



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

A report on

Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr

**Bethel Road
Lower Cwmtwrch
Swansea
SA9 2PT**

Date of inspection: December 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr

Name of provider	Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr
Local authority	Powys County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	407
Pupils of statutory school age	281
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	65
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 23.7%)</i>	15.7%
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 13.2%)</i>	13.8%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	40.3%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2012
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	11/12/2023

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 Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr is an inclusive, welcoming and friendly school that prides itself on ensuring the best possible well-being for all pupils. Pupils take pride in their school and the opportunities they are given through their learning experiences. They are very polite and respectful towards each other and visitors to the school and their behaviour is good. The school promotes a strong culture of safeguarding and, as a result, pupils feel safe at school.

Most pupils make good progress in their language, numeracy and digital skills from their starting points. They apply their skills confidently across the curriculum. However, pupils have a tendency to use English as a language for socialising and communicating with peers when discussing their work at school, including during lessons through the medium of Welsh.

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers plan stimulating and interesting learning experiences that reflect the local context effectively. Pupils contribute effectively to the process of planning the curriculum and their ideas and preferences are incorporated skilfully into themes and activities. Teachers establish a fond and supportive working relationship with pupils and the learning areas are full of buzz and energy. On the whole, they use a good range of effective teaching methods that engage pupils' interest and encourage them to work independently successfully. However, the pace of sessions is not always quick enough and feedback does not always ensure that pupils improve their work effectively enough.

The headteacher is an effective and firm leader. She has high expectations of herself and others and her vision is based on ensuring that all pupils are happy and safe. The headteacher is supported by a team of dedicated and hard-working staff who work together purposefully to meet pupils' needs. Governors support the school with commendable care and passion and have a good understanding of their duties and responsibilities. They provide leaders and staff with robust support and ensure that the school uses its resources appropriately.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' use of spoken Welsh
- R2 Share the best teaching practices to ensure that learning sessions have a suitable pace and extend opportunities for pupils to improve their work

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' communication and social skills are lower than expected for their age and stage of development. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are affected by poverty, make good progress in their skills compared to their starting points.

Most pupils develop their speaking skills appropriately. They talk to their peers and adults by using suitable language and tone of voice and use relevant subject vocabulary confidently. For example, Year 6 pupils use terms such as 'stalactites' and 'stalagmites' purposefully to describe the features of nearby caves. At times, a majority of pupils speak Welsh confidently with adults and use language patterns that are within their experience correctly. However, when socialising and discussing their work with their peers, they do not use the Welsh language regularly enough. They tend to turn to English, even when responding to questions and instructions in Welsh, even though they have a good understanding of that they have heard, on the whole. This hinders the progress of their spoken Welsh skills.

Most pupils' reading skills develop well in Welsh and English. Year 2 pupils develop their confidence and read with increasing fluency. They begin to use expression and intonation to convey meaning purposefully. By Year 4, pupils explain the content of stories skilfully and use phonological knowledge to read less familiar words confidently. The oldest pupils express their opinions about a range of texts successfully and begin to show a preference for specific authors.

Most pupils make sound progress with their writing skills. The youngest pupils develop basic writing skills when forming shapes and marks in sugar. They build on these skills by Year 2 when using imaginative adjectives to describe their dragons. Pupils at the Glas y Gors unit build a series of sentences punctuated correctly to tell the story of their residential visit to Cardiff. Older pupils use a range of effective methods to create an atmosphere of fear and unease when describing children's experiences during the 'Blitz' during the Second World War. Pupils apply their writing skills skilfully across the curriculum.

Most pupils develop their mathematics skills successfully. The youngest pupils recognise numbers up to 10 and count objects skilfully. They build successfully on this knowledge and, by Year 3, they subtract numbers purposefully by using a range of suitable methods. By the top of the school, they develop increasing fluency when dealing with number, for example when adding mixed numbers. They apply their

skills purposefully across the curriculum. For example, Year 2 pupils measure the length and width of letters in the post office and sort them by size ready to be sent.

