



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

A report on
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwyncelyn

**Heather Way
Llwyncelyn
Porth
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF39 9TL**

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 Gynradd Gymraeg Llwynceilyn

Name of provider	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwynceilyn
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	335
Pupils of statutory school age	243
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	43
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>	17.8%
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>	2.1%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	64.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2023
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 Gynradd Gymraeg Llwynceilyn is an inclusive, happy and caring community where nearly all pupils behave excellently. They form strong relationships with staff and with each other and treat all members of the school community with respect and courtesy. Pupils are very proud of their school and say that they feel safe, talk excitedly about their experiences and enjoy their time there. As a result, this leads to strong engagement in school life.

A notable aspect of the school's work is the enthusiastic co-operation between the headteacher, staff and governors to ensure that the Welsh language is at the heart of all of the school's work and community. As a result, nearly all pupils acquire sound Welsh language skills as they move through the school and use Welsh completely naturally around the school and during break times.

The school's mission statement, '*Acen. Atgofion. Cred*', permeates its ethos skilfully across all classes. The headteacher and staff encourage pupils to take pride in, and celebrate, their Welshness and they are immersed in a wide range of stimulating and creative learning experiences that broaden pupils' horizons to rich opportunities beyond their square mile. As a result, the skilful combination of these aspects lays a firm foundation for pupils to grow their wings by the end of their time at the school.

During their time at the school, most pupils make sound progress in developing their language, numeracy and digital skills and achieve well. Overall, they apply these skills successfully across a range of interesting contexts. However, opportunities for pupils to make independent choices about how to present their work are inconsistent.

One of the school's strongest qualities is the priority that is given to ensuring that pupils develop a sound understanding of their rights, the importance of equality and being moral citizens. As a result, the school has recently won a national heritage competition for its work to promote pupils' cultural development through a range of valuable experiences.

The headteacher provides strong and passionate leadership and is supported well by the deputy. Leaders evaluate the school's work to plan for improvements thoroughly by using robust self-evaluation processes. The governing body is supportive and knows the school well in terms of its strengths and areas for development.

Recommendations

- R1 Extend purposeful opportunities for pupils to make decisions about how to present their work with increasing independence

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to developing pupils' spoken Welsh skills and promoting pupils' multicultural and moral development across the school, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Learning

From their various starting points, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals, make sound progress in a wide range of skills. The development of their oral Welsh skills is very robust.

Across the school, most pupils listen well. The youngest pupils listen attentively to instructions from adults and enjoy listening to stories in joint sessions. By the top of the school, pupils' listening skills develop skilfully, for example as Year 6 pupils listen and consider each other's ideas when discussing the importance of 'Hanukkah' as a Jewish celebration.

Nearly all pupils' pride in the Welsh language is a notable element of the school's work. They speak Welsh confidently and completely naturally inside and outside the classrooms. Many pupils begin to recognise familiar words and repeat simple sentences, for example when asking and answering Father Christmas's questions. By Year 2, nearly all pupils' Welsh speaking skills develop skilfully. They use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary in context, for example as they talk confidently about the importance of brushing teeth regularly. By the end of their time at the school, nearly all pupils express their opinions in a lively and enthusiastic manner, for example when discussing the advantages and disadvantages of changing the length of school terms in Wales.

During their time at the school, most pupils' reading skills develop soundly. In the school's lower years, nearly all pupils recognise sounds and letters confidently. By Year 1, they read an increasing range of vocabulary correctly, for example when finding imperative words and pronouncing them correctly. As pupils move through the school, their reading skills in both languages develop consistently well. Year 4 pupils read a range of factual texts confidently when gathering information about famous people from the Tudor period and the sailor Sir Francis Drake. They use this information purposefully to create a diary entry to read to the rest of the class.

