



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

A report on

Ysgol Glan Gele

**Ffordd Y Morfa
Abergele
Conwy
LL22 7NU**

Date of inspection: October 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Glan Gele

Name of provider	Ysgol Glan Gele
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	277
Pupils of statutory school age	211
Number in nursery classes	66
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 23.0%)	25.5%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 16.1%)	26.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	5.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	09/09/2015
Start date of inspection	09/10/2023

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

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website:
mylocalschool.gov.wales

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

Overview

Ysgol Glan Gele is an inclusive, caring community where everyone's well-being is a priority. This is a strong feature of the school. This supportive and warm atmosphere helps nearly all pupils settle into school life easily and contributes significantly to pupils' engagement in school and their readiness to learn. The positive working relationships between pupils and staff encourage all pupils to show a responsible attitude in lessons and demonstrate excellent behaviour around the school.

During their time at the school, most pupils make good progress in their learning from their individual starting points, including those pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). The school provides a wide range of support for pupils, and skilful teaching assistants provide useful help in dedicated sessions to address emotional and learning needs. The school works closely with a wide range of agencies including health and social care to support pupils and their families. This collaborative approach enables pupils to engage appropriately in their learning.

Leaders and teachers have developed a curriculum that reflects the principles of the Curriculum for Wales. They use immersion days to ignite pupils' interests in their work and allow opportunities for them to contribute their ideas about what they would like to learn. The school provides a broad and balanced range of learning experiences. This includes a wide choice of exciting extra-curricular activities and a variety of educational visits, that enrich the curriculum. Many staff use questioning well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, teachers do not always provide pupils with activities that meet pupils' learning needs closely enough or challenge them suitably. Opportunities for pupils to engage in effective outdoor learning are underdeveloped.

Leaders and staff share a purposeful vision for the school. They work together well to ensure that the school is successful in its aims. The governing body has a strong understanding of the strengths of the school and works effectively with the headteacher, staff, pupils and parents to support ongoing improvement.

Recommendations

- R1 Further develop learning experiences to meet the needs of all pupils and to provide sufficient challenge in learning across the curriculum
- R2 Improve the provision for outdoor learning

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time in the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress and use their knowledge and skills in their work across the curriculum suitably. They settle quickly into school life and learn daily routines confidently.

Most pupils listen attentively to instructions and communicate their needs well. As they develop a wider range of spoken vocabulary, pupils begin to talk confidently with each other and staff. They ask and answer simple questions, ask for help and seek clarification effectively. Many older pupils develop as articulate speakers and relish opportunities to talk about their work. From a young age, many pupils enjoy looking at books and talking about the pictures. In reception, pupils enjoy retelling stories they have heard and act out different parts of these stories enthusiastically. As they move through the school, many pupils share their favourite books with their friends and enjoy discussing the content as they look at the pictures together. They are beginning to use their phonological skills to enable them to decode words effectively. By Year 2 many pupils read a range of texts accurately and fluently.

Across the school, many pupils develop their writing skills appropriately. Younger pupils use a wide range of resources to make marks and understand that they are developing their communication skills. Many draw, paint, and make patterns using a range of media and they are beginning to write using a suitable pencil grip. A majority of children in Year 1 are beginning to use their emergent writing skills in their imaginative play, for example when attempting to write notes and lists. By Year 2, many older pupils make good progress. They can write stories independently and are able to draft and edit their work. For example, older pupils write adventure stories with increasingly detailed character descriptions. However, across the school, not all pupils are sufficiently challenged to improve their work in other areas of the curriculum.

Most pupils' Welsh language skills are developing well and build effectively on previous learning. Younger pupils confidently identify colours and shapes in Welsh, and they enjoy singing a range of songs and rhymes. Older pupils continue to make good progress and are beginning to hold simple conversations in Welsh with their friends.

