



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

A report on
Ysgol Bro Cernyw

Llangernyw
Abergele
Conwy
LL22 8PP

Date of inspection: September 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Bro Cernyw

Name of provider	Ysgol Bro Cernyw
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	96
Pupils of statutory school age	69
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	14
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>	6.0%
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>	
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	66.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2007
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	19/01/2016
Start date of inspection	25/09/2023

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

The school's robust leadership and conscientious staff nurture pupils' well-being, care and support highly effectively. They know the pupils well and have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. With this information, they set about improving provision conscientiously and ensure that there is a close-knit community throughout the school. By doing so, and through the homely and inclusive sense that is created, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning.

A strong feature of teaching and learning is the way in which pupils develop robust oral skills during their time at the school. Pupils also foster a love of reading purposefully and most are confident readers by the end of their time at the school. Teachers plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their core skills, such as their literacy, numeracy and digital skills, across the curriculum. Although there are good examples of these opportunities, which develop most pupils' skills soundly, there are not enough regular opportunities for them to build on their numeracy, digital and extended writing skills, in general.

The working relationship between teachers and pupils is a strength and the care, support and guidance they provide for pupils are very effective. All staff interact highly effectively with pupils and each other, which creates a productive learning environment. This supports pupils to foster enthusiasm towards their learning successfully. Teachers work diligently to ensure that most activities engage pupils' interest and give them useful feedback and support, on the whole. However, at times, teachers provide pupils with too much guidance, which hinders their ability to develop their independent learning skills and not all tasks succeed in challenging pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.

Recommendations

- R1 Increase opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills, digital skills and their ability to write at length across the curriculum
- R2 Ensure that teachers challenge pupils to the best of their ability and provide regular opportunities for them to develop their independent learning skills effectively

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 have literacy, numeracy and social skills that correspond to their stage of development. During their time at the school, most make sound progress in a wide range of skills.

On the whole, pupils' literacy skills develop soundly. The way in which most pupils communicate with each other and adults clearly and productively is an obvious strength. They talk maturely when completing tasks and listen carefully to the contributions of others. By the end of their time at the school, most pupils have highly robust oral skills and use a wide and rich range of Welsh vocabulary successfully. With most pupils having a good ability to respect people's feelings and know when and how to include others in conversations, they develop as eloquent and polite communicators.

Many pupils are enthusiastic to learn more about their themes and are keen to read materials about the areas, and to write in different genres as a result of what they have discovered. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils read and create an article for a local newspaper re-telling their class story, 'After the storm', by noting the main events and considering the feelings of the characters in the story effectively. By the end of their time at the school, most pupils have sound reading skills. More able readers read fluently and show an interest in, and love of, reading various fictional books. They apply their reading skills effectively when gathering information from different sources, for example about the habitats of different animals, to create a pamphlet that contains interesting information.

Most of the youngest pupils develop their early writing skills successfully by experimenting and making marks with various resources. As they mature, they build on their writing skills effectively in a rich range of genres, for example when writing a creative story about pirates and summarising facts about the octopus in an orderly manner. By Year 2, many write simple sentences and pay suitable attention to basic punctuation. Many pupils across the school are keen to use new vocabulary and apply it effectively in their written work, for example as Year 3 and 4 pupils describe Celtic materials as '*esmwyth*' ('smooth'), '*miniog*' ('sharp') or '*garw*' ('rough'). Most of the oldest pupils write in different genres and demonstrate a good understanding of grammatical rules and appropriate consideration of the audience. They use adjectives effectively in their written pieces, for example when composing interesting poems or when creating cartoon characters. However, across the school the overuse of worksheets and closed tasks hinders the opportunities for pupils to write at length and with increasing independence.

Many pupils make appropriate progress in their basic number skills and mathematical understanding. Across the school, there are examples of pupils applying their numeracy skills further in areas across the curriculum. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils produce bar graphs to show different food groups correctly. However, teachers do not provide numeracy opportunities regularly enough for pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum and do not always challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. As a result, a few pupils do not always achieve to the best of their ability.

