



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

A report on
Ysgol Gynradd Cerrigydrudion

**Ffordd yr Alwen
Cerrigydrudion
Corwen
Conwy
LL21 9SW**

Date of inspection: March 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Gynradd Cerrigydrudion

Name of provider	Ysgol Gynradd Cerrigydrudion
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	86
Pupils of statutory school age	75
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	11
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>	8.7%
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>	8.3%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	86.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	1.16%
Date of headteacher appointment	19/02/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	04/04/2016
Start date of inspection	11/03/2024

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 Gynradd Cerrigydrudion is an inclusive and supportive community that promotes a caring ethos extremely successfully. There are close and warm working relationships between pupils and staff, which foster an enthusiastic learning environment and a beneficial sense that pupils are valued members of the school family.

Most pupils make good progress from their starting points. They develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills purposefully by the end of their time at the school. However, teachers do not always ensure regular opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.

Teachers plan interesting learning activities that engage and hold pupils' interest successfully. They provide stimulating learning experiences for pupils and ensure that activities are suitably paced. However, teachers' feedback does not always identify the next steps in pupils' learning effectively enough. Staff provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about their *cynefin* or local area and about the history and traditions of Wales. As a result, pupils are aware of their locality and show pride and respect towards their community and the Welsh language.

Provision for supporting the learning skills of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is good. As a result, they make good progress over time against their targets and previous achievements.

The school's self-evaluation and quality assurance arrangements are sound. Members of the governing body support the acting headteacher and staff successfully. They have a sound awareness of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge that supports leaders to develop the school purposefully.

The school needs to address the safeguarding concerns relating to the school's site.

Recommendations

- R1 Respond to the health and safety concerns relating to the school's site
- R2 Ensure that the quality of teachers' feedback identifies the next steps in pupils' learning effectively
- R3 Develop regular opportunities to develop pupils' independent learning skills

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, most pupils' skills and knowledge correspond to what is expected for their age and stage of development. As they move through the school, most pupils, including those with ALN and those who are eligible for free school meals, make sound progress in their learning.

Most pupils develop their listening and speaking skills purposefully. Nearly all pupils are keen to talk enthusiastically with their teachers and visitors. They present information about what they are learning in a lively manner, for example as the youngest pupils re-tell the story of Melangell and Brochwel. As pupils move through the school, many talk intelligently to their peers and staff, for example as Year 2 and 3 pupils discuss how to build a purpose-built shed in which to keep sheep. Most of the oldest pupils speak confidently about their work and listen carefully to questions before answering them, for example when referring to problem-solving methods relating to the exchange rate.

Nearly all of the youngest pupils develop reading skills successfully and come to recognise the sound and form of letters from a young age. They use suitable methods to attempt to read unfamiliar words and begin to apply their reading skills in different contexts. By Year 4, many pupils become skilled readers and read with purposeful expression. As pupils' skills develop, many discuss their books reasonably confidently and refer to previous events in a variety of texts.

The youngest pupils develop early writing skills well. Nearly all begin to experiment when making marks and many develop sound fine motor skills when beginning to write for different purposes. Most pupils develop their writing skills firmly by the end of Year 3. They write with increasing accuracy, by using punctuation and verbs successfully, for example when writing a portrayal of their heroes. Most of the oldest pupils recognise the features of different genres of writing and emulate them in their own work successfully. For example, they use adjectives and similes intelligently when writing about the story of Rosa Parks. Most pupils develop legible handwriting and many take pride in presenting their work.

Across the school, many pupils make good progress in developing their mathematical skills. Year 2 pupils recognise numbers and develop an understanding of measurement and interpret scales of measurement well. By Year 4, pupils use a formula successfully to measure the area of compound shapes. Many of the oldest pupils take purposeful advantage of opportunities to apply their numeracy skills

across the curriculum, for example when drawing a fort to a specific scale on the school playground as part of their Humanities work.

Most pupils develop a beneficial range of digital skills that support their learning. For example, the youngest pupils insert voice and sounds when using animation programs and tools to create a video about a deer on the school grounds. The oldest pupils program and code a moving vehicle to follow digital instructions.

Most pupils develop their creative skills effectively and use a variety of materials and styles skilfully when producing artwork, for example by producing impressive 2D work to compete in the Cerrig Show. Across the school, most pupils develop robust physical skills and take advantage of a variety of opportunities to keep fit during physical exercise sessions and during break times.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils' well-being is a strength. Nearly all pupils are happy and feel safe at school. Their behaviour is excellent and they are kind towards each other, and greet staff and visitors in a friendly manner. They are very proud of their school and are keen to talk enthusiastically about their unique experiences within its familial, homely and inclusive community. This is a consistent and notable aspect of the school.