Most younger pupils make suitable progress in their mathematical development. Most count to at least ten and match objects to numbers accurately. They recognise and name shapes in the environment and identify the number of sides they have. As part of their work on castles, many pupils identify the regular shapes they find in pictures. Many older pupils use mathematical vocabulary successfully in their play, for example when comparing large and small. They understand the use of money, shapes and measures and can apply these in problem solving activities, for example when measuring the time it takes for ice cubes to melt while investigating global warming. However, across the school, not all pupils transfer their understanding of these mathematical concepts to their learning experiences across the curriculum.

Across the school, many pupils make good use of a wide range of digital resources to support their learning. Younger pupils create pictograms to record data of favourite foods and use simple programs to create digital art. Older pupils create spreadsheets analysing ticket sales for the school pantomime. Many build and programme robots to collect plastics in oceans, as part of their project on the environment. They create multimedia presentations and animations using greenscreen technology. to show their understanding of their topic.

Most pupils' physical skills develop well during their time at the school. They move confidently when using the play equipment and during PE sessions, where they demonstrate their strength and stamina. Many children develop good fine motor skills and co-ordination, for example when using tweezers to carefully pick up and move small objects such as conkers from one space to another.

Pupils are beginning to develop their creativity and imagination well. They use a range of resources including natural materials, to create models, collage, and paintings. All pupils regularly participate in assemblies as well as annual pantomimes. They use music and movement well to enhance their learning with regular gymnastic and dance lessons.

Many pupils work well in pairs and small groups when developing their problem-solving skills during free play. However, generally, pupils do not use these skills consistently across all areas of learning.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils at Ysgol Glan Gele are proud of their school and feel safe and secure in its positive and homely learning environment. They show a caring attitude towards others both in classrooms and around the school. Most pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for each other, their school and their community and understand that they are well cared for. Year 2 playground buddies enthusiastically support younger pupils throughout playtimes by playing, singing, and joining in with their games. They show a strong awareness of what it is to be a good friend and how to help others.

Nearly all pupils benefit from opportunities to discuss their feelings and emotions regularly. As a result, they feel supported and valued. They identify how they are feeling at the start of the day and understand how to regulate their emotions when needed.

Nearly all pupils are becoming healthy, confident individuals. They explain how to make healthy choices relating to diet, physical activity and emotional well-being. Many are aware of the importance of a balanced diet and talk confidently about choosing fruit and vegetables. They understand how exercise helps them develop physically and enjoy taking part in healthy themed days involving parents.

Most pupils have a secure awareness of how to keep themselves safe and confidently describe how they do this inside and outside of school. They know who they can speak to, to report any concerns they may have. Most pupils have a strong awareness about who strangers are and know what to do if the behaviour of others makes them feel uncomfortable.

Many pupils are increasingly becoming ethical and informed citizens. They demonstrate a growing sense of empathy and compassion towards others and their awareness of diversity and equality is developing appropriately. For example, they raise money to support national charities who campaign against child poverty. Older pupils show a good awareness of children's rights and can explain how these have an impact on their own and others' daily lives.

Nearly all pupils develop well as ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn and show confidence and resilience, for example in the way they enjoy interacting with adults and persevere with their work within the classroom. Lessons are described as 'fun' and 'interesting' with most pupils talking enthusiastically about what they enjoy doing in school. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in all areas of learning.

Nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, are ready to take on leadership roles and responsibilities and to play a full part in the life and work of the school, for example as members of the numerous pupil voice groups including school council, Criw Cymraeg, Digital Leaders, Play Ambassadors and eco groups. Pupils take these roles seriously and are beginning to make contributions to the work of the school.

Across the school, most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They have a sound understanding of the school's values and reward systems. As a result, the behaviour of pupils across the school is good. They concentrate effectively while working and play together happily during break times and lunchtimes. A majority of pupils discuss their work and previous learning confidently. Older pupils respond suitably to feedback and improve aspects of their work. Generally, they understand the next steps in their learning. Most undertake their tasks conscientiously and focus well.