Nearly all pupils' writing skills develop highly effectively across the school. The youngest pupils develop their marking skills in a range of contexts, for example when ordering food in the role-play café. By Year 2, nearly all pupils form letters correctly and build simple sentences including familiar words, for example when writing a

healthy menu. As they move through the school, nearly all pupils build on their writing skills proficiently in both languages. By Year 4, they show a sound grasp of familiar spelling patterns and use an appropriate range of adjectives and similes to enrich their work successfully to write extended pieces. By Year 6, most pupils adapt their style and structure to different contexts effectively, for example when writing an imaginative story.

Across the school, most pupils' numeracy skills develop well. In the nursery and reception classes, pupils count confidently up to 10 and identify and match objects and numbers successfully. By Year 2, most pupils have a sound grasp of number facts and measurement and handle money correctly, for example when calculating how much money is needed to pay for goods in a shop. As they move through the school, most pupils make sound progress in their mathematical skills. By Year 6, they have a good understanding of the value of numbers to two decimal points and multiply and divide three-digit numbers confidently. They use mathematical equipment purposefully, for example by using a protractor to measure the size of missing angles up to 360 degrees. Across the school, most pupils apply their numeracy skills in various contexts, which link purposefully to their termly themes. For example, the school's oldest pupils use their measuring skills effectively when creating board games from recycled materials for wartime evacuees.

During their time at the school, most pupils' digital skills develop well. The youngest pupils use a digital art package confidently to create an imaginative picture of a soldier during the Crimean War. Year 1 pupils control a programmable toy fairly independently while travelling to different shops in the village of Llwynceilyn. By Year 3, most pupils' research a variety of websites carefully and use a graphics program effectively, for example to create a timeline when presenting interesting facts about extinct animals. The school's oldest pupils refine their digital skills successfully while creating animations, spreadsheets and presentations skilfully. For example, they produce a range of digital books for the school's youngest pupils, adding sound and voiceover skilfully, to encourage their enjoyment of reading. Most pupils apply their digital skills purposefully across the curriculum. For example, after learning about rationing during the Second World War, Year 6 pupils create statements effectively to investigate the effects of the rising cost of living on a budget. As a result, this deepens their understanding of the importance of careful money management.

Most pupils develop their creative and artistic skills highly successfully. For example, Year 2 pupils use a range of waste materials to create instruments to use when performing a rap to promote recycling. At the top of the school, pupils compose and perform a dramatic dance skilfully to convey the threat to Swansea during the Blitz.

Nearly all pupils' physical skills develop well. For example, the youngest pupils develop their gross motor skills effectively when using bicycles and tricycles and contribute to physical activities during break time. The oldest pupils develop their balancing and co-ordination skills effectively, for example by taking part in folk dancing lessons and acting in a variety of plays.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are happy and feel safe at school. Nearly all pupils' behaviour is excellent and they are kind to each other and greet visitors in a friendly manner.

Nearly all pupils are very proud of their school and are keen to speak confidently with staff and visitors about their unique experiences within its familial, homely and inclusive community. This is a consistent and notable feature of the school.

Nearly all pupils discuss their feelings confidently daily within their classes through purposeful worry boxes and explain sensibly that they have high levels of trust in staff and show a willingness to discuss any concerns with them. They are also confident that the staff will listen to them and consider their concerns. This contributes highly effectively to pupils' emotional well-being.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop their understanding of the importance of being moral and principled citizens highly effectively. For example, Year 2 pupils deepen their understanding of the lives of people across the world by gathering information about the food, clothes and homes of people on the continent of Africa. By the top of the school, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of cultural dances across the world, before performing them confidently in front of an audience.

Most pupils develop the ability and confidence to discuss their feelings and show empathy towards other who are in distress successfully. A particular example of this is the close relationship pupils have with a school in Uganda, as a result of which they have raised money and sent them a football kit. As a result, pupils are able to compare their own lives with those of pupils in Uganda intelligently and, in turn, this has a positive effect on their understanding of other people's needs.