When they are given an opportunity to do so, most pupils show enthusiasm when working with technological devices to develop their digital skills. For example, many pupils in the nursery and reception class use the interactive whiteboard confidently when recording members of their family and understand how to take a picture with a tablet, save it and share it so that parents are able to see their work. As pupils move through the school, the digital skills of the majority develop progressively. In Year 3 and 4, they research meaningfully on the internet to find information about Welsh castles and take into account how reliable the different websites are. By the time they reach the top of the school, many are able to produce different graphs that represent data from their activities and use a green screen to create business and enterprise presentations for the '*Y Criw Mentrus*' competition. However, across the school, pupils are not given purposeful and challenging enough opportunities to develop the full range of digital skills.

Most pupils' creative and physical skills are developing well. Nursery and reception pupils imitate the movements of animals and change the position of their body carefully. In Year 1 and 2, most pupils use paint creatively to make pictures of animals. While competing practical work with wood, they design a hedgehog, identify broadly the materials needed and create a simple plan for their final product. In Year 3 and 4, pupils create a Celtic shield and consider a specific shape and form correctly. They also create attractive pieces of art of wild animals in the area and use natural materials when considering texture, colour and shape carefully. Across the school, pupils experience success in terms of their physical and creative skills in Urdd competitions, for example when creating jewellery, creative textiles, folk dancing and clog dancing and performing in '*cerdd dant*' groups.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

The caring and familial relationship between pupils and between pupils and staff is a strength. This encourages pupils to foster enthusiasm towards their learning successfully.

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and that they receive caring support. They are happy and polite towards adults and each other. Most pupils treat each other fairly and with respect and know who to approach for advice if anything is worrying them. They are confident that staff respond to their concerns immediately and support them appropriately.

Most pupils feel that staff listen to them and that their contribution to school life is valued. For example, they make effective use of the 'well-being area' when they need support for a specific concern or worry. Pupils understand the school's rules and listen carefully to their peers and adults. As a result, nearly all pupils are very well behaved in lessons and during break and lunchtimes, including during opportunities for them to play games together in the hall during wet break times.

Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning and are proud of the opportunity to immerse themselves in activities that interest them. When planning potential themes and activities for the class, pupils make appropriate suggestions about the content of inquiry questions, for example when considering the features of the 'Wales' theme.

Nearly all pupils speak confidently with visitors and other adults, for example when discussing their work and experiences outside the classroom. They show an interest in their lessons, for example when showing enthusiasm towards writing a letter of thanks to Dafydd Iwan for coming to sing at the school following Wales' international football matches.

Most pupils are glad of the feedback they receive from staff when completing tasks and appreciate the beneficial experience of checking their own work. By identifying their success criteria, they are beginning to evaluate the nature of the responses to the different tasks they undertake. As a result, many pupils show perseverance when developing to become conscientious learners who support each other well in their activities. They develop effective thinking skills and show resilience when concentrating continuously on their work.

Members of the school council take their duties seriously and contribute sensibly to the life and work of the school. They develop their leadership skills effectively, for example when organising well-being days for their peers and organising and holding an '*Estyn llaw*' ('Helping hand') coffee morning to raise money for the earthquake appeal in Syria and Turkey.

Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They know the importance of protecting their personal information and reporting concerns to an adult. Visits from the community police officer reinforce this. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and understand the impact of exercise on their health. Pupils explain why it is beneficial to eat a balanced diet, for example by making posters to inform the school community about the importance of this. They value opportunities to keep fit through after-school sports activities, such as the skills club or by taking part in the area's swimming gala.

