



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gynradd Llanrug**

**Caernarfon  
Gwynedd  
LL55 4AL**

**Date of inspection: November 2023**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh**

## About Ysgol Gynradd Llanrug

Name of provider	Ysgol Gynradd Llanrug
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	253
Pupils of statutory school age	181
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	34
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>	8.5%
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>	6.1%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	86.8%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	06/06/2015
Start date of inspection	20/11/2023

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](http://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 Llanrug is situated in one of the most Welsh-speaking parts of Wales and, as a result, pupils develop to become natural, rich Welsh speakers. Pupils who are latecomers to the school are immersed in the language and quickly develop to become fluent speakers. A familial ethos permeates the school, which is a notable element with everyone taking pride in their school and their community. Pupils behave very well and treat others with modest courtesy and respect.

Most pupils make sound progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. They concentrate for extended periods from a very early age and show a mature understanding of all elements of school life. Their engagement and perseverance towards tasks are good.

Teachers work together effectively to provide a balanced curriculum across the classes. A strong element of consistency permeates staff's teaching methods, they plan together and set shared expectations in terms of attainment. They provide a wide range of interesting learning experiences which inspire pupils to continue with their education at home. Teachers have an excellent working relationship with pupils, they care and respect them. They prepare appropriate learning areas that are attractive and encourage pupils' curiosity. However, they do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills. Learning assistants support pupils' progress very skilfully and provide purposeful guidance that meets the needs of individuals and groups of learners.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is based firmly on Welshness, pupils' well-being and maintaining standards. Other leaders support the headteacher well. Members of the governing body fulfil their roles intelligently. They have a very good awareness of the school's activities and use their expertise effectively for the benefit of pupils. They ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures are in place, that the building is looked after and that the best use is made of funding. They have a very good awareness of the school's priorities and are developing their ability to work alongside staff to evaluate provision effectively. Their support reinforces the family caring ethos that is associated with the school.

## Recommendations

R1 Improve opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning 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 around the expected level for their age and ability. Their spoken Welsh skills and social skills are above what is expected. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress in their skills from their starting points. During their lessons, most concentrate exceptionally well, show genuine pride in their work and recall previous learning successfully.

A very high percentage of pupils are natural Welsh speakers on entry to the school. Within a short period of time, the few pupils who start school with Welsh as their second language quickly develop to become fluent speakers. The vocabulary of the area can be heard in pupils' speech and they are proud of the fact that they speak Welsh in one of the most Welsh-speaking areas of Wales. They speak Welsh naturally with their friends during their activities and when playing during break times. By the end of their time at the school, most pupils make sound progress in their oral skills in both languages.

Most nursery and reception pupils enjoy listening to stories and concentrate for extended periods and respond intelligently to the text. They begin to use phonic strategies effectively to recognise simple and familiar words during their play activities. As pupils move through the school, most read enthusiastically and make progress in line with their age and ability. They vary their tone of voice appropriately and interpret punctuation correctly. By the top of the school, many develop as mature readers in both languages and the most confident read a range of materials skilfully. Pupils use a varied range of reading strategies to gather information and appreciate a wide range of texts effectively.

Most pupils' writing skills develop well during their time at the school. For example, the youngest pupils make marks, they begin forming letters and are starting to write simple words. By Year 2, many write a series of purposeful sentences by using a range of interesting vocabulary and basic punctuation with increasing accuracy. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop their understanding of writing genres and skilfully create a monologue from the perspective of one of the members of the Welsh football team who is preparing for a crucial game in the World Cup competition. They succeed in creating tension and express the player's emotion extremely successfully. By the end of their time at the school, many write at length and demonstrate a sound grasp of the elements of language and a range of writing genres. A notable example of this is the personal diary written from the perspective of the wizard Gwydion. Pupils include elements such as rhetorical questions very effectively and weave them sensitively within the natural dialect of Eryri.

