



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

A report on

Ysgol Cenarth

**Cenarth
Newcastle Emlyn
SA38 9JP**

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 Cenarth

Name of provider	Ysgol Cenarth
Local authority	Ceredigion County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	93
Pupils of statutory school age	59
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	18
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>	23.7%
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>	11.9%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	22.0%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	09/01/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	04/04/2015
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 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 Cenarth is a happy, familial and welcoming community. All staff work together effectively to provide an inclusive and friendly ethos where pupils are polite and behave respectfully. Pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to learning and make sound progress from their starting points. At times, learning experiences encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, which engages their interest. However, this has not been embedded and developed consistently, and opportunities to be inquisitive and independent learners are limited.

Many pupils develop their numeracy and digital skills well by the end of their time at the school. However, a minority of pupils' Welsh reading strategies are limited. Most pupils develop their creative skills effectively and their work is displayed and celebrated attractively around the school.

Teachers provide a broad and interesting curriculum for pupils and consider their views sensibly about what they would like to learn in relation to their learning themes. However, they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in different contexts.

The school is run effectively and leaders identify aspects of the school's work that are in need of improvement and the steps needed to realise this. The school's monitoring and evaluation activities are shrewd and accurate. Leaders give careful consideration to the views of pupils and governors and their voice influences the school's direction appropriately. Leaders share their vision clearly with everyone and the school community works diligently to ensure that learners are given a 'Good start' to have a 'Bright future'. Governors have a good awareness of the school's work and support the school effectively. The school needs to address the safeguarding concerns relating to the school's site.

Recommendations

- R1 Respond to the safeguarding concerns relating to the school's site
- R2 Develop pupils' Welsh reading skills
- R3 Expand opportunities for pupils to write at length in different contexts
- R4 Develop opportunities to promote pupils' independent skills

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' skills are lower than expected for their age, particularly their Welsh skills. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those who have been identified as having additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress in most of their areas of learning.

Although a majority of pupils are unable to speak Welsh when they join the school, they acquire the language quickly. By the end of Year 2, they use purposeful vocabulary when communicating with others when describing Seithennyn's palace from the legend of Cantre'r Gwaelod successfully. They talk about their work and interests with natural enthusiasm. As they move through the school, a majority talk confidently in formal and informal situations.

Nearly all pupils' listening skills across the school develop well. Most listen attentively and respond respectfully to the contributions of adults and their peers.

A majority of the school's youngest pupils come to read at a level that is appropriate for their age and ability. They read with appropriate expression and use a variety of strategies to read unfamiliar words. They enjoy listening to stories and are able to discuss the content of class stories enthusiastically. Many of the school's older pupils develop their reading skills appropriately and discuss the content of text sensibly and maturely. However, although pupils' Welsh reading skills continue to develop, a majority of pupils find it difficult to understand the content of what they read in Welsh.

Many pupils develop their writing skills appropriately as they move through the school. The youngest pupils begin to make marks and form letters and simple words correctly. By Year 2, many pupils write freely and begin to present their work methodically and clearly. A majority of older pupils write appropriately for different purposes and use relevant genre and vocabulary, for example when recalling the prisoners' journey following a show about the Second World War. In Years 3 and 4, a majority of pupils write purposefully for different purposes, for example when writing instructions for preparing various sandwiches to create a digital film. However, they are not given enough opportunities to write extended pieces or refine and improve their work in a wide enough range of contexts.

Most pupils develop their mathematical skills well. From an early age, many pupils develop a good understanding of number, size and shape. By Year 2, many build on these skills as they learn to add and subtract numbers. As pupils move through the school, they expand on their number skills beneficially; for example, a majority in Years 3 and 4 use their number skills when multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100. They develop a secure understanding of place value in two-digit numbers. Most pupils deal with the number system skilfully and show an understanding of the value of negative numbers. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 work well with the four number rules, shape and measure and develop robust data-handling skills. Many apply their number skills skilfully when problem solving, for example in challenges relating to money. They are happy to learn from their mistakes and share suggestions with their peers when checking answers.

Pupils' digital skills develop consistently across the school. Most of the youngest pupils use digital devices purposefully to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills and creativity. By the end of Year 2, many are able to create a block graph of facts about pupils in the class. Most older pupils use the internet to research independently to find information about a variety of topics. Many pupils develop an effective understanding of how to handle data and create spreadsheets. A good example of this is pupils' database of books by T. Llew Jones.

Most pupils develop their creative skills effectively, for example by emulating the style of famous and local artists successfully. They use a variety of materials and styles skilfully to produce and display attractive artwork.

Most pupils develop their physical skills well across the school. They take part in a variety of activities and lessons that promote their health and well-being effectively, for example during daily fitness sessions.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

The school is a happy, inclusive and welcoming community where most pupils greet each other, staff and visitors with respect and courtesy. There is a wonderful, familial ethos which ensures that most pupils develop as healthy and confident individuals who are very willing to engage with their learning.

