



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gynradd Pentrefoelas**

**Pentrefoelas  
Betws y Coed  
Conwy  
LL24 0LE**

**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 Pentrefoelas

Name of provider	Ysgol Gynradd Pentrefoelas
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	42
Pupils of statutory school age	29
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	5
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>	8.3%
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>	7.1%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	86.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	04/05/2015
Start date of inspection	06/11/2023

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 Pentrefoelas is a close-knit community that celebrates Welshness, courtesy and respect exceptionally well. The headteacher provides wise leadership that values the efforts of everyone who contributes to the pupils' education. All staff are committed to ensuring high quality care and pupil well-being across the school in a homely and supportive learning environment. This has a strong influence on pupils' attitudes towards each other and others both inside and outside the school.

Pupils' pride in the Welsh language is a strong feature and they use the language completely naturally both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers and assistants model language highly skilfully and work together successfully to plan a range of varied and purposeful learning and play experiences for pupils. As a result, pupils' pride in their learning, their village and their local area is a strength.

Staff provide a curriculum that enables pupils to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to support their work and help them to apply them in relevant activities across the curriculum. However, provision for pupils to develop their numeracy and extended writing skills across the areas of learning are inconsistent. On the whole, teachers do not always provide learning activities that support pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. Provision to support the learning skills of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is purposeful. As a result, they make good progress in their learning.

The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to take part in performances and events to nurture their self-confidence and their expressive ability. For example, they perform enthusiastically in shows and concerts in the community, in addition to the Urdd's local, regional and national eisteddfodau.

The school's self-evaluation and quality assurance arrangements are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' well-being and progress. Members of the governing body support the headteacher and staff well. Pupils' attendance rates are very high. The headteacher, with the support of staff and governors, promotes a culture of safeguarding effectively.

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' writing skills
- R2 Provide activities that challenge all pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R3 Ensure that feedback from staff identifies the next steps in pupils' learning effectively

## What happens next

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

## Main findings

### Learning

On entry to the school, many pupils' skills are around what is expected for their age and stage of development. Most have strong oral Welsh skills on entry to the school. During their time at the school, many make sound progress from their starting points. Pupils with ALN make strong progress during their time at the school.

From a young age, nearly all pupils develop suitable vocabulary and language patterns, for example when discussing the feelings of characters in a story. By the end of Year 2, many expand their speaking skills appropriately to talk about their experiences more widely by using local dialect naturally. For example, they discuss what happens to the environment in the story '*Sbwriel Sbango*' skilfully. At the top of the school, many pupils develop their communication skills effectively and support some comments with a purposeful reason when expressing an opinion.

Many pupils' reading skills develop appropriately as they move through the school. The youngest pupils recognise initial letters confidently and show pride in developing their reading skills. By the end of Year 2, most pupils enjoy listening to stories and read simple books maturely to their friends and adults. A majority of the oldest pupils read fluently in various contexts in both languages. They begin to use intonation to demonstrate their understanding of the content. At the top of the school, many develop their higher-order reading skills skilfully, for example when gathering and presenting relevant information about rare butterflies.

On entry to the school, most pupils hold mark-making equipment confidently to make early marks. By the end of Year 2, many begin to write with increasing independence and show a sound understanding of spelling and punctuation. For example, they use imperative verbs when writing instructions on how to plant seeds successfully. Across the school, a majority of pupils develop their ability to write appropriately, particular in fictional genres. They adapt the style and structure appropriately when writing an imaginary story. However, a minority of the oldest pupils do not develop their extended writing skills effectively enough.

From an early age, most pupils' mathematical skills develop purposefully within their experiences. They identify 2D shapes confidently and use their number skills effectively when solving simple mathematical problems, for example. Most of the youngest pupils have a good grasp of 2-digit numbers, non-standard measures and simple data handling. They apply their numeracy skills successfully, for example when analysing a pictogram about houses and homes. By Year 2, they use money practically in the class charity shop. At the top of the school, a majority of pupils show a good understanding of units of measurement, for example by applying their

measuring skills when designing and building flower troughs. However, at the top of the school, a minority of pupils do not develop their numeracy and problem-solving skills soundly enough.

