



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

A report on

Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn

**Ffrydan Road
Bala
Gwynedd
LL23 7RU**

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 Godre'r Berwyn

Name of provider	Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	All age school
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	566
Pupils of statutory school age	474
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	15
Number in sixth form	53
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 all-age schools is 21.6%)	10.3%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in all-age schools is 12.7%)	8.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	68.4%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	23/10/2023

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 Godre'r Berwyn is a caring community in which most pupils feel safe and valued. Nearly all pupils behave very well in classes, during leisure time and as they move around the school. They are kind to adults and each other.

The school has an excellent Welsh ethos and many pupils make sound progress in developing Welsh language skills during their time at the school and becoming confident communicators. They also develop suitable literacy skills in English but, overall, pupils' ability to write extended pieces in English is hindered by a lack of opportunities to do so. Many pupils make suitable progress in developing numeracy and digital skills. However, teachers do not plan opportunities cohesively enough to enable pupils to apply the full range of these skills and build on previous learning over time. In the strongest cases, teachers present engaging lessons by using interesting prompts, such as video clips, to ignite pupils' enthusiasm. The youngest pupils also benefit from a wide range of hands-on activities, which provide valuable opportunities to apply their skills. Where teaching is not strong, teachers do not give enough consideration to the needs of all learners when planning, including those pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).

The headteachers is a positive role model who shows a clear vision for the school and succeeds in creating a welcoming learning environment for pupils. The effect of leaders on other aspects of the school's work varies. They have not yet succeeded in having a sufficient influence to ensure consistency in the school's work across the age range. For example, they have not had enough of an impact on planning progress in pupils' skills across the school or evaluating and monitoring attendance levels. In addition, improvement planning processes are not always clear and specific enough to ensure timely progress. Expectations and lines of accountability are also not clear enough.

The school is a lead school for initial teacher education.

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen leadership at all levels and ensure that responsibilities are distributed sensibly and that there is a clear structure of accountability
- R2 Strengthen the effectiveness of improvement planning processes
- R3 Co-ordinate and improve provision to develop pupils' skills
- R4 Strengthen processes for monitoring and promoting attendance to raise attendance levels

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Learning

Many pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals, make appropriate progress during their time at the school. On the whole, pupils with ALN make suitable progress from their starting points.

Most pupils develop listening skills successfully. They respond appropriately to teachers' instructions and presentations in Welsh from a young age and listen to the contributions of their peers with increasing maturity. Most pupils converse in Welsh naturally around the building and when discussing in their lessons, with many speaking with a good measure of accuracy. They discuss effectively with partners, for example as Year 4 pupils offer ideas for which equipment is most suitable to measure the size of different objects. In their group discussion tasks, many of the oldest pupils evaluate critically and respect the opinions of different people to move discussions forward. They use technical terms with increasing accuracy and use rich Welsh vocabulary in their work across the curriculum. For example, Year 9 pupils discuss birth and death rates in their humanities lessons. The majority of the oldest pupils given extended answers to teachers' questions. A few pupils use English words in Welsh sentences or turn to speaking English completely with their peers in lessons, at times. A very few of the school's oldest pupils choose not to listen carefully to their peers' answers and are reluctant to contribute orally or give only short answers.

Many pupils develop appropriate Welsh reading skills from a young age. During their time in the school's lower years, they develop as increasingly confident readers. By the end of Year 6, many pupils show an enjoyment of reading. They read a range of texts appropriately with a suitable level of accuracy in Welsh and English. Many of the school's oldest pupils develop higher-order reading skills successfully. They use the scanning technique appropriately, for example to find key information in historical sources. Many reason skilfully, for example when considering the points of view of different characters in the play 'An Inspector Calls' in English lessons. Although most of the oldest pupils continue to develop their reading skills and read aloud clearly, a minority vary their expression and intonation to engage the audience's interest. Many read with meaning when text contains subject-specific and unfamiliar terminology.