Nearly all pupils control their emotions appropriately. They feel that adults value them and support them emotionally through opportunities to discuss their feelings, for example through daily well-being checks. Across the school, nearly all pupils have positive working relationships with staff and each other. As a result, they engage purposefully with their learning and have the confidence to contribute ideas and ask for support. However, pupils tend to be over-reliant on support from staff, which hinders the development of their independent learning skills.

Most pupils' behaviour in the classroom and during break times is excellent. Pupils respond well to each other and enjoy learning and playing happily. As they move around the school, most pupils are mindful and considerate of others.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to undertake new learning opportunities and show resilience when completing unfamiliar tasks. For example, they use the 'don't give up' method effectively to support them to persevere and make progress in their learning. As a result, most pupils develop to become ambitious and confident learners who are ready to learn. Overall, most pupils respond well to oral feedback from staff. However, pupils do not understand or respond proactively enough to teachers' written feedback. As a result, they do not always understand what to do to improve their work, and how, to make progress in their learning.

Nearly all pupils develop a sound understanding of the importance of being moral and principled citizens. They develop the ability and confidence to discuss their feelings and show empathy towards others. For example, when the oldest pupils discuss their fundamental rights and demonstrate maturity when discussing Dafydd Iwan's stand over the Welsh language. As a result, their awareness of fairness and equality develops well.

Most pupils are aware of the importance of making healthy choices and keeping fit. Many apply themselves well to activities that develop their physical skills successfully, for example as the youngest pupils follow a zig zag path on the school playground. The oldest pupils apply themselves regularly in extra-curricular clubs such as sports and performing. They develop their ball control skills skilfully and participate enthusiastically in local and regional competitions and tournaments.

Most pupils have a suitable understanding of how to stay safe on the internet. For example, they discuss confidently how to keep their passwords secure and how to respond if a stranger contacts them while they learn online.

All pupils, including those with ALN, are offered leadership roles and responsibilities by being members of pupil groups. They undertake leadership roles enthusiastically, take their responsibilities seriously and take pride in their success. For example, the school council is proud of its responsibilities in organising charity events, while members of the eco council are active in reducing the use of single-use plastic bottles at the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school's curricular provision is broad and reflects the caring nature of the school's community. Staff plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about their *cynefin*, or local area, and about the history and traditions of Wales. As a result, pupils are aware of their locality and show pride and respect for their community.

Teachers have a reflective and collaborative approach to planning the curriculum and refine their plans to consider the methods that are most suitable for pupils. At the beginning of each term, staff provide opportunities for pupils to influence the direction of themes. By doing so, they begin to develop an awareness of the flexibility of Curriculum for Wales's principles of progression of. This helps them to develop a common understanding of ensuring the progress of pupils across the school.

Teachers and assistants have excellent working relationships with pupils, which create a purposeful and supportive learning environment. Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions about their learning to deepen their understanding and knowledge of different areas. Staff identify pupils' needs well and encourage them to make regular progress in their skills.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively and ensure that nearly all pupils engage fully with learning activities and experiences. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning develop appropriately across the school. However, there is a tendency for staff to over-direct learning activities, which limits pupils' ability to develop their independent learning skills.

A prominent feature of the school's work is the way in which teachers and assistants encourage pupils to take pride in the Welsh language and the culture and heritage of the Uwchaled area and Wales. By planning rich themes, teachers develop pupils' awareness and sound understanding of their neighbourhood by providing live and meaningful experiences. They engage and hold pupils' interest skilfully by planning a variety of interesting activities and valuable experiences that reflect the nature and

context of the school and its place in the local community, for example when a famous entertainer works with pupils to perform enthusiastically as part of the school's special birthday celebrations. As a result, nearly all pupils' spoken Welsh skills and understanding of Welsh heritage and culture develop highly effectively. This is a strong feature of the school's life and work.

Teachers share clear objectives at the beginning of learning activities and use success criteria regularly as a means of supporting pupils in their learning. As a result, pupils have confidence when self-evaluating their own efforts and achievements and those of their peers. Staff provide pupils with valuable oral feedback during activities to support and extend their learning. Teachers provide simple written feedback which focuses on praising pupils' efforts. However, feedback does not identify the next steps in pupils' learning effectively enough or offer them guidance so that they can improve. As a result, pupils are not confident in their understanding of what is good in their work and what needs to be improved effectively enough.

The school tracks pupils' progress effectively by making purposeful use of various assessments, which ensures that pupils receive the support they need to succeed. As a result, most pupils make sound progress in all aspects of their learning. The school shares information about pupils' progress with parents in a timely manner and includes improvement targets, where relevant.

Care, support and guidance

The close working relationship between staff and pupils, and between the pupils themselves, provides a firm foundation for creating a caring community with a familial, friendly and warm ethos. Teachers and assistants know pupils' emotional and social needs well. Staff's positive attitudes support pupils to settle quickly and contribute well to school life. This reinforces their contentment and well-being and encourages pupils to foster resilient attitudes to learning.

