



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

A report on

Ysgol Gynradd Talyllychau

**Talley
Llandeilo
Carmarthenshire
SA19 7YH**

Date of inspection: June 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Gynradd Talylychau

Name of provider	Ysgol Gynradd Talylychau
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	51
Pupils of statutory school age	39
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	7
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>	24.2%
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>	20.5%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	15.4%
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)	
Start date of inspection	12/06/2023

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

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Ysgol Talylychau provides a happy and hardworking environment where pupils show respect and behaviour of the highest standard. The school is an inclusive learning community where all pupils are respected and developed as well-rounded and responsible individuals. Staff care for the health and well-being of pupils highly successfully. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss their feelings and have support with their learning and emotional well-being, where necessary. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is a strength.

Staff provide a rich curriculum that includes the pupil's voice regularly. In the best practices, teaching motivates children successfully and captures their interest regularly. Teachers plan exciting and interesting activities for pupils, which develops them as independent learners successfully from a young age. They provide beneficial oral feedback so that pupils make progress during learning sessions, however, written feedback is inconsistent. Staff use the classrooms and the wider area to stimulate pupils' learning and to support their education very effectively. Most pupils develop their skills strongly during their time at the school.

The school has a strong Welsh ethos. Pupils are given experiences that develop them to become citizens who are proud and knowledgeable about their area and heritage. They are an integral part of the village and the wider community.

The headteacher, assistant headteacher and all staff create an effective team that works for the benefit of pupils. They meet with staff from other schools in the federation regularly to share good practice, learn from each other and make the most of their resources. Leaders identify the school's strengths and are aware of what needs to be improved, although priorities are not always clear enough or easy to measure efficiently. The governing body is very supportive of the school and knows it well. Members are very knowledgeable about a number of important aspects of the school, including funding. As a result, they provide relevant support and challenge and ensure value for money.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that the school's priorities for improvement are clear and measurable

R2 Ensure that teachers' feedback supports pupils to improve their work regularly

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, many pupils' skills are lower than, or similar to, what is expected for their age. Nearly all of the youngest pupils make strong progress and, during their time at the school, many older pupils continue to make appropriate progress. This includes pupils with ALN.

Across the school, most pupils develop Welsh listening and speaking skills very well from an early age. They enjoy singing nursery rhymes that enrich their vocabulary and introduce language patterns that are relevant to the class themes. By doing so, they become increasingly confident speakers. A majority of the oldest pupils respond to teachers' questions in Welsh. However, a few are too willing to turn to English rather than persevering in Welsh.

Nearly all of the youngest pupils develop reading skills successfully and come to recognise the sound and form of letters from an early age. They use suitable methods to attempt to read unfamiliar words. They begin to apply their reading skills in different contexts. Many of the oldest pupils continue to develop their reading skills appropriately in both languages. A few begin to read with expression which considers the reader as they read. Most pupils apply reading skills appropriately in their work across the curriculum, for example when reading instructions on how to create seed bombs to be scattered. However, a few of the oldest pupils find it difficult to understand the content of their Welsh reading books.

The youngest pupils develop early writing skills well. Nearly all are beginning to experiment with mark making and many are beginning to write for different purposes successfully. Most of the youngest pupils develop sound writing skills by the end of Year 2. They write with increasing confidence, spell familiar words and begin to punctuate appropriately, for example when writing a recipe and instructions for making a smoothie. A majority of the oldest pupils apply their writing skills appropriately, for example when writing a formal letter to ask for donations to the school to create a community garden, and when writing a report of their visit to the Botanical Gardens. However, they do not always refine their extended writing to master the features of these genres in full due to limited opportunities to practise these skills. Most pupils develop legible handwriting and a majority present their work neatly and methodically. However, the presentation of work of a few older pupils is inconsistent.