Most pupils' digital skills develop appropriately. They apply their skills purposefully across the curriculum. The youngest pupils acquire early coding skills when programming a rover to visit a range of owls. By the top of the school, they build further on their coding skills by recreating the sailing route of the Titanic on the screen by using a purposeful package.

Most pupils' physical skills develop well. The youngest pupils develop their fine motor skills purposefully while shaping dough carefully to emulate forest creatures. Year 3 pupils perform a sequence of movements confidently to demonstrate balance, body tension and appropriate timing. The oldest pupils develop their football skills enthusiastically. Most work together effectively as members of a team and respect the rules of activities.

Most pupils' creative skills develop highly successfully. This is a strong feature of the school. The youngest pupils use a purposeful package to create interesting interpretations of the owl in its habitat. They develop their skills and ability to express their ideas across an increasing range of media and methods as they move through the school. For example, Year 4 and 5 pupils produce work of a high standard when emulating the work of an artist about the planets.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Almost without exception, pupils are friendly and respectful and extremely caring towards their peers. They talk proudly about the school and take pride in the productive relationships they have with staff. As a result, most pupils feel safe at school and know whom to approach if they have any concerns. They are caring towards each other and sensitive to the needs of their peers. Most behave consistently well in lessons, during assemblies and while moving around the school.

Most pupils show a sound awareness of how to support their own well-being. For example, pupils identify how they feel when they arrive at the class in the morning and staff respond promptly to any concerns or needs. Many pupils make good use of the well-being corners in the classes when they need time to relax or reflect on their feelings. A few of the school's vulnerable pupils attend the valuable 'Yr Hafan' provision. Elected well-being officers from each class support their peers effectively, for example by offering friendship and someone with whom to socialise during playtimes.

Most pupils, including those at the Glas y Gors centre, have positive attitudes towards their work and learning experiences. On the whole, they listen maturely to the contributions of their peers and respect their views and perspectives. Older pupils model these behaviours effectively for the younger pupils. Nearly all pupils engage positively with new experiences and many persevere admirably when they face challenges. For example, Year 4 pupils support each other and stay on task when solving challenging problems relating to perimeter and area. Most pupils develop to become ethical and knowledgeable citizens. For example, they develop empathy and a mature understanding of challenges that others have overcome when studying the history of Betty Campbell.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. Many buy healthy snacks from the fruit shop every day. Pupils at the top of the school show a sound awareness of the effect of exercise on their physical and mental health. They participate energetically in physical exercise sessions on a regular basis. Many pupils also develop their physical skills by attending a wide range of extra-curricular clubs at the school, including rugby, football, netball and hockey. Nearly all know how to keep themselves safe online. For example, they choose suitable passwords and understand the importance of seeking an adult's permission before using less familiar websites and apps.

Most pupils enjoy undertaking roles and responsibilities within the school. They take pride in the fact that all pupils are given an opportunity to take part. They fulfil their duties conscientiously and value the opportunities they are given to promote the health and well-being of others, for example by organising fundraising activities for local and national charities. The school council promotes community activities purposefully through the '*Calendr Caredigrwdd*' ('Kindness Calendar'), such as the school choir singing in the local home for the elderly and organising afternoon tea for residents in the area. The Criw Cymraeg is beginning to promote the Welsh language purposefully, for example by rewarding pupils who strive to develop their use of the Welsh language.

Most pupils value regular opportunities to voice their opinions about what and how they learn. They contribute ideas to new themes purposefully and identify inquiry questions on murals in the classrooms. The school's youngest pupils co-operate effectively when designing role play areas, for example when designing a post office in Year 2. The oldest pupils link their rights maturely with what they would like to learn. When they are given an opportunity to do so, many pupils respond positively to feedback from teachers and improve their work purposefully.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school offers a balanced and rich curriculum and provides learning experiences that engage pupils' interest successfully. Leaders and staff have worked with pupils, parents and governors to ensure provision that covers the Curriculum for Wales' areas of learning and experience purposefully and uses the local context effectively.