Most pupils have a comprehensive understanding of the importance of being principled and knowledgeable citizens. They are keen to lead assemblies regularly to share messages about sustainability, for example by discussing the importance of recycling and the effect light pollution has on the natural world. Nearly all pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and know that they must not disclose their passwords to others.

Most pupils understand the importance of making choices that affect their health. As part of their theme work, Year 2 pupils compose a rap to promote fitness creatively and prepare a delicious fruit salad to encourage others to stay healthy. Across the school, most pupils enjoy taking part in a good range of physical activities, for example by taking part in exercise sessions and after-school clubs enthusiastically.

Most pupils are willing to share their ideas to have a positive influence on the life and work of the school. Members of the school Senedd show pride in their role and the effect of their work can be seen clearly throughout the school, for example by investing in purposeful benches on the playground for playtime. As a result, this along with the 'playground buddies', who are extremely caring towards the school's youngest pupils, has contributed successfully to creating an ethos of healthy joint play among pupils during break times.

Most pupils respond well to oral and written feedback. As pupils move through the school, they have a good understanding of the role they can play in evaluating their own learning or that of their peers. By the top of the school, they take pride in the challenge of tasks and value teachers' feedback in order to improve. As a result, they

know how to make improvements to their work and this supports them to make progress.

During their time at the school, most pupils develop the attitudes they need to be successful learners. They show interest and understand the importance of maintaining positive attitudes to their work and are motivated to learn. As a result, most pupils concentrate consistently well and show resilience when completing tasks. They work well with their peers to solve problems before seeking help from adults and use the 'Three Before Me' strategy successfully during sessions. By Year 6, most pupils' participation and enjoyment in learning are positive. For example, pupils are keen to be part of the school's successful choirs and folk dancing groups.

Teaching and learning experiences

All staff have a very close and warm working relationship with pupils. They treat all pupils with kindness and respect, which creates an inclusive and caring environment. All staff have high expectations of pupils and work together purposefully to foster strong attitudes of perseverance and resilience in all pupils.

Teachers work together highly effectively to plan a balanced and broad curriculum that develops all pupils' sound understanding of their local area, identity and Welsh culture. For example, as part of the '*Dewrder*' ('Bravery') theme, all staff plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of important events in Welsh history, including the effect of the flooding of the village of Capel Celyn to supply water to the residents of Liverpool. The curriculum provides rich opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in various interesting and stimulating experiences. This includes developing pupils' understanding of global current affairs, for example the reasons for wars and the impact they have on people's lives. Teachers' plans also place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures, beliefs and religions. As a result, nearly all pupils develop to become knowledgeable and intelligent citizens who treat others with empathy and respect.

Staff promote pupils' use of the Welsh language exceptionally well through a range of valuable experiences. For example, as part of their themes, pupils are given purposeful opportunities to role play by interviewing a number of national historical famous people and contemporary influential people. As a result, nearly all pupils' spoken Welsh skills and understanding of Welsh heritage develop very effectively. This is a strong feature of the school's life and work.

Staff plan a range of very memorable visits for pupils, which link purposefully with the termly themes. For example, as part of the theme on the 'Second World War', the school's older pupils visit important historical places, including Anne Frank's home in Amsterdam. These experiences are very effective and extremely valuable in deepening pupils' understanding of important elements of their work.

Across the school, the standard of teaching is consistently good. By using a range of effective teaching methods, teachers ensure that most pupils make sound progress in their learning. Nearly all teachers use skilled questioning techniques which are effective in building on pupils' previous learning and extending their understanding further. They share the aim of sessions regularly and include pupils purposefully in

the process of setting the success criteria for their learning. In turn, this leads to improvements in the standard of pupils' work. Nearly all teachers plan learning purposefully to ensure that the level of challenge for pupils is appropriate. However, tasks do not always provide opportunities for pupils to make increasingly independent decisions about how they want to present their work. Across the school, teaching assistants use their skills to contribute effectively to developing pupils' learning.

