



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

A report on

Ysgol Ffridd Y Llyn

Cefnddwysarn

Bala

Gwynedd

LL23 7HE

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 Ffridd Y Llyn

Name of provider	Ysgol Ffridd Y Llyn
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	44
Pupils of statutory school age	41
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	0
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>	15.8%
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>	20%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	73.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	April 2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	22/01/2024

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

Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn is part of the Cysgod y Foel federation. The teacher in charge is supported by a head of site at Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and a head of site at Ysgol Bro Tryweryn.

The teacher in charge has created a clear and firm vision based on ensuring that pupils' well-being and the development of their skills are at the forefront of the work and life of the federation's schools. Governors have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They visit the schools regularly and conduct learning walks, scrutinise pupils' work and hold discussions with groups of pupils and staff. However, members of the governing body do not always operate strategically enough in realising the federation's school improvement priorities.

Most pupils are very well behaved. They treat each other, staff and visitors with respect. They work together effectively in the learning areas and are willing to contribute to class discussions, sharing their ideas maturely and sensibly. When pupils are given an opportunity to do so, most concentrate well and engage conscientiously when responding to challenges in their work. However, the level of challenge is not always appropriate to support pupils to develop their skills to the best of their ability.

Staff know the pupils well and there is a very productive working relationship between them. Staff across the federation's schools hold regular meetings to share ideas, plan interesting educational activities and share good practice. They consider pupils' opinions and views purposefully when planning learning activities for them. As a result, pupils enjoy school and are willing to undertake the range of stimulating and engaging experiences that are provided for them. Staff play a prominent part in the self-improvement process, which is effective in developing their understanding of the standard of provision and progress in pupils' skills. However, leaders within the schools have not had enough time to work together to develop their role and act fully on the schools' improvement priorities.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that learning activities challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability
- R2 Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders, including the governing body, so that they co-operate more strategically across the federation to address improvement priorities

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' literacy, numeracy and social skills are at the expected stage of development. As they move through the school, most pupils, including those with additional needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, make sound progress in their skills.

Across the school, most pupils' listening skills develop highly effectively. In the youngest years, pupils follow staff's instructions and respond to questions successfully. As they move through the school, they concentrate for extended periods and are thoughtful when listening to each other's views and ideas.

Most pupils' oral skills develop well in both languages. The youngest pupils use an increasing range of vocabulary purposefully in various situations. For example, Year 1 pupils discuss enthusiastically the equipment and materials they need when building a house in the creative area. In the school's upper years, most pupils' oral skills continue to develop skilfully. For example, Year 4 pupils communicate clearly and confidently when discussing what to include in a persuasive pamphlet for an estate agent.

As they move through the school, most pupils' reading skills develop appropriately. In the reception class, most recognise letters and associate them with their sounds with increasing accuracy. By Year 2, they read simple texts clearly and show increasing expression. They read with enjoyment, understand the meaning of the text and express opinions appropriately. At the top of the school, nearly all pupils make sound progress in their Welsh and English reading skills. They read intelligently and vary their tone of voice effectively. They use purposeful methods to build the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Most pupils make sound progress in developing their writing skills. The youngest pupils practise their early writing skills by using a range of equipment purposefully in the learning areas. They begin to form letters correctly and match sounds and letters successfully. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils record the main events in the story of the three little pigs by using a range of familiar vocabulary. The writing skills of older pupils develop skilfully in both languages. By Year 5, many pupils adapt their style and structure to different texts effectively, for example when writing a letter to a local councillor to express concern about the effect of litter pollution on the environment.

