils are given beneficial opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of global issues, such as the negative effect that rainforest deforestation has on climate change. As a result, nearly all pupils develop as knowledgeable citizens who discuss contemporary and ethical topics sensibly.

Across the school, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and express their views maturely when responding to the termly enquiries. The youngest pupils make suggestions about how to enrich the outdoor areas further, for example developing an imaginative and exciting play garden. Pupils in the oldest classes enjoy contributing ideas and questions to the mind maps at the beginning of new themes. Pupils across the federation enjoy sharing their ideas with their peers. This has a positive effect on strengthening the working and social relationship between the pupils at both schools.

Most pupils concentrate well and engage conscientiously in lessons. When teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their skills independently, they learn diligently and complete their activities enthusiastically. However, teachers do not always provide activities that support pupils to develop their independent learning skills to the best of their ability. Most pupils enjoy working with their peers in pairs or groups to solve challenges and make effective use of self-correction methods to move their learning forwards. They listen maturely to each other's points of view and discuss their ideas effectively, for example when estimating how much liquid is in each container as part of their mathematics work.

Most pupils understand how to stay healthy through the variety of fitness activities within the school. Through their themes, they have a sound understanding of the effect that a balanced diet and physical exercise have on their health. Most pupils participate enthusiastically in physical activities, including the forest school physical education sessions. The oldest pupils are proud that there are arrangements available for them to join their peers across the federation to compete as a team in a variety of local tournaments.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Leaders promote regular and effective co-operation across the federation. Teachers plan in detail to deliver the Curriculum for Wales and share ideas continuously to provide a broad and rich curriculum for pupils at both schools. They hold regular meetings to discuss provision and pupils' progress which, in turn, facilitates teaching and learning highly effectively.

The school curriculum is rooted firmly in the pupils' local area or *cynefin*. Staff plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and traditions of Wales, while also promoting their awareness that Welsh is part of the lively and modern culture of their local area. Teachers promote pupils' learning beneficially by capturing their ideas and interests. For example, teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to look at the effects of the past on their present day lives and their hopes for the future. By doing so, pupils develop their awareness of the importance of the Welsh language to the communities of Wales today. As a result, pupils produced a personal pamphlet to encourage people to develop positive attitudes to the Welsh language.

Provision within the indoor and outdoor learning areas is rich and provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to play, learn and investigate in an interesting environment. The youngest pupils benefit greatly from experiences that develop their skills successfully. Teachers question pupils about their ideas and adapt provision creatively, in line with their interests.

Provision to develop pupils' oral and reading skills is effective. As a result, many pupils speak confidently in both languages about different aspects of their work. For example, the oldest pupils play mathematical games in Welsh and show a good standard of fluency when using mathematical language with each other. Teachers plan interesting reading activities well, which develop their confidence successfully. Provision to develop pupils' digital skills is effective. For example, many of the oldest pupils discuss their computer work confidently and explain how their personal website is a means for them to save and access their work easily. However, teachers do not provide enough appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their extended writing skills or numeracy skills across the areas of learning and experience.

Teachers and support staff in both streams are confident in their Welsh-speaking skills and support pupils highly effectively to develop their understanding of the correct use of the language. In the youngest pupils' class in the Welsh-medium stream, staff encourage pupils' understanding and confidence to express themselves verbally from an early age. As a result, most pupils express themselves with increasing accuracy in Welsh. In the youngest pupils' class in the English-medium stream, pupils discuss their work maturely, share ideas and express an opinion about different aspects of their work well. Their understanding and use of the Welsh language develops robustly.

Staff foster a close and highly supportive working relationship with pupils. Teachers question pupils skilfully and encourage them to think for themselves, to express an opinion and give reasons for their views. Teachers present suitable learning aims and success criteria. As a result, many pupils have an appropriate understanding of different activities.

Staff provide pupils with useful oral feedback during their activities and many pupils have an increasing understanding of what they need to do to develop their work further. Written feedback from their peers and teachers supports pupils effectively to consider the success criteria of particular tasks. However, teachers do not always provide activities that support pupils to develop their independent learning skills to the best of their ability.



Leaders scrutinise pupils' progress effectively. Teachers and support staff focus on a range of information about progress in pupils' skills and also pay effective attention to their well-being. This provides a detailed picture of the development of pupils as well-rounded individuals, in addition to providing useful information about the progress of particular groups.

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

The school is a caring and inclusive community that promotes the well-being of pupils and staff highly successfully. This means that nearly all pupils settle quickly at the school. Staff deal with any issues that arise in a supportive manner and concerns are resolved quickly. As a result of the supportive relationship between pupils and staff, nearly all pupils are happy to come to school, work well together in lessons and play together appropriately during break times.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) has robust processes to identify pupils' needs at an early stage. Leaders track pupils' progress in detail and evaluate the effect of support programmes on their progress effectively. Appropriate one-page profiles include useful information about pupils' individual needs and what they need to develop further. The ALNCo provides opportunities for parents, staff and pupils to contribute appropriately to pupils' individual development plans. Staff evaluate pupils' progress against their targets to support them to make progress in their skills over time.

The school has valuable arrangements for collective worship. For example, teachers and pupils hold assemblies on themes such as the rights of the child and learning methods. Teachers inspire pupils by sharing the stories of influential famous people, such as Betsi Cadwaladr, and encourage pupils to reflect on people they admire. For example, the 'Criw Cymraeg', which has representation from both of the school's streams, leads a beneficial assembly through the medium of Welsh to support the speaking skills of their peers.