Almost all pupils feel that adults in the school listen to their views and take them into account when making decisions that affect them. All pupils have the opportunity to contribute ideas when they begin a new topic and take part in the end of topic review. As a result, most of the time, across the school most pupils are engaged in their learning. Nearly all pupils talk enthusiastically about their experiences and engage well with the broad range of after school activities on offer.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff across the school develop good working relationships with pupils. They foster respect and trust that enables pupils to feel valued. As a result, most pupils settle quickly to their work and behave well in lessons.

The school is making good progress towards developing a curriculum aligned to Curriculum for Wales (CfW), involving pupils, parents, staff and governors in its creation. The school's vision encompasses its key values and aims for learning. Staff provide pupils with a broad, balanced curriculum that includes immersion days and questions at the start of topics. This approach successfully captures pupils' interest and allows them to include their own ideas. Teachers share broad learning goals with pupils during lessons and these generally outline their expectations.

Teachers provide suitable learning experiences for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum. However, these experiences do not always meet the needs of all learners or provide a suitable level of challenge.

The school develops pupils' Welsh language skills effectively. Pupils learn about Wales and Welsh culture and develop their understanding of Welsh traditions and cultures. Pupils especially benefit from visits to enhance their knowledge, for example when visiting Conwy and Gwrych castles. The school strengthens its curriculum through an extensive range of extra-curricular activities including running club, construction club and nature detectives.

The school provides pupils with a bright, engaging, well-resourced learning environment. Working walls and displays are used effectively to support and enhance children's learning within the classroom and whole-school displays promote the school's values effectively. The school provides regular opportunities for planned outdoor learning sessions, including sessions that take place in the school's woodland area. However, opportunities for outdoor learning outside of planned woodland experiences are limited.

Teachers plan successfully to develop pupils' oracy, reading and writing skills. They plan comprehensively to develop pupils' mathematical development. However, teachers do not plan for all pupils to apply these skills consistently across the curriculum.

Teaching assistants successfully support pupils to develop their skills and well-being. Alongside teachers, they provide good language role models and many use questioning effectively to deepen the pupils understanding.

Most teachers use assessment strategies such as paired discussion and pit stops effectively, to enable pupils to reflect on their learning. Pupils regularly evaluate their own learning against success criteria. Most teachers provide purposeful verbal feedback to pupils during lessons and when marking their work at the end of a lesson. Teachers provide useful opportunities for pupils to self-assess during weekly learning reviews. These approaches enable pupils to know how to be successful and improve their work. Across the school, teachers apply marking and feedback strategies consistently to monitor progress.

Teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn about how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They sensitively discuss personal safety with pupils. The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of other cultures. For example, younger pupils research people and places across the world and older pupils study climate change.

Care, support and guidance

The quality of care, support and guidance for pupils and their families is a strength of the school. The school is a caring, inclusive community where everyone's well-being is a priority. The warm and supportive ethos staff create, helps nearly all pupils settle into school life easily and contributes significantly to pupils' engagement in school and their readiness to learn. The school provides a network of support for families in need.

The school provides a wide range of pertinent and effective intervention strategies that support pupils with their learning and well-being. This broad range of support including thoughtful sensory and music approaches ensures pupils receive the individual support they need. Nearly all pupils enjoy taking part in these support sessions and, as a result, make good progress from their individual starting points.

Staff provide a comprehensive range of support to help pupils develop resilience and perseverance and to improve their well-being. The school creates specific environments for pupils to use when needing safe or calm spaces that successfully support them to regulate their emotions and behaviour.

The school has robust and established procedures in place to identify, monitor and respond to the specific needs of pupils with ALN. They set realistic and achievable targets for all pupils, particularly those with ALN.

The school is committed to working with a wide range of external agencies, including support for speech and language to provide tailored support for pupils. As a result, many of the most vulnerable pupils and those with learning needs, make good progress as they move through the school. The school's strong commitment to person centred practice contributes effectively to its implementation of ALN reform.