Most pupils' mathematical skills develop robustly. They build appropriately on previous learning and foster new skills and concepts suitably. The calculation skills of many of the youngest pupils develop well. By Year 2, they recognise even and odd

numbers and place numbers up to 100 in the correct order. By Year 6, most pupils have a sound understanding of the four rules and use them effectively to solve number problems. They have a good understanding of measuring facts, for example when using a range of equipment to discover the length and width of common and compound shapes. They have a good understanding of the relationship between area and perimeter. Most pupils apply their numeracy skills confidently across the areas of learning and experience. For example, in Year 4, pupils develop their understanding of number and measurement facts effectively by estimating and calculating the length of a fence a local farmer needs to keep his sheep secure.

Nearly all pupils' digital skills develop well. The youngest pupils use a range of programs confidently on a digital tablet, for example when creating a short film about the story of the three little pigs by using green screen. By Year 6, nearly all pupils' digital skills develop successfully; for example, older pupils use a measuring program to create an interactive house design.

Most pupils' creative skills develop robustly across the school. Most of the youngest pupils enjoy using a range of equipment and materials to create pictures and models. For example, as part of their theme, pupils in the reception class weave a colourful blanket confidently for the three little pigs. These pupils work imaginatively when experimenting with a wide variety of materials and techniques, for example when emulating the work of Welsh artists.

Nearly all pupils develop their physical skills well by taking part in a variety of activities that promote their health and well-being effectively. Pupils develop their balance and co-ordination skills well, for example when undertaking a variety of physical activities, including weekly rugby and football sessions. They develop their co-operation skills successfully by competing in local sports tournaments.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils' attendance is good and they are happy at school. They feel safe and know whom to approach if they are worried about anything. They believe that staff treat them fairly and there is a productive working relationship between staff and pupils.

Provision to develop pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's vision. Pupils are very caring towards each other and respond sensitively to the needs of others, particularly pupils with emotional and social needs. Younger pupils benefit from mindfulness sessions, where they are given daily opportunities to discuss their feelings and undertake body movements. This has a very positive effect on the behaviour of nearly all pupils.

Most pupils concentrate well and older pupils respond maturely to any disruption caused by a small minority of pupils in the classroom. Most pupils listen attentively to presentations and work consistently well individually, in pairs and in small groups. When they are given purposeful opportunities to do so, they show resilience when taking on challenges and persevere effectively when solving difficulties and completing tasks. However, the level of challenge within learning activities does not always respond to pupils' needs. As a result, a very few pupils do not develop their skills at a level that is suitable for their ability.

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes towards keeping healthy. They are enthusiastic and hard-working during physical education lessons and enjoy taking part in a variety of sports activities, including the weekly rugby and football sessions and the Urdd sports club. Through their themes, nearly all pupils have a mature understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of their responsibilities as global, ethical and informed citizens. For example, as part of the theme “Dyma Ni”, pupils have deepened their understanding of fairness and equality and know how important it is to respect everyone in society.

Pupils respond positively to the oral feedback they receive from staff when undertaking their tasks. They know what their progress targets are and what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. As a result, most pupils make sound progress in their skills over time.

Most pupils enjoy contributing to what they would like to learn within their termly themes. By taking part in class discussions at the beginning of a new theme, pupils share their views and add ideas about what they would like to learn. As a result, pupils feel that adults listen to their ideas and consider them when planning learning activities for them. Recently, pupils have begun to contribute to a few elements of the school’s work through the school council, for example by planning activities for a Macmillan coffee morning. However, pupils do not currently play a leading enough role in making decisions about the wider life and work of the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

There is a very close and supportive working relationship between staff and pupils. This mutual relationship is one of the school’s strengths. Teachers foster an inclusive learning environment. As a result, most pupils’ behaviour and attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils are polite and treat adults and visitors with respect.

Teachers plan appropriately to deliver a curriculum that responds effectively to the requirements of Curriculum for Wales. They plan purposefully to provide beneficial experiences that cover all the areas of learning and experience, which is effective in engaging pupils’ interest. This includes identifying purposeful opportunities to promote pupils’ knowledge and appreciation of their local area and its environmental, cultural and historical features. For example, as part of a theme, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of famous local people, including Michael D. Jones and his campaign to establish a Welsh society in Patagonia.