Nearly all pupils behave well both inside and outside the classroom and they are caring towards each other when working and playing together. The family ethos and closeness between the pupils are supported effectively through the work of the 'buddies'. The 'buddy' system gives careful consideration to others, as older pupils are watchful of the school's youngest pupils and provide them with valuable support if they are sad or lonely.

Most pupils feel safe at school and are confident that adults listen to their concerns and help them to solve any worries they may have. Regular visits by the community police officer, who provides sessions on a range of themes such as antisocial behaviour and the dangers of talking to strangers, reinforce pupils' understanding of how to stay safe in the community.

Most pupils concentrate well in lessons, respond confidently to questions from teachers and assistants and apply themselves to their tasks immediately. Many show an interest in what they learn, undertake the activities that are provided enthusiastically and succeed in concentrating for extended periods. They listen well to presentations and instructions from staff, work harmoniously with others and respect each other's views during discussions. Many pupils across the school show resilience and perseverance when completing tasks. For example, the school's older pupils use purposeful strategies to help them to overcome any difficulties they face. Many pupils use oral and written feedback effectively to move their learning forward purposefully when responding to comments from staff and their peers.

Many pupils discuss their work confidently and are given opportunities to voice their opinions about what they would like to learn. They suggest ideas to be included in their themes and share them purposefully with their teachers. Members of the school council and the various committees make a beneficial contribution to the school's life

and work. For example, the eco council promotes sustainability effectively by reminding pupils to reduce, re-use and recycle materials. Pupils who are members of the Welsh committee have a good influence on promoting the Welsh language and pupils' Welshness successfully. As a result, many pupils across the school take pride in their ability to speak Welsh.

Most pupils understand how to make healthy choices in relation to eating and drinking, physical activity and their personal well-being, including how to keep themselves safe online.

Through a variety of charity work, many pupils are aware of others who are less fortunate. They raise money for the local food bank and contribute generously to other good causes. There are close links between the school and the wider community. Pupils visit places of interest in the local area to reinforce their learning and understanding of class themes. A good example of this is the older pupils' visit to a prisoner camp from the Second World War. As a result, most pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of their '*cynefin*' or local area and develop as ethical and knowledgeable citizens.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has a clear vision for learning that reflects the principles and culture of the Curriculum for Wales. Across the school, learning experiences promote this vision successfully and teachers provide a curriculum that develops pupils' skills effectively. An inclusive curriculum promotes a fair opportunity for all pupils to benefit from experiences, particularly pupils with ALN, vulnerable pupils and those who are eligible for free school meals. Teachers have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of their pupils and their learning styles and use this information sensibly to plan interesting learning experiences for them.

There is an effective working relationship between the school's staff, which fosters a happy and inclusive learning environment for pupils. Teachers and assistants identify and respond to pupils' needs very well. Staff develop positive working relationships with pupils, which creates a purposeful, calm and supportive learning environment. As a result, pupils feel that someone listens to them and that they are able to ask questions if they need support with their learning.

Teachers have a reflective and co-operative approach when planning the curriculum and refine their plans to consider the most suitable methods for their pupils. They are beginning to develop an awareness of the principles of progression in the Curriculum for Wales. This helps them to develop a common understanding of progression in pupils' learning across the school and to ensure that assessments are valid, accurate, reliable and shape the next stages of development for individual learners.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and ensure that most engage fully in lessons and their learning experiences. In many lessons, teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils. At times, they encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning to try to engage their interest and develop independent learners. However, this has not been embedded and developed consistently across the school. In around half of classes, there are long periods where staff over-direct

learning, which hinders the excitement of learning and limits opportunities for learners to be inquisitive and independent.

A prominent feature of the school's work is the way in which teachers and practitioners encourage pupils to take pride in the Welsh language and Welsh culture. By planning themes on the local area, teachers develop pupils' sound awareness and understanding of their neighbourhood by providing them with living and meaningful experiences, for example by visiting the Coracle Museum and the old mill in the centre of the village.

Nearly all staff use various questioning techniques effectively to extend pupils' understanding. They provide pupils with valuable oral feedback during activities to support and extend their learning. They provide simple written feedback and pupils respond to it regularly. As a result, pupils across the school respond confidently about what is good in their work and their next learning steps.

The school tracks pupils' progress thoroughly by making purposeful use of various assessments which ensure that they receive the support they need to succeed. As a result, most pupils make appropriate progress in most aspects of their learning.

Teachers provide useful information about pupils' progress in an annual progress report for parents. They also hold an open '*Dewch i Ddathlu*' ('Come and Celebrate') afternoon, where pupils share and celebrate their learning with their parents, while teachers are available to discuss any specific issues.

Care, support and guidance

There is a successful working relationship between staff and pupils, which leads to creating a happy and caring community. Teachers and assistants know the pupils well and support their personal and social needs skilfully. As a result, the nurturing and caring ethos has a positive effect on pupils' well-being, behaviour and engagement with their learning. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding children. However, during the inspection, leaders' attention was drawn to a health and safety issues relating to the school's site.

The headteacher and staff use effective procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress and well-being. These procedures enable teachers to identify the needs of individuals and groups of pupils very early on in their journey through the school.