Many pupils in the foundation learning classes develop a good understanding of number, shape and data. They become familiar with discussing different two-dimensional shapes during their activities. In the nursery class, many demonstrate a good understanding when using shapes to create repeating patterns. Pupils in the foundation learning classes apply their skills successfully when using different units to measure parts of the body. Many Year 2 pupils conduct a detailed

investigation when measuring different pumpkins and sort chestnuts into groups of 2, 5 and 10 as part of their theme work. At the top of the school, many pupils apply their numeracy skills successfully in different contexts. For example, in their science work, Year 5 and 6 pupils conduct an investigation into the effect of air resistance on a balloon. They make purposeful predictions and interpret their results skilfully.

Pupils' digital skills develop soundly across the school. Many pupils in the nursery and reception classes control a small programmable robot effectively. In Years 1 and 2, most pupils use tablet computers maturely in order to record their work independently. They use a tally method to create digital graphs that record the eye colour of pupils in the class. In the older classes, most pupils use a range of programs confidently and decide which software is best for completing different tasks. For example, in Years 3 and 4, they create effective presentations about the importance of caring for the world and reducing pollution. At the top of the school, they use database skilfully to find information, for example when learning about Welsh people who travelled to Patagonia on the *Mimosa*. They also demonstrate robust coding skills when creating an animation in the form of an exciting game and develop their work by making the game more challenging for players following feedback from teachers.

Most pupils develop their physical skills well throughout the school. In the foundation learning classes, pupils ride different two and three-wheeled bicycles confidently and demonstrate good balance. During their time at the school, pupils take part in a variety of lessons that promote their health and fitness and have a sound understanding of how to take care of their bodies.

Nearly all pupils develop appropriate creative skills from an early age, for example when using a simple printing technique to represent leaves on a tree in the early years. As they develop through the school they build on their skills by emulating the work of William Morris and creating elaborate drawings of buildings in Patagonia.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

A friendly and homely ethos is a strong feature of the school. Nearly all pupils are polite, welcoming and enjoy sharing their experiences with visitors in their natural, rich Welsh dialect. They listen attentively to their peers and respect their contributions while talking to each other in a mature and lively manner. Pupils feel safe at school and say that it is easy to talk to teachers as they listen to their needs. They feel that everyone is treated equally, regardless of their gender or background. Nearly all pupils behave excellently in lessons, when moving around the school and during playtime. The school's vision, '*Bydd yn barchus, bydd yn gyfrifol, bydd y gorau gelli di fod*' ('Be respectful, be responsible, be the best you can be'), has been embedded successfully.

Many pupils treat each other with kindness and care. They support their peers effectively, they are very willing to help and include each other in the school's day-to-day activities. A good example of this is pupils praising each other for their efforts in physical education lessons. As a result, most pupils develop as ethical and knowledgeable citizens who are very aware of what it means to be a good friend. Pupils show others sincere empathy and are keen to help those in need, for example

by organising a collection of resources to help people in Europe through a shoebox scheme.

Nearly all pupils show confidence and resilience in the way in which they persevere with their work. They challenge themselves successfully by selecting activities that are graded in terms of the level of challenge. For example, pupils have the confidence to take risks and move from one level of challenge to the next when evaluating their own progress. Pupils value and respond to constructive feedback which provides them with guidance on how to progress with their learning. For example, in a gymnastics lesson, pupils share good practice, evaluate progress and adjust their movements in order to improve.

Most pupils listen well to presentations, concentrate for extended periods and work together effectively to complete activities. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards their work and show increasing interest. Pupils have a skilled understanding of their tasks and demonstrate perseverance when completing them to the best of their ability. They participate enthusiastically as individuals and are keen to work together as a group within a range of learning experiences.

Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of issues relating to staying safe online as well as the dangers associated with the use of social media. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and discuss the effect of exercise on their health in an informed manner.

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those who are eligible for free school meals, develop their leadership skills appropriately through various councils. They influence developments within the school appropriately. For example, they organise a fruit shop, a chess club and the Criw Clên which helps look after younger pupils and organises games for them during playtime.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school's curriculum is broad and rich. Teachers give effective consideration to pupils' ideas as they plan themes and refer to them regularly when preparing activities. They plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about their *cynefin* or local area and about the history and traditions of the area. For example, pupils visit the slate museum in Llanberis to learn about the history and culture of the quarries. As a result, pupils demonstrate genuine pride in their village.