The school's approach to promoting positive behaviour is successful. Leaders and staff are positive role models for pupils and promote values such as kindness and empathy effectively. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and provides beneficial opportunities for pupils and their families to share their own cultural heritage through authentic events, for example when hosting an Indian banquet evening for local families.

The school embraces equality and diversity and provides effective opportunities for pupils to learn about the diverse nature of the world and to develop a good understanding of their Welsh heritage. Pupils take part in the whole school annual Eisteddfod, read Welsh stories and cook traditional Welsh food.

Teachers ensure that pupils benefit from educational visits to support their learning. These include visits to a local beach, where they explore the terrain and learn how to stay safe. In addition, there are useful visits to the school by the community police officer, who teaches the pupils how to stay safe, Senegalese drummers, and a local orchestra. The school provides extensive opportunities for pupils to expand their interests and experiences through extra-curricular clubs such as running and craft club.

The school has appropriate arrangements to support pupils to learn about the importance of healthy eating and drinking, and on-line safety. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to benefit from physical exercise during the school day. These experiences help pupils to develop their understanding of how to stay fit and remain healthy.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Across the school, staff have a clear understanding of the processes and procedures used to keep pupils safe. They work well in partnership with outside agencies when appropriate. The school has clear arrangements for monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality. As a result,

attendance concerns are dealt with in a timely manner and parents are invited in to discuss how the school can support them.

Leadership and management

The recently appointed headteacher provides compassionate leadership that supports the well-being of all successfully. She sets high expectations of herself, staff, and pupils and this fosters a strong sense of pride, trust and respect, which permeates the school community. Leaders and staff have a clear vision for the school, "Happy and secure as we all learn together". The effective team of staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are committed to this vision. Leaders are fully aware of the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on pupils' attainment and have robust and highly effective processes in place for inclusion.

Staff have a thorough understanding of the needs of their pupils and the local community and work with commitment to meet these needs. For example, the recently established "Hub" provision allows vulnerable pupils to access emotional support as and when they need it.

Leaders use suitable evidence to monitor and evaluate pupil progress. Processes for evaluating provision and pupil outcomes are timely and clearly related to the school's plans for improvement. Over time, the school has identified key areas for improvement well, such as reading and numeracy and leaders address the national priorities of curriculum and additional learning needs reform well. However, leaders do not always focus closely enough on important aspects that need improving, such as ensuring that teachers provide learning experiences that challenge all pupils appropriately to deepen their learning.

The wide range of resources available in the school are used purposefully by pupils to develop a range of skills. However, staff do not make sufficient and appropriate use of the outdoors to support pupils' learning and development.

The school's relationship with parents is a strength. Leaders and staff adopt a community focused approach to supporting pupils, parents and the wider community. As a result, parents trust that the school is doing the best thing for their children and that staff will always act in their best interests. This reflects the fully inclusive ethos of the school and has a positive impact on pupils' well-being.

Members of the governing body know the school well and are highly supportive of its work. Link governors are assigned to areas of learning and experience (AoLEs) and have a good understanding of pupil progress and the school's priorities for improvement. The headteacher informs governors about pupils' learning regularly and advises them realistically on how to improve provision. They ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances well. They allocate the pupil development grant effectively to provide additional support to improve pupils' wellbeing and skills. They consider the impact of poverty and ensure that finance is not a barrier to learning, for example by subsidising school trips and providing free fruit for pupils.

The headteacher and staff monitor the progress of all pupils carefully from their individual starting points. They use a range of information and data, including regular progress review meetings effectively to highlight any cause for concern and to adapt or change provision when needed. As a result, most pupils including those with ALN make strong progress.

Leaders promote a culture of professional learning that impacts on provision and standards positively. For example, all staff are involved in the development of curriculum and assessment for learning. Performance management procedures for all staff are effective. They link closely to school improvement priorities as well as staff individual professional development needs.

The school works closely with a range of partners to benefit pupils and staff. Specialist agencies regularly provide direct support and guidance that impacts positively on outcomes for pupils. The school supports the development of student teachers and teaching assistants from the local college effectively.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

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

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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