Firm support is provided for pupils with ALN. There is effective co-operation between the ALN co-ordinator, staff, parents and external agencies. The school works purposefully with them to provide the best possible experiences and support for all pupils. As a result of the clear and robust guidance of the ALN co-ordinator, staff have undertaken valuable training to refine provision to meet the new requirements. For example, they have received valuable training on how to prepare individual development plans to support pupils in their classes. As a result, pupils are central to the process of setting targets in their individual plans, and parents and staff are an integral part of discussions.

All staff promote Welshness effectively and, as a result, most pupils have a sound understanding of the benefits of being bilingual. Events such as the 'Ffair Iaith' language fair and the school's activities to promote Welshness ensure that pupils, including latecomers, foster pride in the Welsh language. The school promotes strong links with the local community, which enriches pupils' learning experiences soundly. Teachers plan purposeful activities to develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of local history; for example, by visiting the nearby flour mill to enrich pupils' understanding of their identity and heritage successfully.

Teachers ensure that pupils are given opportunities to influence what they learn by encouraging them to contribute purposeful questions within their themes.

Most parents feel that the school is a happy and inclusive environment and value the care and guidance their children receive. They value the strong relationship between the school and home, which leads to a strong sense of community. The school shares relevant information with parents regularly, which fosters productive co-operation in terms of the well-being and education of all pupils.

The school's culture promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to promote and reflect on principles that help them develop as responsible citizens and contribute positively to the work of the school and the wider community. For example, the school works purposefully with community groups, such as the local food bank, to provide valuable support to families in need.

The school has robust procedures for promoting healthy eating and drinking. As a result, most pupils talk purposefully about healthy eating habits and understand the importance of a balanced diet. They are given valuable opportunities to keep fit within the school curriculum. Good examples of this are the whole-school swimming lessons and bicycle training, which ensure that pupils improve their fitness and well-being regularly.

The school encourages pupils to use their imagination and engage with the expressive arts effectively. They are given purposeful opportunities to appreciate and recognise the characteristics of different types of music and to perform, compose and exhibit their work in front of an audience. For example, the school's youngest pupils have been given valuable opportunities to create a soundscape by using percussion instruments creatively to convey the journey of the River Teifi.

Leadership and management

The headteacher sets a firm and clear strategic direction for the school. Her vision is based on creating a happy and familial learning environment which enables learners to have a 'Good start' for a 'Bright future'. All staff work together successfully to realise this vision and its effect can be seen on pupils' development, progress and well-being.

A strong sense of family has been established at the school. The enthusiastic team of teachers and assistants work together effectively to ensure rich provision in a local and Welsh context. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of all their work and staff and pupils work together happily. The headteacher facilitates effective co-operation with

all the school's stakeholders and looks for interesting approaches to stimulate pupils' thinking and imagination, for example by holding a photography competition about local nature.

The governors are responsible for particular areas, such as pupils' attitudes to learning or staff's professional learning, and they visit the school to discuss these aspects with staff. They have thorough knowledge of the recent Curriculum for Wales development and of the expectations of reforming provision for pupils with additional learning needs and their effect on the school. Governors conduct learning walks with the headteacher or key staff, scrutinising pupils' work and discussing developments in terms of teaching and planning. For example, governors went on a learning walk with the school's literacy co-ordinator, focusing on reading activities. As a result of this work, a decision was made to invest in digital books to motivate pupils to enjoy reading books in Welsh. These changes are now beginning to have an effect on pupils' reading progress. Governors have a sound awareness of the importance of promoting a culture of healthy eating and drinking among pupils. Through their detailed work, they act effectively as a critical friend to the school.

The school's self-evaluation and quality assurance arrangements are thorough. After establishing a timetable of a range of monitoring activities, the headteacher and teachers scrutinise pupils' books, conduct learning walks and seek the views of parents and stakeholders. This enables leaders to identify strengths and areas for improvement accurately.

The headteacher manages funding carefully under the watchful care of the governing body. Together, they support the school to manage and organise its resources effectively, which includes good use of the pupil development grant. The school has a sensible spending plan, which ensures enough resources to meet pupils' needs purposefully. Teachers use the outdoor areas suitable to enrich pupils' learning experiences.

Teachers take on numerous responsibilities and share and co-operate with each other regularly and flexibly. They play a full role in the process of evaluating and developing the school's curriculum. This can be seen in particular in the way in which they provide rich opportunities for pupils to take part in outdoor activities and to enjoy experiences that arise from work in the local area.

The headteacher has created a positive culture, which promotes and supports the professional learning of all members of staff effectively. Staff training is linked clearly to the school's improvement priorities and their professional needs. Teaching assistants have received training to implement a variety of interventions to support pupils' literacy, numeracy and well-being needs successfully.

Leaders have established effective arrangements for managing staff's performance. Staff objectives link directly to the school's priorities and their individual development needs. Leaders have established a robust culture for promoting and supporting the professional learning of staff. There are extensive opportunities for staff to attend training and shoulder managerial responsibilities, which add to the school's leadership capacity. Staff work closely with other schools and share good practice within the school and beyond.

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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