Many of the youngest pupils develop their fine motor skills effectively. For example, they make dough independently and use a sand and salt table to practise writing key words. As a result, they develop the physical skills necessary to begin mark making. By the end of Year 2, most pupils develop legible handwriting and begin to write independently, for example when creating a book that identifies parts of the body. By Year 6, many write with a suitable flow and present work in an organised manner.

Many of the secondary age pupils write at length in different genres and for specific audiences in Welsh. Many spell and punctuate correctly consistently. Overall, many use the expected vocabulary and syntax correctly and a few use varied and increasingly complex vocabulary, organising their work effectively to capture the reader's attention. Many apply their writing skills purposefully in their work across the curriculum, particularly when responding to tasks in their science work. However, a few pupils make elementary spelling and punctuation errors when writing in Welsh and English in their work across the subjects. Overall, pupils do not make as much progress as they could in developing their writing skills in English. This is mainly due to inconsistencies in the opportunities they are given to write extended pieces.

Many pupils across the school develop a suitable understanding of mathematical concepts. However, only a minority apply their numeracy skills successfully on a regular basis, mainly because they are not given sufficiently purposeful opportunities. On the whole, pupils' numeracy skills do not build systematically over time in their work across the curriculum. Most of the school's youngest pupils develop early numeracy skills effectively. For example, they begin to recognise the shapes of coins in the Reception class. Between Years 1 and 6, many apply their skills appropriately in practical tasks, for example when measuring their peers' waist and crown. They begin to use standard measurements with increasing accuracy. Many secondary age pupils apply number skills appropriately when calculating range, mode, median and mean, for example when interpreting population data in geography lessons. They use appropriate terminology in their lessons, for example when discussing probability. They deal with the rules of angles and calculate the area of 2D shapes successfully. They recall and use a variety of mental strategies to multiply and divide. Many begin to handle data with increasing confidence, for example when choosing how to record their measurements and create tables independently and begin to make increasingly challenging charts. In the best practices, particularly in science lessons, older pupils handle data with precision. However, pupils' use of data-handling skills is inconsistent across the school, with a few recording information that is technically incorrect.

The youngest pupils use technology successfully, for example when creating autumn pictures with an art package. Many pupils continue to develop digital skills suitably, mainly by using the internet to find information and using different software to present information. They take advantage of occasional opportunities to develop other digital skills appropriately. For example, in their technology lessons, Year 8 pupils code a machine to measure how far they walk. However, on the whole, pupils develop a limited range of digital skills and they do not develop their skills coherently over time.

Across the school, most pupils develop creative skills effectively. The school's youngest pupils take advantage of regular opportunities to experiment freely with paint. Older pupils create pieces of work inspired by famous artists successfully. Many secondary-age pupils are successful in creating pieces of music and performing them, using a range of instruments and voices.

Many pupils develop thinking skills successfully, for example when discussing current affairs and expressing increasingly mature opinions. Across the age range, most pupils develop physical skills effectively. Most of the youngest pupils develop strong gross motor skills by moving and placing wood and tyres to create an adventure

course and balancing along it. Older pupils develop a good range of physical skills through health and well-being sessions.

Most pupils in the sixth-form work independently successfully and participate fully in lessons. They make a valuable contribution to school life and an appropriate number take advantage of the opportunity to guide the school's younger pupils, for example by holding scientific workshops.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils have a strong sense of pride and of belonging to the school community. They are polite and welcoming towards peers, staff and visitors and many interact confidently. Most pupils feel safe at school and free from bullying. They are aware of who they can turn to if they are worried about anything or if they need further support. They appreciate the sensitive support from staff at the '*Hafan*' and '*Hwb*' areas to support their emotional well-being and mental health.

