



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

A report on
Ysgol Penllwyn

Capel Bangor
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3LP

Date of inspection: September 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Penllwyn

Name of provider	Ysgol Penllwyn
Local authority	Ceredigion County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	45
Pupils of statutory school age	39
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	
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 23.0%)</i>	4.5%
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 16.1%)</i>	15.4%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	56.4%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	
Date of headteacher appointment	April 2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/03/2013

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 Penllwyn is a rural school with a homely and welcoming ethos. Most pupils make sound progress during their time there. All staff contribute towards creating and maintaining a Welsh ethos where nearly all pupils take pride in speaking Welsh. A minority of pupils have a tendency to speak English with their peers in informal situations.

Most pupils acquire a range of suitable literacy and numeracy skills and apply them successfully in activities across the curriculum. However, a few of the writing activities that are provided for the oldest pupils are too limited which, in turn, slows their progress and their ability to work increasingly freely and at length. On the whole, they develop their digital skills appropriately, although the oldest pupils do not always achieve to the best of their ability.

Teachers have a productive working relationship with pupils. On the whole, they provide engaging lessons for pupils, which motivate them to enjoy a suitable range of activities. However, they do not ensure that all pupils are ready to learn at the beginning of sessions. As a result, a very few of the oldest pupils disrupt the flow of lessons. Pupils are beginning to make decisions about what they learn. However, on the whole, pupils, including those who are members of committees, such as the school council, do not influence the school's work regularly.

Teachers provide a wide variety of valuable opportunities for pupils to compete in the local community, for example by taking part in sports tournaments, local shows and eisteddfodau.

Ysgol Penllwyn is federated with Ysgol Penrhyncoch. The headteacher, who works across both sites, embodies the motto '*gyda'n gilydd, gallwn lwyddo*' ('together we can succeed'). Although the schools have their own unique communities, they also take pride in the fact that they are part of one federation and hold activities together for pupils and parents regularly.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that teachers' expectations are high enough to support all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability
- R2 Develop pupils' independent learning skills, including their ability to make choices about their learning, improve their own work and influence the work of the school

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 have an appropriate range of communication and social skills. As they move through the school, most pupils thrive, make good progress and acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding to progress with their learning from their starting points successfully.

Most of the youngest pupils listen to instructions from adults and gain confidence in communicating during their learning and play activities. They listen well to each other and take turns to speak. They are keen to talk about what they are doing, for example when deciding what ingredients are needed to bake cupcakes. Many of the oldest pupils enjoy joining in with discussions and talk sensibly about current affairs, such as the war in Ukraine. They prepare and present information to others confidently, for example by creating a video clip to emulate a current television programme and add a voiceover effectively.

Across the school, pupils genuinely enjoy and immerse themselves in a good range of reading texts. The youngest pupils listen to simple stories, such as The Little Red Hen, and re-tell them appropriately. By Year 2, many read with appropriate accuracy and fluency. Most have a useful understanding of phonic sounds and combinations. Most of the oldest pupils read confidently in both languages. They pay close attention to punctuation and change their tone of voice to create effect when reading a conversation between different characters in a novel. They build effectively on their skills when reading a script about the Good Samaritan and imitate the characters while acting the script confidently. Within lessons, many pupils are willing to apply new vocabulary they have acquired in reading activities with increasing confidence both orally and in their written work.

On the whole, pupils develop their writing skills successfully. The youngest pupils are beginning to write words and sentences while playing a game and writing with increasing confidence. As they develop their skills, older pupils organise their work in paragraphs and usually use punctuation correctly. They write in a varied range of genres and for a range of purposes, for example when writing a persuasive letter to hold joint football competitions between the schools in the federation. At the top of the school, the most able pupils write to a high standard and use increasingly complex sentences, rich vocabulary and various adverbs to enrich their work. However, at times, over-use of writing guidelines and worksheets limit the opportunities for pupils to write increasingly freely and independently. This hinders the ability of a few pupils to develop their writing skills to the best of their ability, overall.

Many pupils develop their mathematical and numeracy skills appropriately. The youngest pupils count correctly to 10 and are beginning to recognise number patterns when adding or subtracting numbers. Pupils' weighing and measuring skills are developing well, for example when calculating the volume of cups and different objects by using standard units correctly. Across the school, many pupils' money-handling skills are developing consistently. Most of the oldest pupils apply their numeracy skills effectively, for example when calculating the cost of food as part of

their work in relation to local food producers. When pupils are given opportunities to apply their numeracy skills across the areas of learning, many achieve well.

