



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 Bryn-y-Môr

**St Alban's Road
Brynmill
Swansea
SA2 0BP**

Date of inspection: January 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bryn-y-Môr

Name of provider	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bryn-y-Môr
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	277
Pupils of statutory school age	195
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	56
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>	9.7%
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>	7.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	40.5%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	06/01/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	14/03/2016
Start date of inspection	29/01/2024

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

Pupils, staff and parents are proud of the school's happy and friendly ethos. Pupils feel very safe within the school's homely and inclusive feel, where everyone respects and cares greatly for each other. The Welsh language is at the heart of the school and pupils' show pride in their language. They use the language completely naturally both inside and outside the classroom.

Under the headteacher's knowledgeable leadership, staff provide an innovative and exciting curriculum that enables pupils to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to support their work. This is a strong feature. Teachers give pupils' ideas careful consideration and provide opportunities for them to choose how they would like to learn. Although provision is robust in most classes, it does not challenge a few pupils in the foundation learning phase sufficiently. As a result, they do not achieve to the best of their ability.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and their behaviour is excellent. Most engage immediately at the beginning of each lesson and show perseverance and resilience in what they achieve. Pupils assess their own work and that of their peers successfully and maturely. However, teachers' written responses to help pupils to know what they need to do to improve and how they can improve their work are inconsistent.

The headteacher has a clear and robust vision for the school, which is based on developing pupils' well-being and opportunities for them to thrive. Governors are very supportive of the school and show a good awareness of their roles and responsibilities. They support leaders and staff effectively. The headteacher, with the support of staff and governors, promotes a robust culture of safeguarding.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve provision in the foundation learning phase to ensure that pupils are challenged to achieve to the best of their ability
- R2 Strengthen feedback for pupils to help them know what they need to do to improve their work

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 Curriculum for Wales, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, many pupils' literacy, numeracy and social skills are below what is expected for their age. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress in their skills from their starting points. During their lessons, nearly all concentrate exceptionally well, show pride in their work and recall their previous learning successfully.

Few pupils speak Welsh completely naturally on entry to the school. However, a majority of pupils who start school with Welsh as their second language develop as confident speakers by the end of their time in the reception class. By Year 3, they converse naturally with each other during lessons and when playing during break time. When they reach Year 6, they are mature speakers and the area's accent can be heard in pupils' speech. Pupils' pride towards the Welsh language permeates the school.

Most pupils in the nursery class enjoy listening to stories and discuss the characters simply, such as the animals in the story of Mrs Wishi Washi. Year 1 pupils begin to familiarise themselves with the content of books and use this information to place events in order effectively. By Year 2, many read with increasing fluency and use appropriate methods to build unfamiliar words. Most older pupils read intelligently in Welsh and English. In addition to discussing their books maturely, Year 4 pupils gather information to investigate the effect of fossil fuels on the environment. By Year 6, they read a range of challenging texts and apply their skills effectively to support their learning in various contexts.

Most pupils' writing skills develop well during their time at the school in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils in the nursery class begin to make marks by using a variety of media successfully. Many pupils in the reception class begin to form letters and simple words when writing about the adventures of Fred the dog. By the end of Year 2, many write descriptive and interesting pieces with increasing accuracy, for example when creating a portrayal of superheroes and when recalling the legend of Dinas Emrys. As pupils move through the school, they develop their skills purposefully and begin to vary their sentences and use a range of appropriate vocabulary when writing. At the top of the school, most write to a good standard. They convey emotions skilfully when creating a diary of an evacuee in Welsh and express their views firmly about the pros and cons of tourism in Eryri in English.

Most pupils develop a sound understanding of mathematical concepts. The youngest pupils come to recognise numbers and simple 3D shapes and develop an understanding of measurement well. In Year 2, most apply their numeracy skills effectively through activities inside and outside the classroom. They use natural objects skilfully when comparing each other's height in the forest school. By Year 6, many pupils apply their numeracy skills successfully in different contexts. For example, when undertaking a business venture, pupils in Years 5 and 6 research the cost of goods to create a product, show a sound understanding of how to make a profit and recognise the possibility of making a loss effectively.