In the foundation learning classes, teachers work together effectively to ensure a range of engaging experiences for pupils, which allow them to develop their skills from an early age. They provide a suitable range of resources that stimulate the youngest pupils to learn through play, which supports and promotes learning effectively. The indoor and outdoor learning areas are used appropriately to provide various learning experiences for pupils. In a few activities, the over-use of worksheets tends to limit opportunities for pupils to express themselves at length.

The school's procedures for responding to the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales are developing soundly. As part of their self-assessment processes, leaders and teachers introduce changes in an agreed and measured manner, they trial and evaluate their provision to ensure that pupils' progress and interest are maintained.

Learning teams create flexible schemes of work that place a clear focus on developing literacy, numeracy and digital competence skills systematically. Teachers focus appropriately on teaching specific skills that build pupils' confidence by applying their skills in different contexts across the curriculum. Staff are beginning to provide opportunities for older pupils to choose independently the most effective way to develop their ideas and present their work.

Across the school, teachers focus appropriately on developing pupils' independence. In the foundation learning classes, they plan purposeful opportunities that encourage pupils to develop their independence from an early age, ensuring access to different equipment and activities that stimulate them successfully. In the school's older classes, teachers are beginning to ensure opportunities for pupils to work together effectively on different independent tasks. An example of this is the way in which pupils work together to develop a dramatic performance based on the Victorian era in Years 3 and 4. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills within the school and in the outdoor areas have not yet been fully developed.

Across the school, staff have high expectations of pupils. They provide them with regular and constructive oral feedback and encourage them to do their best. They know their pupils well and understand the best way to challenge them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Teachers question pupils skilfully to check their understanding and encourage them to share what they have learned. In the foundation learning classes, staff strike an appropriate balance between periods of class discussion, with opportunities for pupils to discuss with a partner. In the school's older classes, staff build on this work skilfully and encourage pupils to share their opinions or offer their own ideas.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school is a caring and happy community that promotes good behaviour and 'courtesy from all pupils. All staff are committed to ensuring that values, along with pupils' emotional well-being, are key to their work. Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well and treat all pupils fairly and with respect. As a result, pupils are very keen to engage with their learning and make good progress across the curriculum. The school's culture promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. The diverse range of rich opportunities provides a purposeful means of promoting pupils' understanding and development in these aspects. The element of respect provides a firm foundation for all activities.

The school effectively helps pupils to develop an understanding of their identity, heritage and culture and how they belong to the local community and the wider world. For example, they deepen their sense of belonging by visiting nearby locations, such as the forest school at Llyn Padarn. This intensifies pupils' pride in the fact that they 'come from the most Welsh village in the world'.

All staff are committed to ensuring that values, along with pupils' emotional well-being, are key to their work. This is reflected in the pupils' own positive attitudes towards school life. The school provides a well-being questionnaire to the older pupils each year and the findings provide useful information that is used well to adapt

provision to meet pupils' well-being needs. The school provides opportunities that encourage pupils to take part in a range of sport and leisure activities, for example through sports teams and tournaments, such as swimming for pupils from Years 2 to 6 during the year and organising and holding the Llanrug running race every June for the local and wider community. The school also organises a health, well-being and eco fortnight each year and invites experts and external agencies to hold activities and training sessions. During this week, pupils are able to enjoy experiences such as yoga, dancing, cycling and fitness programmes such as Ffit Cymru and Eryri Harriers, which add to the school's ability to nurture healthy and confident individuals.