Most pupils see the benefit of physical activity and are aware of the importance of living a healthy life. A few take advantage of extra-curricular opportunities to take part in physical activities that have a positive effect on their health and well-being, for example by attending the climbing club. Many pupils show sensitivity towards global concerns and show an awareness of current affairs, for example when discussing the content of a daily news programme. When they are given the opportunity to do so, they discuss important issues, such as a multicultural society and equality, appropriately.

During lessons, many pupils are keen to contribute fully and stay on task throughout the lesson. On the whole, many pupils develop confidence and resilience and this helps them to learn and think independently. For example, the youngest pupils make their own decisions confidently about what, when and how they learn.

Where relevant, pupils benefit from opportunities to undertake leadership roles within the school and show responsibility, for example by acting as 'playground buddies' or road officers. The school's older pupils also take advantage of opportunities to volunteer to support the youngest pupils with reading.

Nearly all pupils behave very well around the school during break time, lunchtime and while moving along the corridors. In assemblies, they behave excellently and benefit from opportunities to think and reflect. They listen respectfully to teachers and respond sensibly to instructions and activities. Most pupils are punctual for lessons and are enthusiastic to begin their work.

Attendance levels remain lower than before the pandemic. The attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is also too low in comparison with their peers.

Sixth-form pupils are worthy ambassadors for the school. They are polite and speak maturely, respectfully and confidently. They help during open evenings and show an understanding of their key role in maintaining and implementing the homely ethos of the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

Across the school, staff foster effective working relationships with pupils and treat them with respect. They greet pupils at the door and ensure that they settle to work promptly. Many teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and are strong language models who contribute to the school's excellent Welsh ethos. In their lessons, they give clear presentations and instructions to pupils and manage the learning space purposefully. Through appropriate questioning, they test pupils' understanding regularly and ensure that they listen attentively.

In the few lessons where teaching is most effective, teachers have a strong understanding of pupils' needs and high expectations of them. They are inspiring in their teaching and provide valuable learning materials, such as video clips and animations that spark the imagination. Through skilful planning, they set clear learning aims and model the expectations of tasks well for pupils. These teachers ignite enthusiasm in their classes which, in turn, means that pupils make sound progress over time. In the primary years, teachers succeed in creating an attractive learning environment that encourages curiosity and independence.

In the few cases where teaching is less effective, a lack of classroom management means that pupils do not make consistent progress. Tasks are not designed to respond to the needs of the full range of pupils and they are often repetitive. Teachers in these cases have a tendency to mistime the pace and timing of lessons. Overall, these teachers' expectations are too low.

On the whole, many teachers give pupils timely and useful oral feedback. They walk around the classroom effectively to support pupils with their work. In the best practices, a few teachers correct mistakes in pupils' work and offer useful guidance on how to improve it. However, this is inconsistent across the school and a minority of teachers give feedback that is often superficial and vague. Where appropriate, teachers and learning assistants work well together to support pupils with ALN. However, a very few less able pupils make limited progress from their starting points as a result of a lack of purposeful planning to meet their needs.

A majority of teachers plan a suitable variety of tasks which build logically on each other and increase in challenge. Overall, valuable opportunities are provided for pupils to practise and apply their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills in Welsh at primary age and in a few of the secondary subjects. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to practise and apply aspects of their numeracy skills outside mathematics lessons. In the best practices, teachers of the youngest pupils take advantage of timely events to develop literacy and numeracy skills successfully, for example by studying the football World Cup in Qatar. There are beneficial opportunities for the school's youngest pupils to use and apply their basic digital skills and a very few teachers plan beneficial activities to target a wider range of digital skills. Leaders have begun to conduct an audit and map opportunities to develop pupils' skills across the school. However, there is no whole-school strategy to ensure that pupils' English writing skills, numeracy and digital competence develop over time.

Leaders have a suitable vision for delivering the Curriculum for Wales. They are beginning to work together across the school and the areas of learning and

experience to design learning experiences that reflect the nature and context of the school.