Teachers provide rich opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills in various real-life contexts. For example, Year 1 pupils write instructions for the school's youngest pupils on how to look after their teeth, while Year 4 pupils write a letter to friends in a nearby school which includes a number of interesting facts about their school and community. As a result, most pupils' ability to write for different purposes develops skilfully. There are also comprehensive plans in place to develop pupils' numeracy and digital skills. For example, Year 3 pupils apply their digital and numeracy skills confidently when using the internet to calculate the cost of ingredients in a local supermarket, before making and cooking a vegan pizza.

In nearly all classes, the standard of oral feedback given by teachers is good. It leads to pupils understanding how to improve their work there and then, for example in terms of where to include adjectives to enrich their work. The guidance provided by teachers in pupils' books is purposeful. For example, teachers highlight elements of pupils' work that are in need of attention and this is effective in showing pupils where they need to edit their work. Nearly all teachers give pupils beneficial opportunities to consider the quality of their own work and, at appropriate times, the work of other pupils.

Care, support and guidance

All staff contribute successfully to developing a happy, caring and safe ethos at the school. They foster harmonious values such as care, kindness, fairness and respect particularly well and this is highlighted in pupils' positive attitudes around the school. Staff set high expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour and, as a result, pupils treat each other, staff and visitors in an extremely polite and kind manner. There is a strong sense of Welshness and pride in the language which is at the heart of all of the school's work. The wonderful family atmosphere that is evident in the school means that pupils are keen to attend and this has a positive influence on the school's attendance rate.

Teaching staff have robust systems to identify and track pupils with specific learning needs. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) and assistants work together effectively and are passionate about their responsibilities and pupils' development. Individuals' needs are identified at an early stage and support programmes, including those to improve emotional well-being and develop literacy and numeracy skills, meet the personal needs and targets of pupils with ALN successfully. There is an open and honest relationship between the school and the home, which enables the school to provide a valuable opportunity for pupils to benefit from targeted support. These steps help to ensure that most pupils make sound progress towards their individual targets during their time at the school.

The school supports pupils' well-being and physical needs effectively through a range of interesting activities. During the week for promoting the well-being of pupils and staff, the school organises a range of interesting activities, such as circuit training, mindfulness sessions and clog dancing. Teaching assistants have robust arrangements to ensure that pupils with educational or emotional needs receive consistently good support to develop their skills successfully. This ensures that most pupils engage well with their learning and enjoy the school's life and work.

Through interesting themes and educational visits, staff develop pupils' understanding of Welsh identity, heritage and culture very skilfully. They plan valuable opportunities for pupils to visit Swansea, for example to learn about the history and influence of Italian immigrants on society in the Rhondda Valley. As a result, nearly all pupils have a strong sense of belonging to their community and Wales.

The school has effective provision for developing pupils' spiritual and moral understanding. Staff plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to lead purposeful discussions in assemblies about a variety of issues, such as the importance of recycling and sustainability in our world.

Staff increase pupils' awareness and understanding of issues relating to diversity and equality highly effectively; for example, by providing valuable opportunities for pupils to compose and perform a catchy rap telling the story and experience of influential black people, such as Betty Campbell. This helps pupils to understand the rights of others and promotes healthy attitudes towards celebrating diversity.

Across the school, pupils are given valuable opportunities to take part in a variety of rich sport and leisure experiences; for example, by running a range of after-school sports clubs and inviting the Commonwealth Games' Judoka champion to the school. These varied experiences foster pupils' self-confidence, raise their aspirations for the future and develop their expressive and creative skills in an excellent way.

Through the good range of pupil councils, the school takes advantage of regular and excellent opportunities to promote the learners' voice and develop them as active and responsible citizens. There are careful opportunities for pupils to assume responsibilities and have a firm influence on decisions in the school. For example, the school 'Senedd' works proactively and enthusiastically to wash, prepare and organise second-hand clothes to encourage parents and pupils to re-use school uniforms. Then, each class in turn takes responsibility for running the clothes recycling shop. This ensures that nearly all pupils develop intelligence about issues relating to equality and inclusion and develop values of respect and compassion towards others.