Pupils' digital skills develop appropriately across the school. Many pupils from the nursery class to Year 2 use computers with increasing confidence to support their literacy and numeracy skills. In Year 2, they also use a tablet maturely to record their work independently. They use the green screen effectively to create live pictures of their favourite places in Wales, by emulating Barti and Bel's ramble. By Year 4, most pupils begin to use a range of diverse programs to present their work and create simple games. At the top of the school, they use a database skilfully to find information, for example when learning about how many planes the air force lost during the Second World War. They also demonstrate purposeful creative skills when creating an animation of the impact of a lack of food on a community.

Most pupils develop robust creative skills as their move through the school. They develop a good range of techniques to create observational drawings of birds and use natural resources from the local environment to create simple art with leaves in the nursery class. Many pupils develop their confidence and engage enthusiastically when performing in the choir and by composing samba music. Most pupils develop physical skills with increasing confidence. They participate enthusiastically in lessons and extend their skills well by attending school clubs and competing both locally and outside their area. Overall, most pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills are not as well developed.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Across the school, pupils' pride in their school is completely evident, with a strong sense of belonging to one family. They treat each other, staff and visitors with respect, courtesy and kindness. Holding the door and greeting with a smile is a natural part of their approach and contributes to the school's welcoming and warm ethos. Nearly all pupils feel that they are treated fairly and trust the staff. They are very proud to speak Welsh.

Nearly all pupils behave excellently during lessons, when working independently and when playing with their friends during break and lunchtimes. Most pupils engage fully with their learning and demonstrate a positive attitude towards their work. Nearly all pupils express their opinion about what they would like to learn and how they would like to present their work. They take pride in their input into the units of learning and speak with a strong understanding about what they have achieved.

On the whole, most pupils listen attentively to presentations, concentrate for extended periods and work together effectively to complete their activities. They try new tasks enthusiastically, for example as Year 4 and 5 pupils persevere to discover the effect of adding a number of objects to an electrical flow.

Most pupils undertake their leadership responsibilities well, with pupils being enthusiastic members of children's committees and councils. They discuss confidently how they influence school life, consider the views of all pupils and give intelligent reasons for making decisions. For example, the school council has 'paved the way' for pupils at Bryn y Môr to be 'Welsh speakers who are ready, safe and respectful in their lives'. This ethos permeates the school clearly and contributes successfully to developing their peers' understanding of being moral and well-informed citizens. The well-being committee has also planned zones in each class for

pupils to be able to manage their emotions. These areas have helped many pupils to calm down before being able to re-engage with their work quickly and effectively.

Most pupils are aware of the importance of making healthy choices and keeping fit. They explain why it is beneficial to eat healthy snacks during playtime and why foods with too much sugar should be avoided. Many apply themselves well to activities that develop their physical skills successfully, for example as the youngest pupils learn traditional Welsh dance patterns. The oldest pupils attend weekly extra-curricular clubs, such as sports and performing. They develop their football and netball skills skilfully and participate enthusiastically in local and regional competitions and tournaments. Nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of staying safe online and understand the importance of not sharing passwords and any information digitally with others.

Most pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of being a good citizen through their awareness of their rights promoted by the school. Most pupils learn about values to support others successfully and are keen to raise money for local and national charities. Recently, pupils contributed to a mental health charity following a Welsh band's 'gig' at the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that builds effectively on pupils' understanding of their skills. The headteacher has a clear vision for delivering Curriculum for Wales and she has influenced the teachers' ability to plan a menu of exciting and rich activities masterfully. The curriculum is based on providing a balanced and wide range of experiences that engage pupils' curiosity, pride and enjoyment.