Most pupils' creative skills develop effectively. Their enjoyment and pride in this area is clear, for example when performing an original song about the history of the A5 road. At the top of the school, most pupils' musical skills are extended skilfully to compose songs which include a recycling song and creative music for a butterfly. They emulate the work of artists such as Rhiannon Roberts and Catrin Williams and develop their skills to vary colour and texture skilfully. Artwork is displayed tastefully within the attractive learning environment.

Many pupils' digital skills develop purposefully. The youngest pupils develop their skills well by using an electronic tablet and use a variety of apps that promote their oral skills. By the end of Year 2, they develop their skills purposefully, for example by using software to control a programmable device to move around a map. As pupils move through the school, many pupils' skills build consistently on their previous learning by using an increasing range of software and digital equipment. For example, they use an app to control an animal made of Lego successfully.

Most pupils' physical skills develop soundly as a result of a good variety of experiences and activities. The youngest pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to physical activities in the outdoor area, which includes developing their balancing skills during cycling sessions. The oldest pupils develop a range of physical skills successfully, for example by taking part in a range of activities which include football sessions, swimming sessions and opportunities to attend after-school sports clubs.

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

Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe in the care of all of the school's staff. They feel that they are respected and treated fairly which contributes positively to the school's familial, homely and inclusive ethos. Pupils know whom to approach for support if something is worrying them and are confident that staff will listen to them. They attend school regularly and talk enthusiastically about their learning and all of the experiences that are provided for them.

During learning sessions and breaktimes and lunchtimes, nearly all pupils behave very well and treat each other with respect and courtesy. They interact naturally and kindly with their friends and visitors, which fosters the sense that they are like one big family within the school.

The youngest pupils understand the classroom arrangements quickly and learn to play happily alongside their friends. By Year 2, most speak maturely to each other in pair activities and concentrate particularly well on their learning. For example, pupils develop their oral and mathematics skills skilfully when solving a puzzle of placing milk bottles in order and counting them. Most interact with each other happily and naturally in the dedicated areas. They benefit from the use of effective resources that are available to develop their skills and play in different contexts, for example when learning in the construction area.

At the top of the school, most pupils listen attentively and respond appropriately to activities in the classroom and in outdoor sessions. They show an interest in their work and respond well to verbal support from staff. Many pupils show perseverance when completing tasks. They show sensitive and kind attitudes towards pupils who receive additional support.

Nearly all pupils consider and appreciate the feelings of their friends when learning and during circle time, for example by supporting their friends if they are sad. The oldest pupils shoulder additional responsibilities skilfully, which contributes firmly to promoting their confidence successfully. The oldest pupils support the youngest pupils purposefully in their learning and play in a supportive manner.

All the oldest pupils are given an opportunity to be members of the school's councils. Through these suitable opportunities, appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to express opinions about aspects of school life informally with the staff.

Nearly all pupils enjoy taking part in physical activities during their lessons and in extra-curricular sessions, including the football club and the gardening club. They are aware that maintaining a healthy body is important to maintaining their well-being. Taking part in activities such as children's mental health day and a 'Don't touch, tell' workshop promotes this culture successfully. They explain the benefits of eating healthy foods effectively and why they should not eat too much fat and sugar.

Many pupils have an awareness of the importance of equality and respecting others. They have an understanding of their rights, which includes an awareness of the right to be safe. Most understand how to keep themselves safe online, for example through their work with the police and a visit to the DangerPoint centre. The oldest pupils discuss their own rights and those of others meaningfully, for example when learning about women's rights.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school provides purposeful learning experiences for pupils. The curriculum is beginning to provide broad and rich learning experiences that develop pupils' interests and skills effectively. The headteacher and staff have worked diligently with pupils, parents and governors to formulate a vision and plan a curriculum that is based on the local community and the wider world. For example, pupils' knowledge and understanding are developed consistently in interesting activities, such as learning about the history of Thomas Telford and the significance of the A5 road to the people in the area throughout the centuries. The ethos of Welshness is a very prominent feature that is woven through all of the school's life and work.

