



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

A report on

Ysgol Hiraddug

**Thomas Avenue
Dyserth
Rhyl
Denbighshire
LL18 6AN**

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 Hiraddug

Name of provider	Ysgol Hiraddug
Local authority	Denbighshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	215
Pupils of statutory school age	189
Number in nursery classes	26
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 23.7%)	18.5%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 13.2%)	20.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.5%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.6%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	14/09/2015
Start date of inspection	27/11/2023

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

The school provides a warm, nurturing environment that enables all pupils to feel secure and confident. Pupils and parents value the strong relationships they have with staff and feel that their views are listened to and respected. As a result, nearly all pupils enjoy their time in school and feel a strong sense of belonging to their school community. Staff set clear expectations for pupils conduct and model these consistently. Because of this, pupils' behaviour across the school is exemplary.

Teachers provide an exciting variety of learning experiences that capture the interest of most pupils well. They make effective use of well-resourced environments in class and outdoors to engage pupils in worthwhile practical activities that reinforce and extend their learning beneficially. In the best instances, they plan learning experiences that develop pupils' problem-solving skills and foster their independence effectively. For example, they enable older pupils to develop their entrepreneurial skills through a mini-enterprise challenge very successfully. In a few instances, staff intervene too readily in pupils' learning and this restricts their opportunity to make decisions for themselves. Overall, teachers plan appropriately for the development of pupils' numeracy, digital and Welsh language skills. However, they do not provide enough opportunity for pupils to write at length for a variety of purposes in their work across the curriculum.

Leaders promote the care and well-being of all pupils and staff consistently well. They create a climate that supports strong teamwork and fosters collective responsibility effectively. Leaders show a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use the school's resources to support improvement purposefully, including through providing suitable professional learning for staff. However, leaders do not always make clear what specific approach teachers should use in their classes to bring about intended improvements. As a result, progress on some priorities is uneven across the school.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that leaders provide clear direction to teachers to implement improvements consistently
- R2 Ensure that teaching supports all pupils to develop independence and to take responsibility for advancing their own learning
- R3 Improve the quality of pupils' extended writing
- R4 Provide suitable opportunities for all pupils to participate in collective worship

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, make good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding during their time at the school. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make sound progress from their individual starting points.

Most younger pupils are confident speakers. They engage readily with their peers and with adults, for instance to ask questions and to express their thoughts when testing how well boats they have made from recycled packaging float. Nearly all younger pupils listen attentively to a shared story and join in enthusiastically at familiar points. As they move through the school, most pupils extend their vocabulary well. They use language thoughtfully, for instance to discuss emotive topics with their peers in class. Most older pupils enjoy presenting their ideas and speak with self-assurance to an audience.

Most younger pupils develop their early reading skills effectively. They show good recall of initial sounds, for instance when applying their phonic knowledge during practical activities. They recognise rhyming patterns and begin to blend sounds successfully. By Year 2, most pupils read suitably challenging texts with appropriate fluency and accuracy. They sound out unfamiliar words and use illustrations to aid their understanding. Most older pupils build on these skills successfully and use their reading to support their learning across the curriculum effectively. By Year 6, most pupils use skills such as skimming and scanning to locate relevant information efficiently. They show a good understanding of what they read and reference texts to justify their opinions. For example, they select relevant evidence from their class novel to evaluate whether a sergeant was negligent towards the troops under his command.

Most younger pupils show interest and enjoyment in writing. They move from mark making to writing words and short sentences with increasingly regular letter formation. Most begin to use finger spaces and simple punctuation appropriately. By Year 2, many pupils write short descriptions, for instance of characters in their class story. As pupils move through the school, the development of their writing skills is inconsistent. Most use suitable features to write for a variety of purposes, such as to create diary entries and letters linked to their topic work in class. In the best instances, pupils employ precise vocabulary imaginatively to produce lively descriptions and informative reports. However, many older pupils do not plan, draft and extend their writing systematically or apply their writing skills to their work across the curriculum often enough.

Many pupils make suitable progress in using and understanding Welsh. Most younger pupils ask and respond to questions with growing confidence. For example, to greet others and to ask how they are feeling. Many pupils enjoy using Welsh when taking part in activities during 'Helpwr Heddiw' sessions, such as singing Welsh songs and responding to stories. However, as pupils move through the school, they do not build on their previous learning well enough to extend their use of spoken Welsh effectively.