Through their awareness of fairness and equality, most pupils develop as ethical and informed citizens. For example, they treat different religions with respect during morning assemblies and when studying Judaism during their work on the Second World War.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff have worked effectively to provide a revised curriculum that aligns meaningfully with the Curriculum for Wales. They are keen to experiment with different ideas in terms of methods for delivering the curriculum and continue to adapt them sensibly. Teachers plan broad and interesting learning experiences that provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. Staff work together diligently to decide on meaningful themes for pupils and the activities that are planned are often based on the ideas of pupils, parents and members of the local community. Themes usually engage pupils' interest well; for example, pupils take an interest in studying the wonders of the autumn in Year 1 and 2 and in learning about the Celts and the Second World War in the class at the top of the school. This is occasionally enriched further by inviting individuals from the community to share their experiences with pupils and organising beneficial visits that relate to their theme. Within many of the areas of learning and experience, activities build coherently on pupils' existing

knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure progression as they move through the school. As a result, most pupils make sound progress in their learning.

In most cases, teachers plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum. There are suitable examples across the school where pupils are given opportunities to develop and apply their numeracy skills. However, these experiences are not provided regularly enough and do not always challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. Pupils' digital skills develop progressively, with occasional opportunities provided for them to improve their skills, particularly by researching on the internet or using different methods and software to present information. However, opportunities for them to develop a full range of digital skills that challenge them to make consistent progress are too limited. Teachers plan interesting and appropriate opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills, particularly their speaking and reading skills. On the whole, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to master their writing skills through a range of different genres of writing. However, the overuse of worksheets and over-direction from staff at times hinders pupils' ability to write at length. In addition, teachers do not provide regular enough opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.

There is a close and wonderful working relationship between all staff and pupils, which creates an inclusive ethos in all classes. As a result, there is a productive working environment and most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Support staff are very conscientious and support teachers effectively to develop pupils' skills and well-being.

Across the school, staff model language highly effectively and encourage pupils to use correct spoken language, particularly in Welsh. As a result, most pupils develop effective oral skills and a majority develop to become extremely eloquent and confident communicators. In many of the classes where teaching is at its best, teachers have high expectations and classroom organisation is sound. In these cases, teachers' presentations are lively and stimulating, which engages most pupils' interest successfully.

Teachers and assistants provide valuable oral feedback to help pupils improve their work. They use questioning methods purposefully and encourage pupils to extend their responses. When appropriate, teachers provide them with effective written feedback, which is useful in encouraging pupils to improve their work. At times, they also encourage pupils to develop their thinking skills in terms of the quality of what they present. All staff know the pupils' needs well and, in most cases, tailor learning objectives appropriately to support and motivate them to complete their tasks. However, across the school, learning activities do not always challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring and happy community that supports the emotional, health and social needs of all pupils effectively. The headteacher and all staff have a thorough knowledge of all pupils, which enables them to provide them with effective care and support. The strong emphasis placed on promoting positive behaviour and mutual respect is evident in the pupils' excellent personal skills and polite attitudes.

Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. They provide valuable opportunities, such as the daily collective worship sessions, which enable pupils to reflect on important values, for example the characteristics of what makes a good friend. Emphasis is placed on equal opportunities and that each pupil's contribution is equally important, which is as a leading aspect of the vision of the school's leaders, namely '*Dysgu gyda'n gilydd yn hapus a diogel*' ('Learning together happily and safely'). This is implemented extremely well in all aspects of school life.

Staff promote pupils' understanding of their Welsh identity, heritage and culture highly effectively. This includes learning about the history of Owain Glyndŵr, celebrating Cariad@Urdd and welcoming visitors to promote Welsh traditions, including singing, clog dancing and poetry with pupils. The links with the local chapel and church provides valuable opportunities for pupils to perform and take part in services, for example when celebrating the harvest thanksgiving festival.

On the whole, teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop robust values and explore their own beliefs and values. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils learn about Diwali traditions in an effective variety of relevant activities. However, overall, these opportunities are not planned consistently enough across the school. There are also very few opportunities to promote children's rights.