Staff have worked effectively with pupils, parents, carers and governors to form their vision, which reflects the four purposes of the curriculum and is relevant to the Bryn y Môr community. The curriculum reflects the nature of the community successfully and teachers plan activities that consider the context of the school, the local area and the wider world. For example, activities that deepen pupils' understanding of life at the time of the Swansea Blitz and learning poems by local poets are key to their sense of belonging to their *cynefin*, or local area. The school also plans rich opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge by visiting local museums to learn about the life of their forefathers and offering residential opportunities outside the local area which broaden their knowledge of Wales. They take advantage of national grants to have a local artist create impressive art pieces that represent influential famous Welsh people.

Staff work well together to ensure that provision builds methodically on pupils' previous knowledge. Planning to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills has been woven skilfully across the curriculum and ensures that learning activities have a particular purpose. For example, daily sessions to develop pupils' understanding of vocabulary related to the units of learning enrich their language well. This influences pupils' literacy skills successfully in activities across the curriculum.

In many classes where teaching is at its best, teachers have high expectations and classroom organisation is sound. In these classes, teachers are motivating, challenge pupils and make good use of the learning areas both inside and outside the classroom. However, this practice is not consistent across the school and this prevents a few pupils in the foundation learning phase from achieving to the best of their ability.

Staff know their pupils very well and meet the needs of different groups well. They use a wide variety of assessment methods and track pupils' progress effectively to plan for the range of ability. Regular discussions about pupils' attainment and achievement ensure that teachers respond promptly to meet pupils' needs and provide the appropriate support. Teaching assistants support pupils very skilfully, including those with additional learning needs, behavioural challenges and vulnerable individuals.

Staff use a range of questioning methods effectively to ensure pupils' understanding, in addition to guiding the direction of their learning. They share lesson aims effectively and include pupils well in initial discussions when talking about what they need to do to succeed in tasks. This ensures a good mutual understanding of expectations, which leads to improvements in the standard of pupils' work. On the whole, teachers provide beneficial oral feedback which encourages pupils to consider what they are doing well and how they can improve their work. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of their peers and, as a result, by the top of the school, pupils' skills in evaluating each other's work are very mature. However, the quality of teachers' written feedback varies across the school and does not provide clear guidance to challenge pupils sufficiently to improve their work.

Care, support and guidance

The school has a very happy, inclusive and welcoming ethos. The strong emphasis on celebrating their *cynefin*, or local area, and respecting others, makes a valuable contribution to developing pupils who are polite, well-behaved and proud of their school and their community. Staff plan support in a caring manner to meet pupils' emotional, personal and social needs. Nearly all pupils treat their peers and staff with empathy and respect and everyone treats each other with tender care.

A strong feature of provision is the consideration given to pupils' emotional and mental well-being by providing extensive opportunities for them to discuss their feelings. The daily 'keep an eye' sessions meet pupils' well-being requirements well and enable staff to respond to any concerns promptly. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes and are happy. The use of calming zones also provides an opportunity for pupils to manage their emotions successfully in a safe and familiar place.

The school has robust arrangements for supporting pupils with additional learning needs. Staff monitor and track pupils' progress carefully from their starting points and plan a comprehensive timetable of support programmes that respond to pupils' requirements effectively. They work closely with parents and most pupils make good progress against their personal targets and in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. The school makes good use of external agencies, such as educational

psychologists and the speech and language team, to support individuals and their families. Teaching assistants also work very knowledgeably and skilfully in supporting a number of pupils in the classroom.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals, those from low-income households and those who have ALN, to have a strong influence on strategic decisions, as well as the content of their units of learning. The effect of the work of the pupil councils and committees can be seen clearly around the school and has improved well-being, raised the standard of the Welsh language and pupils' attitudes towards sustainability. Through the work of the school council and close links with parents and the local community, the school has also organised a careers day which has provided valuable experiences for pupils in relation to the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The school's culture promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development purposefully. Collective worship provide good opportunities for pupils to consider the views of others. On the whole, pupils are given very few opportunities to learn about different beliefs and religions. However, good opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on how they can help others who are less fortunate than themselves during lessons.