From entry to the school, nearly all pupils develop valuable digital skills. They use digital equipment independently and access a range of apps skilfully, such as spelling and mathematics games to help them to learn. For example, they use a tablet to access learning activities and program a toy successfully to follow a specific route as part of their work on the Little Red Hen. At the top of the school, most pupils edit and organise work confidently by using a range of software. Most use skilful research techniques to search for specific information online. The oldest pupils develop to use a database with increasing confidence, for example when creating and interrogating a database on the temperature of countries and cities and creating graphs to present this information. However, the oldest pupils do not develop the full range of digital skills across the areas of learning.

The youngest pupils' creative skills are developing appropriately. They are keen to discuss shapes they have made from clay and keen to add suitable detail to their products. At the top of the school, most pupils develop their creative skills beneficially, for example by creating pieces of environmental art by emulating the work of an artist by using natural materials to make attractive patterns.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils feel happy at the school and talk enthusiastically about their learning experiences. Most pupils enjoy and are proud to be members of the school community and feel that they are valued by adults. Across the school, pupils have a positive relationship with adults. Pupils treat each other with respect and extend a warm welcome to visitors. On the whole, many pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and show an interest in their work. They work together successfully in pairs and groups and offer support to each other, when necessary. At the top of the school, a few pupils do not concentrate on their learning for extended periods and, as a result, they disrupt the flow of lessons.

Most pupils value and respect the contributions of their peers and respond positively to feedback from others, overall. They use 'Working Walls' proactively to support them to complete activities. They show an interest in their work, particularly when it is tailored to correspond to their interests, for example when following the success of Delyth the sheep in local agricultural shows. Many pupils concentrate on tasks for extended periods. However, at times, a few pupils are too willing to ask for support from adults rather than persevering when they face difficulties. As a result, they do not develop their independent learning skills robustly enough.

Many pupils show a willingness to undertake leadership roles, such as the digital wizards, and to be members of the '*Cymry i'r carn*' group and the school ambassadors. As a result of these responsibilities, they take their duties seriously. They are beginning to influence the school's work, for example by making a successful application to the local authority for money to invest in board games to promote the use of the Welsh language. However, on the whole, they are not given enough opportunities to influence the school's arrangements.

Pupils feel safe at the school. They have a sound understanding of how to stay safe online and know who to approach for advice if anything is worrying them. Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of how to stay healthy by eating and drinking sensibly. They also appreciate regular sessions working in the school garden and taking part in physical education lessons.

Teaching and learning experiences

The leaders and staff of the schools in the federation work together strategically to design and deliver a curriculum that fosters and implements the principles and ethos of the Curriculum for Wales. They provide a purposeful curriculum that responds specifically to the context of the school and its local community. For example, as part of a project on the Aberystwyth Show, pupils take advantage of opportunities to make and sell crafts to raise money for the school.

Teachers and staff across the federation provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop Welsh speaking and listening skills. For example, as part of the 'Ein Cynefin' project, pupils create podcasts which include the history of the National Eisteddfod. However, a minority of pupils turn to English, for example when talking to their peers in formal and informal situations, particularly at the top of the school. Teachers raise pupils' awareness of international languages successfully. For example, recently, the oldest pupils have deepened their understanding of international languages by beginning to learn French and Polish. As a result, pupils show curiosity towards developing linguistic skills and develop tolerance towards other cultures.

Staff have positive working relationships with pupils, which motivate them to learn in an inclusive learning environment. Overall, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and treat all pupils equally and with respect. Across the school, assistants support teachers effectively to develop pupils' skills. Where teaching is at its best, teachers plan purposefully to ensure that lessons are interesting and stimulating. In these cases, teachers share objectives clearly and use a range of purposeful methods and resources to develop many pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. They ensure that pupils immerse themselves in their learning and concentrate on tasks, and work with their peers regularly to achieve to the best of their ability. However, a few teachers do not provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills regularly enough. For example, these pupils are too dependent on writing guides, which limits their ability to write increasingly freely and at length.

Teachers assess pupils' progress continuously in lessons and provide oral feedback to support them to improve the standard of their work. Leaders and teachers hold joint discussions regularly to discuss progress in pupils' skills. In the best practice, staff use this information purposefully and adapt provision to support pupils to make constructive progress in their skills. However, feedback does not always provide pupils with enough guidance to know what to do to improve their work and how, particularly their extended written work.

Staff provide numerous opportunities for pupils to compete in a wide range of sports competitions, in addition to beneficial opportunities for them to take part in activities in the local community. For example, pupils take advantage of the opportunity to take part in the local fun run and the oldest pupils are given opportunities to go camping.

Staff provide a valuable range of extra-curricular clubs, for example a hockey club. As a result, pupils develop positive attitudes towards staying healthy.