The school has an inclusive and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of most pupils. Older pupils are able to study an appropriate range of general and practical courses, including engineering, hairdressing and beauty, and construction. However, the choice of vocational subjects is rather limited. A very few pupils who receive additional support follow suitable alternative courses.

The school enriches pupils' experiences through a variety of beneficial educational visits and opportunities to learn outside the classroom, such as visits to local chapels and churches. Overall, teachers ensure that learning experiences, particularly for the youngest pupils, are interesting and build effectively on their interests.

Throughout the school, staff promote the Welsh language, culture and heritage well and provide many valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh communication skills. For example, they raise the profile of the Welsh language by welcoming famous people from the world of football and the local area. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of the diverse and multicultural communities of Wales and the world.

Curricular provision for health and well-being provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their social and emotional skills. Through this, they foster an increasing awareness of key issues, such as living a healthy life, staying safe online and relationships and sexuality education. This is reinforced by beneficial assemblies and morning registration periods that raise pupils' awareness of the world around them and age-appropriate current affairs in a pleasant and homely environment. Curricular plans and the strong care from staff ensure that pupils' mental health and well-being are prioritised.

Staff offer beneficial provision in relation to careers and experiences in the world of work by working with external partners, so that the school's older pupils can make suitable decisions about their next steps. Where appropriate, pupils with ALN are beginning to benefit from opportunities to attend regular work experience which matches their individual needs.

Care, support and guidance

Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn is a caring community that promotes pupils' well-being effectively. Staff know the pupils well and have positive working relationships with them. The whole-school community embraces values of respect and co-operation and, as a result, behaviour is very good and pupils across the school have positive attitudes to learning. Provision to support pupils' emotional well-being is effective. For example, staff in the *Hafan*, *Hwb* and *Encil* areas provide effective interventions and support to support pupils' emotions, well-being and behaviour.

Within registration sessions and assemblies, the school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to discuss their own values and consider issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion, and provides a period of spiritual reflection. Pupils also have valuable opportunities to contribute to the school community and the wider community, for example by organising fundraising events for good causes.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities. These activities include Eisteddfodau, a production of the musical 'Grease' or attending fitness clubs, a climbing club and the Urdd club.

The school has suitable arrangements to identify pupils' additional learning needs. There are purposeful arrangements in place for fulfilling the statutory requirements in terms of Individual Development Plans. Annual review procedures are suitable and include valuable input from pupils, parents and external agencies. The school works purposefully with a range of partners to support the needs of these pupils.

The ALN co-ordinator (ALNCo) supports pupils and the staff who teach them purposefully, for example by providing beneficial training for staff on methods to support pupils' needs. The school has robust processes for sharing information about new pupils with ALN as they transfer to the school. Staff track the overall progress of pupils with ALN appropriately. However, staff do not use pupils' individual targets purposefully enough when they plan, or measure their progress against their individual targets in enough detail.

There are valuable opportunities for a few pupils to develop their leadership skills by representing their fellow pupils on the school council. The council meets regularly and discusses the suggestions of their peers about aspects of school life. Secondary-age pupils are also given beneficial opportunities to share their ideas about the content of programmes of work, such as the relationships and sexuality education provision.

The school provides valuable guidance and advice about pupils' career choices. For example, members of the local employment community are invited to present and discuss careers with pupils. Pupils are also given valuable opportunities to attend work experience within areas that meet their interests.

The school's processes for safeguarding pupils are suitable and meet requirements. The school's curriculum includes beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe at a level that is suitable for their age. For example, the school's youngest pupils learn about appropriate and inappropriate touching and older pupils have beneficial sessions on the adverse effects of domestic violence. Staff have a sound understanding of child protection processes. They work effectively with other agencies, where appropriate, for example to share information in children's services meetings. However, the school's procedures for monitoring attendance and promoting high levels of attendance are not clear or robust enough.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is ambitious for the school and has a vision that prioritises pupils' well-being to create a happy and healthy society where 'no one is too big, no one is too small'. She promotes and upholds the school's values of respect, kindness, honesty, fairness, care and dignity in a professional and sincere manner.