Staff work together diligently to embed the curriculum effectively through '*Tyfu a ffynnu*' ('Grow and thrive') sessions to plan possible activities and map provision over time. The curriculum enables pupils to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in relevant activities to support their learning in the areas of the curriculum, for example oral, reading and digital. Across the school, pupils are given opportunities to develop their mathematics skills appropriately. However, teachers do not provide enough purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their numeracy and writing skills fully across the areas.

The youngest pupils benefit from purposeful opportunities to experiment with mark making independently. By Year 2, pupils are given regular opportunities to write in a suitable range of genres. At times, teachers provide worksheets for pupils to complete their work, which limits the quality and standard of their writing skills. At the top of the school, teachers plan occasional opportunities for pupils to write creatively. However, these opportunities do not support pupils to write in a variety of genres regularly enough. At times, teachers do not always provide literacy and numeracy activities that challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.

Teachers and assistants have a productive working relationship with pupils. They encourage respect and courtesy, which contributes well to realising the school's vision and ethos. Staff model the Welsh language in a polished manner, which has a robust effect on pupils' oral skills. Assistants support the pupils' learning and play highly successfully and support individuals and specific groups of learners skilfully.

Staff use information about pupils' progress at the beginning of the year well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Teachers and assistants assess the progress and development of individuals, including groups of pupils, skilfully. As a result, many pupils make sound progress from their starting points.

Teachers are beginning to introduce principles and stimulating experiences for pupils. They share and explain the aims of activities well and are beginning to include pupils in the process of producing success criteria. Oral feedback from staff allows pupils to know how well they are achieving and the support they need with specific tasks. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work and to identify and act on what and how to move their learning forwards.

Staff invite various visitors to the school to enrich and develop pupils' understanding of specific areas of learning. For example, they organise workshops with Welsh artists and drama activities with Manon Prysor to develop pupils' creative skills. Staff take advantage of the expertise of local people to stimulate learning well, which includes working closely with the community to plan, build, create and maintain the school's excellent garden.

Pupils' annual reports for parents report clearly on pupils' progress and achievements, in addition to their attitudes to learning.

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

The school is an inclusive and happy community that supports the emotional, health and social needs of all pupils highly effectively. Staff place a strong emphasis on promoting positive behaviour and nurturing pupils' respect for each other well. This is evident in the excellent behaviour and natural courtesy of nearly all pupils.

The headteacher and all staff have a thorough knowledge of each child. They track the progress of all pupils, including those with ALN, effectively. Useful procedures have been established with each class to track progress against suitable assessments and observations. This supports staff to ensure that many pupils make consistent progress in line with their individual starting points and learning targets.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) and the assistants that are responsible for support programmes are experienced and enthusiastic about their responsibilities. They have established purposeful procedures that ensure a good knowledge of all pupils on the ALN register and those who are a cause for concern. For example, they identify and support pupils with speech needs from an early age. The school has taken robust steps in co-operation with the local authority to implement the new ALN act. Staff have productive contact with a wide range of external agencies to support ALN provision. These include educational psychologists and members of the authority's speech and language team, who are a key part of providing suitable support for specific pupils.

Staff provide effective sessions to meet pupils' well-being needs. Provision for promoting health and fitness is popular among pupils and has a consistent effect on their well-being and educational development, for example as pupils produce posters promoting the five steps to well-being that support them to stay healthy. The emphasis on taking care of physical, mental and emotional well-being is a priority in lessons. Many pupils discuss these aspects confidently, which includes sharing their feelings and worries with others.