The school helps pupils to develop an understanding of their identity, culture and heritage extremely well. The school provides opportunities to celebrate the history and traditions of Wales through regular events such as eisteddfodau, visits by artists and musicians and celebrate Wales' most famous poets such as T. Llew Jones. They also use the local community skilfully as an educational resource to undertake environmental studies and learn how to run a business.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of activities to promote health and fitness, such as swimming lessons, sports clubs and exercise sessions. Fitness experts hold activities to encourage pupils to make the right choices about what to eat and to develop dancing skills. This contributes well to developing pupils as healthy and confident individuals. There are purposeful opportunities for pupils to perform and develop their imagination through the expressive and creative arts, such as working with a local artist and by attending woodwind lessons. The school places a strong emphasis on providing a rich and varied range of trips and visits to support the curriculum.

The school's processes for monitoring attendance and punctuality are efficient. Any persistent absences are monitored thoroughly. The school has a sound culture and arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision, which is based on robust co-operation between all of the school's stakeholders, to provide the best opportunities for all pupils within an inclusive, homely and Welsh learning community. Her inspirational leadership has developed a team of leaders who share the vision and realise the school's objectives successfully. The school is a happy and friendly community with a strong sense of belonging to a family. This can be seen through all of the school's life and work.

Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding successfully and keeping children safe is a clear priority. As a result, pupils feel safe and comfortable at the school. Ensuring pupils' well-being and meeting the needs of all pupils is also the foundation of all of the school's work. Leaders have a sound understanding of the well-being of each child and this contributes to good standards, pupils' positive attitudes to their work and the excellent behaviour that is seen from nearly all pupils.

Leaders give exceptional attention to national priorities. The headteacher has led the development of Curriculum for Wales masterfully. Staff's understanding and expectations of the school's curriculum have deepened and, as a result, staff are confident in their ability to plan and present the broad and innovative curriculum. This is a clear strength within the school.

The school has robust self-evaluation procedures which have a successful effect on pupils' attainment in terms of improving their skills and well-being. Procedures include staff input and information gathered from governors, pupils and parents. They measure progress within their areas regularly and staff and leaders monitor plans, scrutinise pupils' books and observe teaching and learning through lesson observations and learning walks. There are also regular meetings to discuss the progress of each pupil, including those with ALN. As a result, they identify areas for improvement well and set clear and strategic steps to address them. For example, pupils' ability to write at length has improved.

Leaders manage staff performance regularly and staff have a very strong awareness of their strengths and aspect to be developed further. The strong culture of professional development contributes successfully to establishing and maintaining a school that is learning progressively. There is a clear link between the training provided to staff and the school's improvement priorities.

Governors are knowledgeable and their positive and intelligent input contributes effectively to improvements across the school. They are very supportive of the headteacher and work purposefully with her and the staff, questioning the impact of their work as critical friends. The headteacher advises them realistically and honestly about how to improve provision, for example about the need to challenge pupils to improve their scientific skills and develop assessment activities further. Governors are knowledgeable about national priorities, such as reforming ALN provision, and the effect of poverty on the lives of parents and pupils within their community. They ensure that the school has purposeful arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

The school has a close and effective relationship with parents and the local community. The school shares information regularly through various media, useful presentations and, more recently, through coffee mornings which strengthen parents' awareness of the school's expectations and successes. Parents are encouraged to be a key part of school life and enrich learning by sharing their interests and expertise, such as gardening for example.

The school makes purposeful use of its funding and uses specific grants, such as the pupil development grant, effectively to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils who are eligible to receive it. As a result, over time, these pupils show good

progress in their basic skills from their starting points. Grant expenditure also allow beneficial professional learning opportunities in response to national priorities.

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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