Across the schools in the federation, teachers plan together deliberately to provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. They ensure that pupils are given beneficial opportunities to apply their skills in a real-life context. For example, as part of their theme, older pupils design a house for a local resident. By doing so, they calculate the size of the rooms by using a scale, calculating angles, and measuring the perimeter and area.

Teachers organise their classrooms effectively. They include colourful and stimulating learning areas in which all pupils can participate in a wide range of

learning experiences. The youngest pupils benefit from purposeful experiences in the school's outdoor areas. For example, pupils in the reception class take advantage of purposeful opportunities to develop their oracy and number skills when building houses, by counting how many bricks are needed.

All members of staff are effective language models. Through all of the school's activities, they encourage pupils to use the Welsh language and support them enthusiastically to develop as confident and fluent speakers. Where teaching is at its best, presentations in many lessons are lively and stimulating and engage the interest of most pupils effectively. Teachers set clear learning objectives within lessons and include pupils in the process of setting the success criteria. This is effective in ensuring that pupils understand what they need to do to succeed in completing their tasks. Teachers use a range of probing questioning methods that build on pupils' previous learning and develop their thinking skills effectively. They give pupils purposeful oral feedback in lessons, which helps them to know what the next steps are in their learning. However, written feedback does not always support pupils to know what the next steps are in their written work. Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and that of their peers. This includes opportunities for pupils to discuss and look over each other's work, offering improvements where appropriate. Through the "*Wyt ti'n gallu*" (Can You) techniques, teachers provide purposeful work that enables many pupils to develop their skills effectively. However, tasks are not always at a level that enables all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.

Teachers plan stimulating educational visits and opportunities for visitors to come to the school to enrich and reinforce learning within the classroom. For example, as part of their themes, the youngest pupils visit the local area to enrich their understanding of the society in which they live. Older pupils benefitted from a visit by a drama company when learning about the voyage of the 'Mimosa' from Wales to Patagonia. They also benefit from trips to different residential centres. Through these visits, pupils are given rich opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Welsh history, culture and heritage.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a happy and friendly community with a caring and supportive ethos. Staff know individual pupils and their families well and this helps them to respond effectively to their needs. The caring relationship between staff and pupils supports pupils' emotional and social needs well and fosters positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils' physical and emotional health and well-being are given a prominent place in the life of the school, with a variety of opportunities to keep fit through physical activities, including activities in the forest area where pupils are given opportunities to work in nature to solve problems.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is comprehensive and effective. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage through professional conversations and through the use of purposeful assessments. Intervention procedures, which are reviewed regularly, meet pupils' requirements effectively. Staff provide comprehensive individual development plans and progress reviews are held regularly, which include opportunities for pupils to measure their progress against

their personal targets. The schools have good links with a variety of support services and external agencies, including speech and language therapists and educational psychologists.

Teachers provide parents with purposeful guidance and advice, which enables them to share regular information with their children. However, end of year reports for parents do not provide enough evidence of the development of pupils' skills within the areas of learning and experience.

Regular assemblies and occasional visits by local religious leaders promote pupils' spiritual and moral development effectively, with opportunities for them to reflect on modern affairs and other religions. For example, a community leader leads religious services regularly and shares important values with pupils, including the need to treat others and the natural world with respect.

There is a strong culture of respect and equality within the school. By celebrating national occasions, such as 'Show racism the red card', staff plan purposefully to ensure that pupils have a sound understanding of values such as fairness, honesty and the need to treat everyone fairly. Staff hold 'Makaton' sign language learning sessions for pupils, which are successful in deepening their understanding of the challenges that are faced by people with profound literacy needs.

Staff provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of their identity, heritage and culture. As a result, pupils are given opportunities to identify with the local community, including studying places of historical interest, including the drowning of the village of Capel Celyn.