Most of the youngest pupils develop a sound understanding of mathematical concepts. They come to recognise numbers and shapes and develop a good understanding of measurement. Most apply their numeracy skills effectively in their activities. For example, they use a tally chart to record the different ways that their peers travel to school and create a pictogram or block chart to present the results. On the whole, many develop numeracy skills appropriately by the end of Year 6. For example, they calculate the area and volume of resources in the school garden. However, pupils' data-handling skills do not develop consistently. For example, they do not always choose the suitable type of chart to record information correctly.

Across the school, most pupils develop sound digital skills. From an early age, many log in to their Hwb accounts independently. They use a digital art package independently, for example to draw a picture of a rainbow, add text and record their voice to describe the picture. The oldest pupils develop coding skills to create a simple animation appropriately.

Most pupils develop their creative skills successfully. The youngest pupils paint a daffodil skilfully. Many of the oldest pupils work with a local artist to create a tithe map to be displayed in the local archive. Many apply their creative skills well when working with the peers from the other schools in the federation and the cluster. For example, they sing, recite and dance in a multimedia performance to convey the legend of Llyn y Fan Fach.

Across the school, pupils develop sound physical skills. Most of the youngest pupils develop their skills by working independently to create butterfly food in the craft area. Many of the oldest pupils enjoy being physically active during break times, for example by working together to create a playground game to challenge their peers to see who can jump the highest.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils enjoy the school's life and work and feel safe within a supportive and inclusive learning community. They show pride in their school and develop as confident and creative learners. Pupils are polite and thoughtful. They are well behaved and treat their peers and visitors with respect and care. The oldest pupils care for the youngest pupils by playing maturely together during break times. This is a strong feature of the school.

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to staying healthy. They show enjoyment when taking part in physical activities, for example when ambassadors plan and lead sports activities effectively during break times. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe online, for example by taking part in appropriate activities during online safety week and receiving advice from the local police officer. Most pupils develop as ethical and knowledgeable citizens, for example by writing a letter to residents in the area asking them to purchase local produce from the village shop. The school's oldest pupils play a proactive part in interviews to recruit new police officers in the area. Many pupils develop their creative skills successfully. For example, they work with local artists to design a creative map of the Talley area. Members of the choir also perform in eisteddfodau in the local community to raise money for different charities.

Pupils who are members of the school council shoulder their responsibilities enthusiastically. They contribute effectively to the school's life and work. For example, the council organises appropriate areas in the playground to support pupils' well-being during break times. On the whole, most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They listen well to instructions from staff and concentrate diligently on their work during lessons. In the best practice, the youngest pupils apply themselves fully to new experiences and show an innate curiosity and effective co-operation when developing and applying their skills across the curriculum.

The independent learning skills of most pupils across the school develop successfully. For example, the youngest pupils use the indoor and outdoor learning areas highly effectively to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Many of the oldest pupils also persevere for extended periods when working on their challenges. Many pupils respond enthusiastically when influencing what they learn within their termly themes. For example, the youngest pupils record what they would like to learn at the beginning of a theme, while the oldest pupils contribute regularly to their learning by completing stretching activities that have been suggested by pupils. This strengthens their commitment to their work effectively. Most pupils discuss their work with staff and peers with increasing confidence. Many pupils check their work satisfactorily in response to teachers' feedback. On the whole, they understand what the next step is in their learning. In the best practices, pupils are beginning to improve and enrich their work as a result of feedback from adults.

Teaching and learning experiences

Teachers and teaching assistants have a productive working relationship with pupils. Staff treat pupils fairly and with respect, which adds to the caring ethos throughout the school. Staff model correct language well and encourage pupils to respond in Welsh regularly, for example by singing nursery rhymes with the youngest pupils about units of measurement. Many practical activities are provided for pupils to support them to develop and apply their skills. In the best practices, particularly in the youngest pupils' class, presentations are stimulating, questions are probing and activities capture pupils' interest successfully. Staff also have high expectations of all pupils.

Teachers plan activities that provide an appropriate challenge for pupils. They plan continuous opportunities for pupils to develop their skills to be independent learners, which includes giving them opportunities to reflect on their work. For example, the youngest pupils prepare bread following the story of The Little Red Hen. The oldest pupils are given beneficial opportunities to research their theme work further with increasing independence.