Care, support and guidance

Staff treat pupils with respect and the caring ethos permeates the school. Pupils' well-being has been a clear priority during the pandemic and continues to be a leading aspect of the federation's work.

The school provides effective learning support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). Teachers and assistants use a good variety of different techniques to support pupils. Provision includes beneficial opportunities for pupils across the school to develop reading skills in groups with further support. Staff support pupils' emotional, health and social needs effectively by providing specific activities and support sessions, where appropriate. For example, they organise beneficial activities about periods for a group of pupils across the federation.

Teachers produce useful one-page profiles for ALN pupils effectively, which include pupils' interests and a description of what helps them to succeed. Staff track the progress of ALN pupils carefully by scrutinising progress in support programmes, scrutinising work and holding regular professional discussions. As a result, they have a sound understanding of the progress that learners with ALN achieve.

Staff adapt provision regularly to meet the needs of pupils across the school. For example, after analysing a pupil well-being questionnaire, projects were planned to target boys' interests, such as animation tasks and a theme based on agriculture. However, on the whole, pupils have a limited influence on what they learn. Representative groups, such as the school council, are beginning to influence the school's arrangements, for example representatives of '*Cymry i'r carn*' choosing Welsh music to be played around the school.

The school has beneficial collective worship arrangements, which include opportunities for pupils to reflect quietly and praise through singing. It uses technology effectively to hold joint assemblies between pupils at both schools in the federation, which supports their moral development consistently. Staff promote values such as respect and empathy successfully, for example by presenting different pumpkins to stimulate a discussion about celebrating diversity. However, they do not promote pupils' understanding of children's rights regularly enough.

Staff have a sound awareness of the process of reporting safeguarding issues. Both schools work closely with the local authority's family engagement officer to monitor pupils' punctuality and attendance.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is based on the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales. She is supported by a team of conscientious middle leaders and governors. Together, they set a decisive strategic direction for the schools in the federation. They succeed in creating and maintaining a strong ethos of co-operation. As a result, all staff in the federation consider themselves to be members of one team.

The governing body acts as a critical friend that supports and challenges staff effectively. Governors ensure that the school promotes healthy eating and drinking effectively, for example by ensuring that pupils only eat fruit during snack time. They make decisions about expenditure appropriately, for example by prioritising funding to create an outdoor area as an extension to the class for the oldest pupils.

Leaders allocate the budget to support the school's priorities suitably, for example to improve pupils' Welsh language skills as they returned to school after the pandemic. Grants are used effectively, including the pupil development grant, to improve pupils' outcomes. For example, part of the 'Winter of Well-being' grant was used to invest in netball resources, and a proportion of the 'Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards' grant was used to refurbish the school library. As a result, pupils develop positive attitudes to keeping fit and reading.

Leaders foster and develop a productive working relationship with various partners. They have robust transition processes with the Cylch Meithrin playgroup that is located on the school grounds. Staff share useful information with parents. For example, they use a secure online digital system effectively to share photographs, videos and pieces of work for pupils and groups across the federation. They provide information for parents about what they can do to support their children's learning, for example by providing ideas on how to enrich reading sessions at home. During open evenings that are provided for parents, staff share a list of useful suggestions to encourage them to talk to their children about different aspects of their work.

The school has a number of productive partnerships with the local community. For example, it works regularly with Aberystwyth Arts Centre to enrich pupils' creative experiences. Pupils work with members of the local community to take care of the school's chickens. By doing so, they develop their Welsh speaking and listening skills effectively with each other and adults.

Leaders ensure that the school's safeguarding culture is prominent throughout the school, for example by ensuring that all staff know how to respond to the concerns about child protection.

The school's self-evaluation processes have been established robustly over time, but due to COVID-19, some activities had to be postponed for a time. Recently, following an unstable period in terms of staffing and the pandemic, leaders have completed a whole-federation self-evaluation activity titled '*myfyrio, ailgydio a thanio*', which includes scrutinising books. They identify many strengths and areas for development correctly. However, the full range of quality assurance activities has not yet resumed.

Leaders organise a wide range of professional learning activities for staff. For example, as a result of a range of information and communication technology (ICT) training, teachers arrange for pupils to be given opportunities to use technology more manageably. Recently, in introducing the Curriculum for Wales, leaders have refined the provision offered for pupils beneficially by introducing French sessions. Leaders support staff to develop their practice and challenge underperformance effectively, where appropriate.

As the school is federated with Ysgol Penrhyncoch, the headteacher spends a percentage of her time at each site and a few other members of staff also teach or

provide support in both schools. All teachers also work together closely to plan learning experiences for pupils across the federation and contribute to professional discussions as one team regularly.

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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