Staff, including those at the Glas y Gors centre, work together effectively to plan an exciting curriculum that builds on previous learning and promotes progression in pupils' skills. Prominence is given to ensuring that pupils' ideas contribute to the design of the themes in addition to learning experiences. As a result, most pupils participate enthusiastically and show a constant desire to learn. Provision supports pupils to use and apply their skills regularly and at an appropriate level across the curriculum. Staff take advantage of opportunities to develop pupils' spoken Welsh skills through purposeful activities in the classroom and the outdoor areas. However, a minority of pupils do not use their Welsh skills independently without encouragement from staff.

Teachers plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to read a range of interesting texts as part of the thematic work of the class, in addition to providing regular opportunities for them to write in a variety of genres. There are valuable opportunities for them to develop their numeracy and digital skills in a range of purposeful contexts. For

example, at the top of the school, pupils apply their skills successfully by producing a bar graph to represent the annual rainfall in the Ystradgynlais area.

The school deepens and enriches the curriculum by inviting interesting and inspiring visitors to the school. For example, pupils work with a famous poet to compose poems that communicate their interpretations of the historical role of slavery in the local wool industry. Educational visits are used purposefully to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of specific areas of learning. For example, they learn about the natural beauty and geographical features of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park.

Staff ensure that the classes and learning areas are stimulating places that enable pupils to research, experiment and learn in a homely and supportive environment. There is an extremely affectionate working relationship between staff and pupils. Across the school, many teachers provide clear guidance during learning activities and pupils work at a purposeful pace. They motivate pupils successfully and, as a result, many pupils concentrate for extended periods and work independently from an early age. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils in terms of behaviour and encourage them to show respect and courtesy. They use a good range of questioning techniques purposefully to confirm understanding and promote pupils' problem-solving skills. Many staff provide useful feedback during learning sessions, which allows pupils to reflect on their work and improve it successfully. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of presentations and activities is too slow and there are few opportunities for pupils to improve their work purposefully.

Staff at the Glas y Gors centre tailor provision purposefully to the individual needs of each pupils and prepare stimulating activities for them. Staff place an emphasis on the '5 Principles of the Day', which include setting clear instructions and the purposeful use of technology. As a result, all pupils at the centre show sound progress from their starting points.

The school uses the site's extensive outdoor areas effectively to stimulate learning and promote pupils' skills further. For example, Year 4 pupils use the shelters in the wild area to identify with children from the time of the Blitz in Swansea during the Second World War. They move on to write interesting diaries that are full of striking feelings and emotions.

Annual reports for parents report appropriately on pupils' progress and the next steps in their learning. They include valuable ideas about how parents can support their child with their learning at home. The centre's staff present regular electronic reports that celebrate pupils' successes during the year in a visual and purposeful manner.

Care, support and guidance

The school has a happy, inclusive and very welcoming ethos. The strong emphasis on celebrating 'cynefin' or the local area and respecting others makes a valuable contribution towards developing polite, well-behaved pupils who are proud of their school and their community. Staff plan support carefully to meet pupils' emotional, personal and social needs. As a result, nearly all pupils treat their peers and staff with empathy and respect, with everyone treating each other with tender care. A strong feature of provision is the consideration given to pupils' mental health and

well-being by providing ample opportunities for them to discuss their emotions in various ways. For example, pupils who attend the nurture provision and the centre are part of a thematic presentation on the Second World War, which has a positive effect on their confidence and self-image.

The school has robust arrangements for supporting pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and most pupils who need support make good progress from their starting points. Staff have established comprehensive arrangements for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. This enables them to identify pupils' needs at an early stage and provide purposeful support programmes, where necessary. Each pupil has appropriate targets which are reviewed regularly with pupils, staff and parents. The school makes good use of external agencies, including regular support from educational psychologists, the speech and language team and autism specialists from the local authority. Assistants work knowledgeably and skilfully to support a number of pupils in the classrooms.

The school provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to assume responsibilities and foster important skills, such as working as a valuable member of a team. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their various activities within committees, such as the school council, the eco committee, the 'Criw Cymraeg' and the 'Digital Wizards'. They influence strategic decisions within the school and contribute to the well-being and happiness of the wider community. For example, the school council organises for food packages to be collected at the school and taken to the local food bank.