Leaders work towards ensuring that the school operates as one all-age school, which is reflected in the operational arrangements of the three phases, which cover a range of school years. However, the realisation of this vision is in its early days as the

primary and secondary departments operate separately in most areas of learning and experience.

Senior leaders have a suitable understanding of their responsibilities and fulfil their day-to-day duties conscientiously. Their roles and responsibilities are not always clear to others and responsibilities are not shared evenly. This limits their opportunities to reflect on the quality of their work and their ability to act strategically. Leadership has had a positive effect on areas such as maintaining pupils' attitudes to learning, their well-being and a constructive working relationship with staff. Leadership has not had enough of an effect on whole-school attendance and standards in a few areas of learning and experience.

Overall, the line management system is in place and frequent meetings have been arranged and regular opportunities for area leaders to meet their line managers. Leaders are inconsistent in implementing this system. As a result, not all leaders of areas of learning and experience are given suitable opportunities to discuss strategic aspects sufficiently to ensure consistency in self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.

Where appropriate, senior leaders identify and challenge staff who are underperforming and provide purposeful support to target improvement. Performance management targets align with the school's priorities and the areas of learning and experience. Targets are often very broad, immeasurable and too operational and, therefore, it is difficult to monitor and evaluate progress against them. As a result, a majority of leaders are unable to use the process to ensure accountability.

On the whole, leaders respond appropriately to national priorities. This includes developing and trialling aspects of the Curriculum for Wales, responding appropriately to the needs of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act and creating a culture of safeguarding. The school is beginning to plan more purposefully to mitigate the impact of poverty on the attainment and well-being of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. For example, they secure the support of learning assistants, support educational trips and provide musical instrument lessons.

The school has a clear calendar for self-evaluation processes, which includes procedures for gathering first-hand evidence of teaching and learning from an appropriate range of sources, such as scrutiny of books and lesson observations. Many leaders contribute to these processes and are beginning to use self-evaluation findings to formulate policies and steps for improvement in their area. Leaders vary in their ability to analyse evidence regarding the standard of teaching and learning and understand how this feeds into the improvement planning process. Overall, they do not focus sufficiently on the effect of teaching on pupils' skills and standards. The school is beginning to seek the views of stakeholders, including pupils, but little use is made of the findings to enrich the improvement process.

The school's improvement plan is detailed and refers to priorities that have been identified appropriately through the self-evaluation processes. On the whole, it includes a list of expected actions and activities, but the success criteria are not incisive or quantitative enough. There is inconsistency in the way in which leaders at different levels formulate relevant priorities and steps for improvement. As a result,

their plans do not focus clearly enough on the main issues that need to be addressed. Monitoring arrangements are often too open-ended.

Governors are very supportive of the school and undertake their roles enthusiastically. They attend various activities at the school. They are aware of their statutory duties and the importance of promoting healthy eating and drinking. They sometimes provide an appropriate level of challenge for leaders.

The headteacher and business manager manage the school's budget carefully. The school currently has a significant surplus. Grant expenditure is appropriate, overall, and has contributed positively to provision for a small cohort of pupils. However, the school does not monitor and evaluate the effect of the use of grants, such as the pupil development grant, in sufficient detail.

The school includes all staff in an appropriate range of activities that support their professional development. As part of the performance management process, staff present their operational or academic research findings to the remainder of the staff and some staff members have benefitted from visiting other schools to share good practice and cooperate. The school has worked purposefully with the schools in the national all-age forum and recently held an event to network and develop expertise in the sector. On the whole, the professional learning offer is not strategic and cohesive enough.

The school is a lead school for initial teacher education and a few teachers benefit from presenting to the trainee teachers. This includes teachers in the areas of literacy, digital and foundation learning.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers, staff 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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website:

<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>

© Crown Copyright 2023: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 27/12/2023