The school has robust processes that have a positive effect on supporting pupils with ALN. The ALN co-ordinator (ALNCo), who is new to the role, and staff, are enthusiastic about their responsibilities and pupils' development. Staff gather useful information about pupils' progress on their journey through the school and analyse this information effectively. As a result, they identify pupils who need additional support in a timely manner and provide a range of support programmes that target their specific needs successfully. The ALNCo works effectively in partnership with assistants and external agencies, such as the language therapy team, to provide effective interventions for learners. The school is preparing well for purposeful planning and action as part of the process of reforming ALN provision.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which staff promote and develop pupils' understanding of their identity, heritage and culture. Pupils take advantage of valuable opportunities to celebrate their Welshness and feel that they belong to the local community. Regular opportunities are taken to share and celebrate these elements through a range of stimulating activities. For example, the oldest pupils visit

Rhug Farm to see different farm animals and learn how meat is produced, with an emphasis on the concept of 'from field to fork'.

Pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes are promoted regularly through collective worship assemblies. They ensure beneficial opportunities for pupils to reflect on current affairs and different religions and cultures in class activities appropriately. Many pupils develop their awareness of how diverse society is today, for example by emphasising 'It's okay to be different'.

The school develops suitable opportunities for pupils to take part in decisions at school level through membership of the school councils and within activities in the classroom. For example, all pupils are given an opportunity to express an opinion on which themes they would like to study. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to express their views about how to improve different aspects of the school and the local community. The school provides various opportunities for pupils to take part in performances and events, for example by competing in sports competitions and local eisteddfodau. This supports pupils to gain self-confidence and develop creativity effectively.

Staff promote the importance of healthy eating and encourage physical fitness through a range of physical education activities. Staff use the community playing fields regularly to organise and provide a range of activities that contribute well to pupils' well-being and enjoyment of their learning. The outdoor play areas on the playground are attractive and encourage pupils to undertake physical activity during learning activities and break times successfully.

Staff promote a culture of safeguarding effectively and the arrangements are not a cause for concern. However, inspectors brought issues relating to the health and safety of the site to the attention of the school's leaders during the inspection. There is a robust system for reporting safeguarding concerns about pupils and staff work with external agencies, where appropriate. The school has robust processes for monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Leadership and management

Since being appointed recently, the acting headteacher has built on the school's leadership strategies successfully. The school's vision is based on clear and firm values that reflect the desire for all individuals to succeed within its caring community. All staff work together successfully to realise this vision and, as a result, the homely and supportive feeling permeates the school's close-knit community.

The acting headteacher has high expectations of pupils and staff. This creates an atmosphere where everyone aims for the best. Leaders allocate responsibilities strategically and successfully, for example restructuring the role of the ALNCo following changes in staffing. The school's performance management procedures are suitable. All members of teaching staff have individual targets that link purposefully to the improvement priorities and meet their professional learning needs. As a result, nearly all members of staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to the development of the school.

The school's relationship with parents is effective and the continuous co-operation and communication promotes the school successfully in its community. Leaders know the needs of pupils, the school and its community well. They provide valuable opportunities for parents to support pupils' well-being, for example by holding an evening to raise awareness of how to stay safe online. The school's parent-teacher association is extremely active in holding events that support the school to celebrate the area's identity. As a result of holding a St David's Day concert, for example, a good amount of profit was made to contribute to the cost of signs that encourage pupils to play traditional Welsh playground games.

Leaders have established robust arrangements to monitor and evaluate learning and provision. They use a number of sources of evidence effectively to gain a clear picture of the school's performance. Leaders prepare suitable monitoring reports that identify strengths and areas for improvement accurately. They use information from self-evaluation processes successfully to set clear priorities for improvement. Leaders monitor progress against the priorities regularly, by responding to specific milestones and evaluating the effect of expenditure clearly.

Governors are extremely supportive of the school's work and know the school and the community it serves well. Leaders' reports ensure that governors receive appropriate information about the school's performance. Governors also gather their own information and contribute appropriately to self-evaluation processes, take part in learning walks, listen to learners and scrutinise pupils' work. They are very supportive of the acting headteacher and work purposefully with her and the staff. Governors are knowledgeable about national priorities, such as Curriculum for Wales, safeguarding and the impact of poverty on the lives of pupils and their families within their own community. They discharge their statutory duties effectively, for example by ensuring appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders manage resources and funding wisely and review expenditure carefully. They link expenditure successfully with the school's improvement priorities and use grants purposefully to enrich provision for pupils. For example, the pupil development grant is used to employ assistants who focus on improving the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils across the school. As a result, overall, most pupils make good progress in their skills.

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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