The school has robust systems for safeguarding pupils which meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. All staff have a good understanding of the processes that are in place. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' consistent attendance and punctuality are sound. Leaders contact parents promptly to discuss any concerns and use the local authority's attendance and welfare officer effectively, where necessary.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's passionate, inspiring and progressive leadership sets a clear strategic direction for developing the school. He has a sound vision based on '*Gwrandewch. Fe'm ganed yma*', to ensure that all pupils receive the best education in a homely, Welsh and inclusive environment. The headteacher has high expectations of himself and, with strong support from the deputy headteacher, shares the vision skilfully with the whole-school community.

Across the school, a culture of high expectations is evident and there is an ethos of close co-operation among all staff to improve and strengthen provision and learning. The headteacher ensures that staff's well-being is at the heart of his day-to-day work and they feel valued, encouraged and nurtured. Leaders encourage and support staff to investigate and experiment with their teaching methods in developing the Curriculum for Wales. They plan a range of rich extra-curricular experiences to broaden pupils' horizons from opportunities that are available outside their community highly skilfully. As a result, all staff work together highly effectively to provide stimulating, engaging and highly memorable learning experiences that meet the needs of nearly all pupils.

One of the strongest features of the school's life and work is the clear priority given by leaders and staff to developing all pupils' Welsh language skills and pride in Wales and their heritage. The school has experienced resounding and commendable success on national stages in the expressive and creative arts, for example by winning various singing, recitation and folk dancing competitions at the Eisteddfod. As a result, the headteacher and staff nurture ambitious, confident pupils who aspire to stand shoulder to shoulder with the best in the world.

The headteacher has established robust arrangements for monitoring and evaluating learning and provision. Leaders use a number of sources of evidence effectively to gain a clear picture of the school's performance. They prepare detailed monitoring reports that identify strengths and areas for improvement accurately. Leaders use information from the self-evaluation processes successfully to set clear priorities for improvement.

The governing body is knowledgeable and holds the headteacher and staff to account effectively. Members know the school and its community well and support the school passionately. The governing body has a sound understanding of the school's improvement priorities and national improvement priorities and makes a valuable contribution towards evaluating the school's work through a range of monitoring activities. It also ensures that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Leaders, including governors and staff, establish a strong culture of safeguarding in the school and ensure that the learning experiences they provide help pupils to develop a sound understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Leaders, including skilful support from members of the governing body, manage funding and monitor spending plans and their effect thoroughly. Expenditure is linked clearly to the improvement plans. The pupil development grant is used decisively to ensure that vulnerable pupils have equal access to valuable learning experiences and to improve pupils' numeracy and literacy skills appropriately.

The school's procedures for managing staff performance are thorough. All staff, including teaching assistants, are able to take advantage of relevant learning opportunities, which link closely to the school's improvement priorities and their individual needs. For example, following recent training, staff in the youngest pupils' classes have transformed the space in their classes and strengthened provision to align with the foundation learning principles and the vision for the school's curriculum. As a result, the headteacher creates a positive culture of promoting and supporting staff's professional learning successfully.

One of the excellent features of the school is the close co-operation with other schools. For example, following the development of a project on celebrating diversity and equality, '*Cymru Pawb. Chwalu Ffiniau*', the school received the first prize in a national heritage competition. As a result, these experiences contribute highly successfully to developing pupils as ethical citizens who value belonging to a multicultural and diverse Wales.

Leaders provide valuable opportunities for parents to visit the school and engage with their child's learning. For example, they attend weekly sessions to read with their children and support the development of their skills and their enjoyment of reading. As a result, these close working relationships contribute towards establishing a strong sense of community based on trust and respect.

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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