Staff promote the principles of foundation learning very well. Teachers plan a highly effective range of rich activities that support pupils to apply their skills in the outdoor learning areas. For example, staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to present a story practically to their peers. Staff also ensure very good use of the outdoor areas during break times to support learning. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to make choices about the activities they would like to complete. For example, they use large books to record pupils' ideas about their learning. As a result, a majority of pupils develop an enthusiasm towards their work.

The school provides a curriculum that is inclusive and is adapted appropriately to ensure that it is accessible to all pupils. On the whole, the school provides a range of activities that develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills beneficially. As a result, most develop their skills soundly, particularly lower down the school. Across the school, teachers plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, for example as pupils write instructions to make a healthy drink. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills by working with local artists, developing their performance skills in a choir club and competing in an Eisteddfod. Useful opportunities are provided for pupils to develop

digital skills effectively, for example by combining their skills to design suitable posters.

Teachers and assistants provide beneficial oral feedback during lessons. Staff provide suitable encouragement as pupils work on their activities. This helps pupils to develop their skills successfully as they work. In the best practice, teachers' written feedback helps pupils to improve their work. However, teachers do not provide regular feedback that supports pupils to refine their extended written pieces. On the whole, pupils are not given enough opportunities to master the features of the different genres of writing in full. As a result, they are not always challenged to achieve to the best of their ability.

Teachers provide useful information about pupils' progress regularly, for example by inviting parents to 'Dewch i Ddathlu' events. During these evenings, pupils share and celebrate their work with their parents, while teachers are available to discuss any specific issues. The school enriches pupils' learning experiences with a range of visitors and visits. For example, as part of the 'Dwylo Dros y Môr' theme, a visitor came to the school to discuss the culture of South Africa, along with visits by a community group that presented stories from the Bible to pupils. The oldest pupils are given beneficial opportunities to go to the Urdd residential centre on a joint visit with peers from the other schools in the federation. As a result, pupils develop robust relationships and links, particularly when preparing to transfer to secondary education.

Care, support and guidance

Ysgol Talylychau is a friendly, welcoming and inclusive community that promotes happiness, courtesy and good behaviour. The caring ethos towards all pupils is a strength of the school. Staff create an exceptionally inclusive and safe learning environment where pupils feel that they are valued.

Teachers and assistants work well together to promote and develop pupils' well-being. They place a high priority on ensuring that they address the needs of all pupils. There are robust and highly effectively arrangements in place to support pupils' emotional, health and social needs. Staff foster a sound relationship with pupils, which promotes beneficial attitudes towards their well-being. For example, staff provide valuable and timely opportunities for pupils to identify any concerns on a daily basis.

There is highly effective provision to support pupils with ALN. The ALN co-ordinator has rigorous processes for identifying pupils' learning and well-being needs. As a result of skilful planning of provision, pupils receive support that meets their needs successfully. Staff have purposeful arrangements for tracking the progress of pupils with ALN which relate to the targets in their individual development plans and their progress from their starting points. As a result, most pupils who need additional support with their learning or well-being make strong progress. The ALN co-ordinator works effectively in partnership with the assistants, staff from other schools and external agencies to provide effective support for learners. The school is preparing well for planning and implementation as part of the process of ALN reform.

The school provides rich opportunities to celebrate and develop pupils' understanding of their identity, heritage and culture. The school is the focal point of its community and takes full advantage of opportunities to hold activities in the local area, for example by working with a local orchestra to experiment with various instruments. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to develop an appropriate awareness of diversity and multicultural communities more widely.

Staff promote the importance of healthy eating and encourage physical fitness through a range of physical education activities, which include suitable opportunities for pupils to take part in sports competitions. Staff use the local playing fields regularly to organise and provide a range of activities that contribute well to pupils' well-being and enjoyment of their learning. The outdoor play areas on the playground are attractive and encourage pupils successfully to undertake physical activity during lessons and break times.