Across the school, most pupils develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts. Most younger pupils use everyday objects to count numbers up to 20 and apply their learning successfully in worthwhile, practical contexts. For example, they develop their measuring skills by using blocks to measure their peers' height. By Year 2, most pupils use standard measurements correctly and record written calculations appropriately. Most older pupils recall their prior learning well and show a sound understanding of a good range of mathematical language. They use their skills purposefully in lessons, such as to construct acute and obtuse angles carefully and to calculate the area and perimeter of shapes accurately. Most older pupils apply their skills to solve mathematical problems linked to their topic work confidently. For example, they compare the cost of organic foods using a range of supermarket websites and calculate the distance fruit travels when transported from different countries.

Most pupils develop good digital skills which they use across the curriculum effectively. Many of the youngest pupils use tablet devices to support their learning successfully. For example, they take a 'selfie' independently and make creative use of a painting app to draw themselves as different animals. By Year 4, most pupils use their digital skills confidently to present information for an audience. For example, they create a film to show the importance of good dental hygiene using clay models of teeth they have made in class. However, older pupils' ability to use spreadsheets and databases is less well developed.

Most pupils develop effective thinking skills. They use purposeful strategies to accomplish tasks successfully. For example, most pupils in Year 6 apply their knowledge and understanding of volume and ratio competently to make scaled trenches in the outdoor learning area. Many pupils make beneficial use of the outdoors to develop their creative skills. For example, pupils in the Early Years classes enjoy making nature rubbings when investigating patterns in the school grounds and pupils in Year 3 construct a replica of a Celtic roundhouse confidently, using a range of natural materials skilfully.

Most pupils develop their physical skills appropriately. Most younger pupils demonstrate good dexterity, for instance when cutting out leaf patterns and lacing beads successfully. They take appropriate risks, such as when making obstacle courses or investigating what makes an effective slide. By Year 4, most pupils use their bodies creatively to make shapes and animal movements as part of their work on deforestation. Many pupils enjoy developing their skills through their participation in sporting clubs and competitions.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Many pupils arrive at school keen and eager to learn. They settle to tasks quickly and manage distractions well. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes towards their school and are happy in classes and with their friends. They appreciate the clear rules the school has and understand that these keep them safe and ensure equity for all. Nearly all pupils feel that they are treated fairly by staff and know who to turn to for help or support.

Nearly all pupils display very good behaviour in classes and around the school. They develop strong working relationships with staff and co-operate very well with their peers. For example, pupils often share ideas and help each other when working on tasks together. Pupils provide useful support to their peers in class through their role as 'learning buddies', for instance by sharing their skill with numbers or spelling. This helps pupils to persevere in their learning and to overcome challenges without relying on the support of staff.

Across the school, nearly all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do their best. For example, they respond constructively when teachers provide opportunities for them to improve their work. Many pupils readily share their ideas about what they would like to learn. For example, they are eager to research the impact deforestation has on the habitats of indigenous animals. Overall, nearly all pupils are developing important skills to become life-long learners. They show resilience when facing difficulties and demonstrate creativity when they have the opportunity to work independently.

Most pupils sustain their focus well. They generally switch between tasks quickly and efficiently. However, in a few instances, pupils become distracted and begin to disturb others when their teachers are slow to start new activities.

Nearly all pupils have worthwhile opportunities to take on leadership roles and to contribute to developing the school. Through their democratically elected groups, pupils help the school's leaders to enhance the curriculum. For example, by actively promoting the use of the Welsh language and by supporting the canteen to reduce waste. Representatives of the pupil groups lead sensible discussions with their peers in class to consider ways they can improve well-being across the school. For example, they reflect maturely on the importance of meeting the care needs of animals when weighing up the benefits of having a class pet.

The oldest pupils develop their understanding of entrepreneurship through purposeful mini-enterprise projects, such as setting up and running a healthy 'shake-shack'. They collaborate to research, plan and organise their business, using a start-up loan to put their plans into action. Through this process, they learn about budgeting, marketing and sales and develop their ability to make real-life decisions that impact on the success of their venture. As a result, pupils develop a broad range of skills and gain vital experience of the world of work.

Many pupils enjoy attending the wide range of extra-curricular activities staff provide for them. They use these opportunities to develop their physical skills and to strengthen their understanding of the Welsh language by participating in the Urdd club. Pupils describe how these opportunities help them to build skills relevant to

their interests, increase their enjoyment of school and enhance their personal well-being.

Most pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and on time. As a result, they are settled in school and ready to start learning at the beginning of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences

Leaders and staff have developed a curriculum that supports the school's aspiration 'to grow and learn together' effectively. Teachers work collaboratively in year groups and phases to plan and deliver a stimulating variety of learning experiences. They take good account of pupils' ideas, for instance through useful pupil board meetings to discuss which themes to investigate in class. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that all pupils, including those from low-income households and those with profound learning needs, benefit from a rich variety of opportunities that match their interest and ability well. As a result, most pupils are motivated to learn and apply themselves enthusiastically to their work in and out of class.