The school's culture promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively and supports them to show empathy towards others. For example, they hold a harvest thanksgiving service with the community to celebrate the natural environment and emphasise how to care for the world. Purposeful collective worship sessions are provided, along with an opportunity for pupils to reflect on values and care for each other. Occasional opportunities for pupils to develop strong values and explore beliefs are beneficial, for example when learning about the five pillars of Islam and composing various prayers.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of their Welsh identity, heritage and culture highly effectively. For example, staff enrich pupils' learning through learning experiences about significant locations in the local area, such as Pontcysyllte. Through this, pupils understand the significance and importance of their local area by comparing it to the wider world. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to take part in performances and events to nurture their self-confidence and expressive ability. These include taking part in shows and concerts in the community and in the Urdd's local, regional and national eisteddfodau. The close link with the community is a strong element of the school's work.

The school has robust procedures for monitoring pupils' punctuality and attendance. It promotes the importance of good attendance and works closely with families and the welfare officer, when necessary. As a result, the school's attendance rate is exceptionally high. The headteacher and all staff understand their responsibilities in terms of safeguarding pupils and the culture of safeguarding pupils is consistent. The arrangements meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and all staff have a clear vision based on a caring and supportive ethos where many pupils make progress and are valued members of society. They realise the school's motto, '*Tyfu a ffynnu gyda'n gilydd*' ('Grow and thrive together'),



and foster values that motivate pupils to be confident, ambitious learners who take pride in their community and culture.

The headteacher sets high expectations for himself, the staff and pupils. This contributes firmly towards developing an effective and supportive team of teachers and assistants and to promoting staff's well-being. They embrace professional values and conduct, which contributes firmly to improving the school and ensuring that effective co-operation is a key part of the school's arrangements. They ensure that everyone understands and promotes the school's culture of safeguarding.

The leadership procedures that have been established across the school are beginning to have an effect on pupils' skills and well-being, in addition to provision in the classroom. Leaders plan purposefully to meet local and national priorities, for example in introducing the principles of the Curriculum for Wales and implementing key elements of the Additional Learning Needs Act effectively. Staff promote the Welsh language and Welshness highly successfully, which contributes firmly to developing pupils' pride in their identity and heritage.

The school's priorities for improvement are based on a good range of first-hand evidence and staff's understanding of them is sound. Effective procedures have been introduced recently to review progress, identify areas for improvement and take steps to implement them. These include an analysis of progress in pupils' outcomes and beneficial opportunities to scrutinise work and observe learning sessions. As a result, leaders and staff know their school well and address many of the improvements purposefully.

Activities are held to organise and act on agreed priorities for improvement effectively. Teachers are responsible for specific areas of learning and experience. Assistants are key members of the school team and contribute directly to improving pupils' standards of learning, well-being and social skills.

Members of the governing body receive and consider robust information about the performance and effect of the school's improvement procedures and about pupils' progress and well-being. They share responsibilities for aspects of the school's work conscientiously. However, there are few opportunities for members of the governing body to play an active part in the self-evaluation process. Overall, they challenge the school on suitable issues, including the sensible use of funding and staffing. This enables them to contribute appropriately to producing clear procedures and strategies for improvement. They work with leaders and pupils to ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

Expenditure is linked purposefully to the school's objectives and improvement plans. The headteacher and governors use the school's budget effectively to enrich the curriculum and raise pupils' standards. They link expenditure appropriately with the priorities in the development plan and monitor funding closely to ensure its best use. Leaders make sensible and relevant use of the pupil development grant.

There are valuable opportunities for staff at all levels to develop professionally. These include opportunities to receive purposeful training on the developments of the Curriculum for Wales and pedagogic principles, for example. Performance management procedures promote staff's professional learning appropriately and are

beginning to have a positive effect on standards and provision. The school has an active relationship with Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy and the schools in the cluster, which includes opportunities to produce strategic plans to share good practice in introducing the principles of the Curriculum for Wales.

The relationship between the school and parents is robust. The school communicates effectively with them to ensure that they are aware of events from day-to-day. Parents are very proud that their children attend such a supportive school which is completely central to the rural community of Pentrefoelas.

## 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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

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