Staff provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to influence some aspects of the school's life and work. Pupils are given purposeful opportunities to contribute to planning the termly themes, sharing their ideas about what they would like to learn and the visitors they would like to invite to the school. As part of the theme of '*Tai a Chartrefi*' ('Houses and Homes'), this has led to a builder, an electrician and a carpenter attending the school to discuss the merits of their jobs. These experiences are successful in engaging pupils' interest and ownership of their learning. However, leaders do not provide enough opportunities for pupils on the school council to influence wider aspects of the school's life and work.

Pupils are given beneficial opportunities to develop their creative and physical skills by performing in various concerts and the Urdd Eisteddfod. Staff provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to take part in local sports competitions, including boys' and girls' rugby and football tournaments. Within the themes, they plan opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills effectively, for example by inviting an operatic musician to hold a music workshop with pupils.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff have a sound understanding of safeguarding processes and leaders respond appropriately to any individual cases, by working effectively with other agencies. The school's processes for ensuring pupils' punctuality and regular attendance are robust.

Leadership and management

In the short time since being appointed, the teacher in charge has established a firm vision for the federation's schools. This is based on ensuring that pupils develop their skills in a familial and inclusive environment. A firm focus is placed on ensuring that the well-being of pupils and staff is given a prominent part in all aspects of the schools' work. Following a period of instability in terms of staffing, more robust leadership arrangements are now beginning to be put in place across the schools. This has a positive effect on ensuring that teachers at both schools work together more closely to plan jointly and share good practices. In turn, this leads to some beneficial improvements in provision for pupils. However, the teacher in charge and site leaders of Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn have not had enough time to act fully on improvement priorities. As a result, it is too early to measure the effect of their work on improvements in provision and pupils' achievement.

The teacher in charge and staff conduct a beneficial range of self-evaluation activities that are scheduled purposefully throughout the year. They scrutinise pupils' work to measure their progress and adapt provision appropriately to support pupils to develop their skills. They observe lessons by focusing on teaching methods to evaluate how effectively teachers encourage aspects such as independence and co-operation among pupils.

Self-evaluation procedures lead to an appropriate school development plan which identifies key priorities for making progress. Priorities are divided into sensible development steps and an activity timetable, together with success criteria and specific milestones, are included. The schools' improvement activities, with the contribution of staff and officers from the local authority and the regional consortium, are already beginning to have a positive effect on developing provision for pupils. The teacher in charge also works closely with colleagues in local schools to share practices and experiences in specific areas, which has a positive influence on assessment procedures within the schools.

Members of the governing body have a hands-on role in supporting and promoting the development of the school. They support the teacher in charge enthusiastically in important aspects, such as ensuring staff stability across the federation's schools. They have appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking for pupils across the federation. They visit the schools regularly and hold meetings with staff and discuss learning progress with pupils. They conduct beneficial learning walks, scrutinise pupils' work and discuss their progress with teachers. This work helps to develop governors' understanding of the different aspects of provision. They receive timely information from the teacher in charge about the schools' progress against their improvement priorities. As a result, members of the governing body have an appropriate understanding of some of the schools' strengths and areas that are in need of further development. However, members of the governing body do not always operate strategically enough in achieving the improvement priorities of the federation's schools.

Leaders manage the schools' budget effectively. They make suitable decisions about spending for the benefit and experiences of pupils. They have recently invested significantly in the outdoor areas for the youngest pupils. This has a positive effect on enriching provision and learning experiences for these pupils. Good use is made of

the pupil development grant to provide sessions to promote pupils' wellbeing which, in turn, have a beneficial effect on the confidence and behaviour of pupils with emotional and social needs.

Staff are given beneficial opportunities to follow training relating to the federation's current priorities or arising from their interests and personal development needs. For example, training on nurturing pupils' well-being skills prepare them effectively to support vulnerable pupils or those who face specific challenges. Staff performance management procedures have been established firmly.

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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