Overall, teachers plan for the development of pupils' skills effectively. In foundation learning sessions, teachers make purposeful use of practical activities that reinforce pupils' knowledge and extend their understanding beneficially. In the best instances, these opportunities support pupils to develop their numeracy and communication skills holistically and with independence. For example, younger pupils apply their understanding of addition successfully through role play when they buy and sell a selection of ice creams with flavoured toppings that vary in price. Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to build on these skills as they move through the school. In particular, they ensure that nearly all pupils have suitable opportunities to apply their mathematical skills progressively in their work across the curriculum. Teachers' planning to develop pupils' writing skills is less effective. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunity for older pupils in particular, to write at length or for a broad enough variety of purposes.

Teachers provide valuable opportunities for older pupils to develop their problem-solving skills, for instance by creating small-scale businesses with the aim of generating a profit. These experiences enhance pupils' understanding of the world of work beneficially and help them to develop entrepreneurial skills successfully.

Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and culture of Wales. They plan appropriate educational visits to local places of interest that deepen pupils' understanding, such as visiting Dyserth War Memorial to lay poppies that pupils have made. Teachers make good use of the neighbouring environment to enhance pupils' knowledge of the natural world, such as by visiting a nearby waterfall to conduct fieldwork about rivers.

Across the school there are warm, supportive relationships between staff and pupils. Staff know their pupils well and create a positive environment for learning where they feel respected and valued. Staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and support them to meet these consistently. This helps to ensure that pupils are ready to learn and make good use of their time in school. Where teaching is most effective, teachers strike a skilful balance between adult-led activities and opportunities for

pupils to work independently. However, in a few instances, teachers over-direct pupils' learning and this limits pupils' ability to take responsibility for their own progress and to make choices about how to carry out their work.

Many staff model the Welsh language well. Teachers use regular 'Helpwr Heddiw' sessions to engage pupils and to promote the language suitably. However, provision for the development of pupils' spoken Welsh does not build on pupils' skills consistently well as they move through the school.

Most teachers provide helpful guidance to pupils on what they need to do to be successful with their work. They set clear objectives in lessons and move pupils' learning forward at an appropriate pace. Teachers across the school make effective use of questioning to recall pupils' previous learning and to guide their activity purposefully. Where teaching is particularly effective, staff enable pupils to determine their own success criteria and to reflect on their own and others' progress thoughtfully. Most teachers provide useful feedback to pupils during lessons. However, they do not give pupils enough opportunity to respond to feedback to improve their work fully.

Leaders and teachers have a good understanding of the development of pupils' skills. They use a valuable range of information to assess their progress and to plan for the next steps in pupils' learning. Teachers provide useful reports to parents that give detailed information about their child's progress and attitudes to learning.

Care, support and guidance

The support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is a strength of the school. The ALN co-ordinator (ALNCo) oversees robust systems for the identification and support of pupils with ALN and for those who require emotional support. The ALNCo works effectively with leaders and staff across the school to ensure that pupils with ALN make appropriate progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Nearly all parents value the support their children receive. They appreciate the strong partnership the school develops with them and with support services, such as educational psychologists and speech and language specialists.

Staff across the school share a positive and consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. This benefits pupils who feel they are treated fairly and are at ease in the calm and relaxed atmosphere that permeates the school. As a result, nearly all pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school.

The school places a strong emphasis on inclusion and welcomes all cultures and nationalities. For example, as a result of twinning with a primary school in Poland, pupils learn about each other's culture and help their peers in Warsaw to develop their English language skills. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of faith and spirituality by exploring a range of beliefs, such as by learning about Diwali and Eid. These opportunities contribute positively to pupils' understanding of diversity and help pupils to question stereotypical assumptions about difference. Across the school, however, provision for collective worship is less well developed.

Staff provide a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities for pupils. These help pupils develop their physical skills and enhance their linguistic and cultural

understanding. Many pupils benefit from attending a rolling programme of clubs such as basketball, Urdd and cheerleading. The school welcomes a range of visitors to enrich the curriculum. For example, a bilingual rap artist works with older pupils to create a rap about the school and a variety of live music performances help inspire pupils to learn to play musical instruments. Teachers make good use of visits in the locality to widen pupils' experience. For example, pupils study the geography of the area from a birds-eye view at the top of a mountain adjacent to the school. Older pupils benefit from residential visits that contribute to improving their understanding of Eryri and develop their confidence through participation in outdoor pursuits.

Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to perform with other schools at a large arena event. As a result, pupils learn from professional singers and dancers during their rehearsals and have opportunities to perform with them. This opportunity raises pupils' aspiration for their own performance and helps them to increase their ambition and confidence. The school also provides valuable frequent opportunities for pupils to participate in local sporting competitions and to represent the school in local matches and tournaments.

The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to demonstrate leadership. For example, pupils have recently introduced their own reward system to encourage healthy eating after learning about the importance of diet for their health. Teachers enable pupils in Year 6 develop their entrepreneurialism by setting up and running a small business. They support pupils to manage this process independently, from agreeing the terms and conditions of a start-up loan to marketing and selling a product. As a result, pupils successfully produce their own unique hoodies and sell them through an online shopping platform to customers in other countries.

The school has a robust approach to safeguarding. All staff understand the clear policies and procedures the school has established. Staff make beneficial use of the school's curriculum to ensure that pupils begin to understand how they can keep themselves safe in their daily activity and online. Leaders monitor rates of pupils' attendance appropriately. They communicate clear expectations to parents and provide appropriate support when needed, for instance to improve the punctuality of a very few pupils. Parents value the work of the school and feel their children are safe and cared for by the staff at the school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher gives clear focus to the work of the school. He provides compassionate leadership and shows unwavering commitment to securing the well-being of all pupils and staff. He demonstrates high expectations through his own conduct and ensures that the school's strategic direction aligns consistently with the inclusive values the school promotes. As a result, staff at all levels share a strong commitment to the school's caring ethos.

Leaders have developed an engaged team of staff. Teachers and teaching assistants understand their responsibilities well and collaborate purposefully to bring about worthwhile improvements. For instance, they share expertise to enhance the classroom environments and to develop the school's outdoor provision successfully. This impacts positively on pupils' engagement with their learning and on their enjoyment and motivation.

Leaders review the school's performance purposefully. They provide suitable opportunities for staff to consider first-hand evidence, such as pupils' work, to evaluate the progress pupils make. This ensures that staff develop a shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. For example, staff have worked together to identify inconsistencies in the teaching of writing and the use of feedback.

Leaders ensure that self-evaluation is a continuous process. They work with partners from the regional school improvement service to adapt plans in light of changes to the school's staffing structure. Leaders and governors take good account of national priorities. For instance, the school's ALNCo works effectively with staff and governors to develop their knowledge of changes arising from recent national reforms.

Leaders set firm goals for improvement. They focus on a workable number of priorities and monitor progress appropriately. However, leaders do not always provide precise direction to teachers about the specific changes that are needed to achieve improvement. For instance, leaders have not established a clear, shared understanding of the approach all staff should use to improve the quality of pupils' writing. As a result, actions are not always implemented consistently and progress on a few whole school priorities is too variable.

The school builds positive relationships with parents. Leaders provide beneficial opportunities to involve parents in their child's learning. For example, teachers share pupils' learning through a digital app and invite parents into school to look through their work together.

Governors provide valuable support for the work of the school. They consider information about school performance thoroughly and show an accurate understanding of what the school does well. Governors have recently distributed responsibilities to oversee specific areas of the school's improvement activity. This helps them to monitor progress more closely and to provide informed challenge to the school's leaders. For instance, the link ALN governor has worked with the ALNCo to review the progress of pupils with special needs.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances diligently. For instance, they evaluate the impact of intervention support provided through the use of the school's pupil development grant rigorously. Leaders use funding equitably to ensure that pupils across the range of socio-economic backgrounds access the full variety of learning experiences the school provides. Leaders and governors have established a robust safeguarding culture. They ensure that the safety and well-being of all pupils is addressed thoroughly through the school's curriculum. Governors ensure that the school's provision for healthy eating and drinking meets requirements.

Leaders manage the performance of staff effectively. They set relevant objectives and meet with staff to monitor progress and to provide appropriate support when needed. They strike a suitable balance between holding teachers to account robustly and enabling their well-being.

The school provides a range of worthwhile professional learning for all staff. Staff meet together regularly in teams to reflect on, and evaluate, their practice. They have good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding through specialist

training to enhance specific aspects of the school's provision. For instance, staff participate in focused training to develop their Welsh language skills. The school makes beneficial use of its strong partnerships with the local cluster of schools to share effective practice and to review aspects of the school's work objectively.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

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

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

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

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

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

Copies of the report

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

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

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

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