Collective worship arrangements provide valuable opportunities to support pupils to learn about issues relating to various beliefs and reflect on fundamental questions and their own values. Regular virtual assemblies are held jointly between the schools in the federation and pupils are given opportunities to play an active part in them. Children's rights are a regular part of the assemblies, and as a result, pupils' understanding of their rights is developing well.

Staff provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to voice an opinion to contribute to their learning and to school life. This enriches their experiences and prepares them well to take responsibility for their decisions and consider the views of others. Most pupils express an opinion about their learning by planning for the class themes. Staff ensure that the school council has a wider influence on school life by developing quiet areas in the playground and by playing a proactive part in developing the pupils' toilets, for example.

Staff promote a culture of safeguarding effectively and the arrangements are not a cause for concern. The procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns about pupils are robust and staff make timely referrals to external agencies, where appropriate. The school has robust processes for monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision for the federation, which includes celebrating the identity of the three individual schools. Pupils, parents, staff and governors value the advantages of being part of a federation, but also take pride in their distinct communities and what makes the three schools unique. The headteacher and all staff ensure that pupils across the federation receive the best education to prepare them for the future and that they have 'roots to grow and wings to fly'. This supports pupils to be happy and make sound progress in their skills.

The headteacher is supported by the enthusiastic and hardworking assistant headteachers of the three schools. They have clear strategic objectives and, together, they ensure that the arrangements and management of the schools intertwine in order to learn from each other and share resources effectively. The headteacher has high expectations of her own performance and that of the staff. She allocates responsibilities strategically and successfully, for example when

re-structuring the curriculum groups following an audit of staff skills. All members of staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Leaders develop the element of teamwork effectively among the staff. Teachers and assistants are dedicated and contribute successfully to the efforts of the whole federation to provide a well-rounded education and effective well-being support for pupils.

The governing body is highly supportive of the three schools in the federation and knows their unique qualities and local communities well. Governors rotate the location of the meetings to ensure that all members get to know and understand the needs of the three sites well. They visit the schools regularly and hold beneficial discussions with staff about elements of provision. This is beginning to support their understanding of issues relating to teaching and learning and the schools' current arrangements appropriately. The governing body ensures that the school promotes healthy eating and drinking regularly among pupils. They make good use of the range of expertise and experience of members of the governing body. For example, members of the health and safety committee have listened to staff and consider their well-being in securing a temporary teacher for the school in response to a significant increase in pupil numbers.

The headteacher, by working closely with the governors' finance sub-committee, manages the budget robustly across the federation to support the strategic priorities, including improving pupils' skills. Leaders ensure that Ysgol Talylychau has enough good quality resources to meet the needs of pupils sensibly. Staff share resources effectively across the federation, when necessary, to ensure value for money, for example specialist digital equipment. They support specific pupils successfully to reduce the effects of poverty on their learning by using the pupil development grant effectively.

Leaders have a full timetable for evaluating provision and pupil outcomes. They ensure that teachers meet together regularly to scrutinise the books of the federation's pupils and discuss best practice. They consider evidence that shows the schools' progress against the priorities of the whole federation. Leaders conduct regular learning walks and observe teaching and learning, and provide useful feedback to confirm strengths and suggest steps forward. They identify most of the federation's strengths and areas for development accurately and identify an extensive number of priorities to be implemented. However, priorities are not always detailed enough or easy to measure effectively.

Leaders respond well to local and national priorities. The federation's staff deliver the Curriculum for Wales appropriately and are preparing thoroughly to implement the ALN Act by ensuring appropriate support for pupils. The school has beneficial partnerships and links with a number of local organisations. Leaders organise regular concerts at the church and provide an afternoon tea for local residents. The school has benefitted from financial donations from local companies to improve its provision.

Leaders create a positive culture of promoting and supporting staff's professional learning. There are extensive opportunities for them to attend courses and training that link directly to their individual needs and the federation's priorities. They work closely with each other and other schools in the catchment area to share good practice regularly. Following training, staff cascade useful information and resources to their colleagues.

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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