Teachers have thorough processes in place which firmly support pupils with additional learning needs. A clear register indicates pupils' needs and records the agencies that work with the school, pupils and their families. They follow a comprehensive timetable for assessments and interventions which identifies staff's responsibilities clearly. Staff track pupils' progress from their starting points. They work closely with parents and most pupils make good progress against their personal targets. A good example of the co-operation between the school and home is the open evening where teachers model interventions that enable parents to reinforce the support that is provided. The school provides a purposeful variety of support programmes that help pupils make appropriate progress in developing good literacy and numeracy skills, in addition to purposefully supporting their well-being. Staff provide effective support programmes for pupils with emotional needs, these help them to feel comfortable at school, promotes their attendance and encourages them to engage in their learning. The school has a good track record of supporting pupils and their families through difficult circumstances by using specific valuable programmes.

Learning assistants keep detailed records and have very good knowledge of different strategies and their effect on pupils' development. Staff discuss professional development requirements and organise training to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils successfully.

The school promotes equal opportunities in all aspects of provision. Valuable opportunities are provided for pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals and those with ALN, to assume responsibilities and contribute to the school and the wider community. Everyone is treated fairly and the school ensures inclusion for all. Leaders use the findings of their research purposefully to meet their priorities. They have recently organised whole-school training to improve staff's understanding of the effect of trauma on pupils' behaviour and how to support them. As a result, nearly all pupils across the school behave very well. The school's procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils' attendance are thorough.

Staff keep detailed records of absences and contact parents promptly to discuss any concerns about their children's attendance.

Staff have a sound awareness of safeguarding processes. Under the intelligent guidance of the governors, the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are comprehensive and completely robust and are not a cause for concern.



## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has established a clear vision that is based on a robust sense of co-operation among all stakeholders. Celebrating Welshness and maintaining high standards in terms of the Welsh language and pupils' well-being are at the heart of all of the school's life and work. The headteacher has high expectations of herself, staff and pupils. The school is a happy and friendly community with a strong sense of being part of one big family. This permeates all aspects of the school's life and work.

Leaders have created a caring and inclusive environment which is based on ensuring total commitment to pupils' well-being. As a result, the staff are committed to meeting the needs of all pupils. They have very good care and knowledge of all pupils well-being and this contributes effectively towards ensuring that all pupils achieve to the best of their ability.

The governing body is very effective. Their understanding of the school's management methods and systems is exceptionally good. They succeed in challenging and providing guidance intelligently and supportively. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and are very aware of priorities, and what is being done to meet those priorities. Members of the governing body have an extensive combination of valuable strengths that enable them to provide support based on invaluable experience and knowledge. They work together well for the good of the school and use their expertise to challenge and support knowledgeably.

The headteacher and chair of the governing body have worked well together over recent years to manage the school's funding. They plan expenditure sensibly to purchase resources for the benefit of the pupils, maintain an appropriate staff ratio and make necessary adaptations to the building. The pupil development grant is used well to provide learning sessions that promote pupils' well-being. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' confidence and behaviour particularly those with emotional and social needs. The governing body promotes good healthy eating and drinking policies and meets the statutory requirements in relation to school meals.

Leaders, including governors, have a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders make purposeful use of a range of self-evaluation arrangements which include scrutiny of books, seeking pupils' views and observing teaching and learning through learning walks and lesson observations. They use this information effectively to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The process includes teaching staff and information gathered from pupils and parents.

The school has a long history of ensuring and maintaining improvements, which have a positive effect on pupils' attainment in terms of their basic skills and well-being. When setting priorities, leaders give due attention to national priorities.

Leaders create an effective culture and ethos to promote, enable and support the professional learning of teaching and support staff. The effect of training can be seen clearly in provision and in pupils' development. There is a clear link between training and school priorities.

Following recent training, local schools in the area have worked together to share and develop their professional practice. Representatives from the six primary schools

have worked with Ysgol Uwchradd Brynrefail to develop a website that supports teachers as they plan to meet the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales. This ensures consistency in provision when developing pupils' skills across the local area and aims to ease the process of transferring Year 6 pupils to the secondary school. This work is a good example of effective co-operation which has a positive influence on ensuring consistency in pupils' learning experiences and well-being across schools in the area.

## 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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**This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).**