Staff promote Welsh culture and heritage purposefully. For example, pupils across the school take part in eisteddfodau and jamborees. Themes such as '*A Ffuo Chi Erioed yn Morio*' also celebrate the history and traditions of Wales successfully. The school makes good use of the local community to provide rich learning experiences, such as completing environmental studies in the local area and visiting Craig y Nos castle. As a result, pupils take pride in the area's traditions and their Welshness.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development successfully. Periods of collective worship provide valuable opportunities for pupils to consider other points of view in addition to giving them an opportunity to reflect on how they can help others who are less fortunate. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to learn about the beliefs of the world's religions by finding out more about their traditions and main celebrations. For example, when discussing the story of Anne Frank, they develop empathy with others who have faced challenges and difficult times.

The school provides a range of experiences that promote pupils' mental and physical health successfully. For example, pupils take part in swimming lessons, sports clubs and walks in the local area. A wide range of exciting opportunities are provided to develop pupils' creative skills. For example, they work with local artists and attend dance and harp lessons. The school places a strong emphasis on providing a rich and varied range of trips and visits to support the curriculum. For example, trips to a local youth centre stimulate pupils to learn about living independently and supporting each other. There are purposeful opportunities for pupils to perform and develop their imagination through the expressive, creative and physical arts. For example, pupils compete in eisteddfodau and national sports competitions, which develop their resilience and self-confidence effectively.

Visits by individuals such as the police officer raise pupils' awareness of dangers, such as internet misuse. The school has robust arrangements for monitoring pupils' attendance and it works closely with families when there is concern regarding a pupil's attendance. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding and all staff take part in purposeful training and regular staff discussions. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision based on ensuring the best possible well-being for all pupils within an inclusive, friendly and close-knit learning community. She has shared this vision successfully with pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. She has high expectations of herself and staff and aspires for all pupils to be safe, comfortable and enjoy their learning experiences. As a result, a strong sense of being part of one big, caring family permeates all aspects of school life. Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding successfully and keeping pupils safe is a clear focal point in the life of the school.

The headteacher is supported by senior managers and a team of dedicated and hard-working staff. They strive tirelessly to provide a comprehensive and rich curriculum that inspires most pupils purposefully. There are robust arrangements for managing staff performance and there is a logical link between the school's improvement priorities and staff's individual development targets. This is supported by a wide range of professional learning activities which build effectively on staff's knowledge and skills. For example, staff attend useful training to develop their ability to support pupils with emotional and behavioural needs in the classrooms and provision at the 'Hafan' and Glas y Gors centre.

Leaders ensure that the school has robust arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. They ensure that stakeholders, such as staff and pupils, gather a comprehensive range of first-hand evidence. They analyse evidence carefully and, as a result, have a suitable understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders produce detailed improvement plans which give purposeful attention to these areas and address national improvement priorities, for example to reduce the effects of poverty on pupils' standards, progress and well-being. Leaders ensure that progress against the school's priorities is monitored closely and adapt improvement plans intelligently and decisively, where necessary.

The governors are passionate advocates for the school. They are extremely supportive of all aspects of the school's work and take pride in their role. They undertake a good range of monitoring activities, for example by scrutinising work and evaluating the school's arrangements for implementing the new curriculum. As a result, they have a useful awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use this knowledge skilfully to challenge leaders about the impact of provision on pupils' progress and well-being. Governors and the headteacher use resources purposefully and shrewdly. They ensure that they spend grants, such as the pupil development grant, appropriately, for example by providing programmes that support the well-being and mental health needs of vulnerable pupils. Governors ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders build a wide range of highly productive partnerships with parents and the wider community. For example, they organise useful workshops that share important information with parents about the learning experiences their children receive, along with providing practical ideas about how to support their children with their homework. The school also organises evening Welsh lessons for parents who are developing their ability to understand and speak the language and to support their children's learning. The school has a strong relationship with the pre-school provision which is situated nearby. Leaders make early contact with staff at the provision and new parents to share comprehensive information about pupils' well-being and learning needs. This supports staff to implement arrangements and prepare to meet pupils' needs in a timely manner as they start at the school.

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

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website:

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

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