Valuable opportunities are provided for all pupils to shoulder responsibilities and contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. For example, all pupils receive praise as the 'Star of the Week' in turn and are given an opportunity to celebrate work on the 'Wow Wall' display. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities to include the pupil's voice when tailoring the curriculum, for example when planning activities and events outside the classroom. By doing so, pupils develop their entrepreneurial skills effectively when planning and undertaking business ventures at the Christmas and summer fayres.

Teachers track the progress of pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), appropriately. The Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) and the assistant responsible for the support programmes are experienced in this area and passionate about their responsibilities and pupils' development. They have established valuable support arrangements and have a thorough knowledge of all pupils, including those who are a cause for concern or need further support. For example, they identify the needs of pupils with speech needs at an early stage and meet their needs effectively. The school has a close and productive link with a wide range of external agencies to support ALN provision, for example educational psychologists and counselling support, which are a key part of support for specific pupils.

The headteacher and staff meet the well-being needs of pupils successfully. For example, valuable activities are provided such as specific well-being days such as '*Haul a Hwyl*' and '*Splash a Sbrî*'. The well-being area for pupils who need a quiet period away from the class ensures strong support for them. Provision for promoting health and fitness is popular among pupils and has a positive effect on their well-being and personal and educational development.

The school monitors pupils' attendance effectively. Procedures to challenge pupils' low attendance are comprehensive and are beginning to have a positive effect on attendance.

The culture of safeguarding is a priority for all members of staff across the school and they ensure that all pupils are aware of how to stay safe online. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision that is based on 'Respect, Effort, Enjoyment and Success'. This vision is embedded deeply and lays a solid foundation for the school's caring and community-based learning environment. A dedicated team of staff work together effectively under the measured and wise guidance of the headteacher and give of their best for the well-being and progress of all pupils. The school's natural Welsh ethos is reinforced by effective language modelling by staff and a purposeful range of experiences to develop enthusiastic and confident pupils.

Members of the governing body know the school well. They celebrate the school's strengths and gain the confidence to identify and monitor aspects of provision that are in need of improvement. Members are part of the self-evaluation processes and make effective use of visits to the school, for example when scrutinising pupils' work. Through these scrutiny activities, members conduct professional dialogue with the headteacher and learning staff to support them and plan actions for improvement. A good example is the headteacher's effective co-operation with members of the governing body to produce clear guidance that includes high expectations for pupils' attendance. The governing body works effectively with the teaching staff and pupils to evaluate and promote healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders manage the school budget and the pupil development grant carefully and ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. They allocate resources well and invest time and money effectively to ensure appealing provision that enriches pupils' learning experiences.

The school has rigorous self-evaluation processes, which ensure that leaders identify strengths and areas for improvement robustly. Teachers are familiar with each other's teaching methods, and scrutinise pupils' work and conduct learning walks regularly. Effective opportunities to incorporate the voice of pupils and parents contribute successfully to the leaders' knowledge of their school. An example of this is the work of the '*Criw Cwricwlwm*', who reflect on the nature of provision and the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales to design and revise the curriculum. The priorities in the school development plan derive directly from the self-evaluation processes and staff take full ownership of them. There are robust actions in place to monitor progress towards outcomes and they are shared regularly with the governing body.

All members of staff understand their responsibilities well and are keen to take advantage of appropriate professional learning opportunities. Effective performance management arrangements for the headteacher and teachers balance the professional aspirations of individuals and the school's current direction of

improvement. Leaders encourage teaching staff to attend relevant training and cascade significant information and support their colleagues. An effective professional relationship between teaching staff and local schools leads to developing consistent practices. For example, as a members of the network of schools in the authority, successful co-operation between staff has led to experimenting with effective approaches to teaching English spelling. This has already begun to lead to improvements in pupils' English spelling.

The close-knit and positive relationship between the school and parents is a strong feature. Staff use digital communication methods effectively to share information and celebrate pupils' successes. The school holds regular community events which contribute significantly to the familial ethos. For example, the school's pupils have raised money for the Syrian earthquake appeal by holding a coffee morning and through performances by the pupils.

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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