Through stimulating themes, teachers develop pupils' understanding of their identity, heritage and Welsh culture successfully. For example, pupils create a useful podcast for visitors which includes interesting facts about the local area. Staff promote pupils' Welshness highly effectively in all aspects of school life. For example, pupils enjoy competing in the school eisteddfod and Eisteddfod Glyn Ceiriog. Valuable opportunities are also provided for pupils at both schools to compete as a federation in the Urdd Eisteddfod, locally, regionally and nationally.

The school provides a range of appealing clubs and activities that enrich the curriculum and provide social and purposeful opportunities for pupils. For example, pupils are given opportunities to take part in drum workshops, to attend the Urdd club and the chess club. By doing so, pupils develop their personal and creative skills highly successfully.

Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to influence a number of issues relating to school life through the activities of the school council and the eco council. For example, members of the eco council play a leading part in developing the school's outdoor areas, including applying for a grant to develop the fruit and vegetable garden. As a result, many pupils have a good understanding of their food's journey

from field to fork. By discussing a range of global issues, teachers develop pupils' understanding of how to be principled and knowledgeable citizens. For example, teachers organise for a representative of an international charity to visit the school to deepen pupils' understanding of the importance of water for everyone around the world. Following this, the youngest pupils organised a sponsored walk in aid of the charity.

Staff provide a rich range of experiences that encourage pupils to use their imagination creatively. For example, following their work on the poet Hedd Wyn, they designed and created eisteddfod chairs out of clay. They also designed and created a model of an animal park on a large scale. Pupils develop their creative skills skilfully by creating and decorating African instruments and by creating attractive pictures when emulating the work of a famous artist on endangered animals.

Teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills in an appropriate range of experiences. For example, pupils take part in physical activities by providing beneficial forest sessions. Staff also organise football and netball tournaments for pupils to develop their skills beneficially. Nearly all pupils enjoy the variety of equipment that is available to them during break time, including the climbing frame and the obstacle course.

Leaders create an effective culture of safeguarding across the schools in the federation. All members of staff have a sound understanding of child protection policies and processes. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management**

Since being appointed in 2021, the headteacher has succeeded in creating a clear and consistent vision for the schools in the federation. Staff work together highly effectively to ensure that the well-being of pupils and staff is at the forefront at both schools. The schools are happy and friendly communities and a sense of being part of one big family permeates all aspects of the federation's life and work.

All staff work together appropriately to provide stimulating and engaging learning experiences that meet the needs of many pupils. They place a clear priority on developing all pupils' Welsh language skills and their pride in Wales. As a result, pupils in both streams, particularly those who are taught in the Welsh-medium stream, speak Welsh confidently and take pride in their identity.

The headteacher has high expectations of herself, the staff and pupils. All members of teaching staff have individual targets that link purposefully to the priorities for improvement and meet their professional learning needs. The school has clear arrangements to ensure that pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave appropriately around the school. As a result, the behaviour and commitment of nearly all pupils to their work and the life of the school are good.

The headteacher has worked diligently to share responsibilities effectively between the staff. Across the federation, all staff work in teams, including teams to develop the curriculum and improve pupils' well-being. Support staff are given beneficial opportunities to lead in a number of areas, for example by providing intervention

sessions for pupils with emotional and social needs and by holding sessions to develop pupils' literacy skills. As a result, pupils receive robust well-being support and stimulating and engaging learning experiences.

Governors and staff have appropriate knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. As part of the self-evaluation processes, leaders and teachers take part in a suitable variety of regular monitoring exercises, for example analysing information about pupils' progress, scrutinising their work and conducting learning walks. However, self-evaluation processes do not always identify the areas for improvement or provide purposeful steps to develop provision further in a timely enough manner.

Leaders organise beneficial professional learning opportunities for staff. For example, teachers are given opportunities to attend courses to develop their leadership role as part of the provision to support them to consider the next steps in their careers. Teachers at both schools are given beneficial opportunities to work with each other and other schools within the cluster, for example by leading on important aspects of the Curriculum for Wales, which includes developing pupils' Welsh oracy and literacy and their digital skills.

Leaders manage the schools' budget effectively. They make suitable decisions about expenditure for the benefit of pupils and their experiences. They have recently made a significant investment in the outdoor areas for the youngest pupils. This has a positive effect on enriching provision and learning experiences for the youngest pupils. Good use is made of the pupil development grant to provide sessions to promote pupils' well-being which, in turn, has a beneficial effect on the confidence and behaviour of pupils with emotional and social needs.

The governing body works diligently to support the school's work. They attend meetings as a full governing body each term and as part of their responsibilities on the sub-committees, which include the curriculum, finance and well-being committees. During the meetings, they scrutinise documentation and contribute to discussions with members of staff, and hold leaders to account when necessary. The governing body promotes healthy eating and drinking for pupils effectively. Governors have recently contributed to the content of letters to parents about the need to provide their children with nutritious food in their lunchboxes. Together, the leaders of the federation promote a culture of safeguarding successfully.

Across the federation, working with parents and the local community is an integral part of the work of the schools' staff. Parents are given regular opportunities to contribute and share their ideas about provision, for example through questionnaires and open evenings about desired learning experiences for their children and the content of the curriculum. Parents have recently attended a 'cuppa and cake afternoon' with the aim of promoting their Welsh language skills so that they can support the development of their children's language at home. Leaders welcome members of the community to the schools regularly to discuss their work and share their expertise with pupils. For example, one resident has visited the school recently to teach pupils clog dancing to traditional Welsh music.

## 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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