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

A report on

Ysgol Eglwysbach

Eglwysbach
Colwyn Bay
Conwy
LL28 5UD

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Eglwysbach

Name of provider	Ysgol Eglwysbach
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales school
Number of pupils on roll	67
Pupils of statutory school age	51
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	10
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average *(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 23.0%)*	8.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) *(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 16.1%)*	*
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	62.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	September 2015
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	20/01/2014

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 Eglwysbach is a safe, happy and caring community and pupils make sound progress in their skills. Teachers and assistants provide an inclusive, supportive environment that reflects the school motto, *'Wrth gredu yn ein gilydd mae'r hud yn cychwyn'* ('By believing in each other the magic begins'). Pupils are enthusiastic towards their learning and this is reflected in the way in which they work happily with each other. They listen attentively and enjoy learning new things. They persevere successfully to succeed with their tasks. Many older pupils work together enthusiastically and make decisions about their learning.

Most pupils make good progress. Those who are latecomers to the Welsh language make sound progress with the language and gain confidence quickly. Across the school, in most lessons, pupils are dedicated and build on their previous learning successfully. Pupils in the foundation phase classes enjoy a rich range of learning experiences both indoors and outdoors.

The school has responded proactively and creatively to the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. The *'pnawniau prysur'* ('busy afternoons') initiative provides rich opportunities for the school's older pupils to develop and apply their skills independently. Pupils are very enthusiastic and persevere exceptionally well during these activities. The school's curriculum is based firmly in its local area in the Conwy valley. Pupils learn about the myths, history and culture of the area and this enriches their learning successfully.

The headteacher and governors have a clear vision that is based on supporting continuous improvement within a homely and caring ethos. The headteacher has high expectations and sets strategic objectives that focus clearly on raising standards and supporting pupils' well-being. Teachers and assistants are a dedicated team and work together effectively in fulfilling their duties.

Recommendations

R1 Strengthen pupils' reading skills

R2 Expand the opportunities to develop pupils' physical education experiences

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 the *'prynhawniau prysur'* ('busy afternoons') and pupil groups that focus on the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, most pupils' skills are where they are expected to be for their age, apart from their Welsh oracy skills, where a majority are significantly lower than expected. Most make good progress during their time at the school. Pupils who are latecomers to the Welsh language make sound progress in the language and gain confidence quickly. Across the school, in most lessons, pupils recall their previous learning confidently and build on it successfully.

The youngest pupils play happily and independently with their friends in the areas in the indoor and outdoor provision. They maintain their interest well and work together to solve problems. For example, they group different objects together when predicting which ones will sink and which ones will float. They develop balancing skills and physical confidence when using two- and three-wheeled bicycles. They develop a good range of fine motor skills by rolling playdough, by weaving and learning how to cut with scissors.

Pupils in the nursery class, reception and Years 1 and 2 develop confidence and independence by completing different challenges in the learning areas. For example, they create a presentation from the perspective of a child who lives in Africa by recording themselves with a tablet computer. Across the school, pupils speak confidently and politely. Pupils who are latecomers to the Welsh language gain confidence and respond positively to the encouragement to use the language with their friends and adults.

Most pupils in the nursery and reception recognise an increasing number of letters and simple phrases and begin to create the sounds that are associated with them. In Years 1 and 2, pupils enjoy listening to stories and discuss the characters in a lively and enthusiastic manner. Many more able pupils in Year 2 read maturely and freely. They discuss the flow of the story and the characters confidently. A majority of Year 3 and 4 pupils read confidently, discuss their favourite authors and story characters and interest facts they have learned. Many Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrate good translanguaging skills when discussing the importance of the relationship between Welsh vocabulary, English and other modern foreign languages such as French. Many read freely and fluently. However, across the school, a minority are less confident when using reading strategies, such as self-correcting and reading around the text and they do not always consider the text in enough detail.

Many Year 2 pupils show an increasingly sound grasp of simple spelling and punctuation requirements. They write with appropriate accuracy in a variety of contexts and various genres, for example when creating a factual description of how to look after a cade lamb. In Years 3 a 4, pupils compose a poignant letter from a child who moved to the Eglwysbach area to escape the Blitz during the Second World War. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 write to a good standard in Welsh and English. They create extended factual and imaginative pieces that discuss aspects such as the Dolgarrog dam disaster. On the whole, they spell and punctuate with a good level of accuracy.

Across the school, pupils' number, shape and data-handling skills are developing appropriately. In the early years, pupils enjoy measuring their height with wool and placing it on the wall to compare. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 apply their numeracy skills to current and interesting contexts. For example, they find the costs associated with organising a trip to Qatar for the World Cup and discover the cost in pounds by comparing the exchange rate from Qatar's currency.

Many Year 1 and 2 pupils apply various digital skills confidently. Many use green screen technology to create a background for their presentation as part of their theme work. Many use apps effectively to evaluate their work. Most Year 5 and 6 pupils show a good understanding of simple coding to control and input instructions. As part of their *'p'nawniau prysur'* work, they animate local myths highly effectively and add sound.

Older pupils respond maturely to opportunities to choose which activities they would like to complete from a varied offer. For example, they create a research booklet based on the national parks in Wales and research how artists convey mood in their paintings. This work in interesting and innovative. It promotes opportunities for pupils to apply their skills independently in different rich contexts. Most older pupils also learn a great deal through the work of the 'four purposes groups'. Projects that focus on aspects such as Welsh Music Day and the work on a walk for Ukraine are an opportunity for pupils to develop confidence and independence and lead to making decisions about their learning.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils behave well in the classroom, in assemblies and when moving around the school and its grounds. They are very polite and treat their peers, staff and visitors with a mature level of respect. Nearly all pupils are caring towards each other and work and play together happily. They are proud of their school and feel safe within its inclusive and familial ethos. Pupils are happy to discuss any concerns with members of staff and are confident that they will listen to them. Most pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe online.

Many pupils at the top of the school understand the importance of exercise and are confident when discussing the different types of activities that allow them to keep fit. They talk enthusiastically about physical activities, such as swimming, and use the climbing trail on the school grounds to develop their physical skills. Most understanding the importance of healthy eating and the effect this has on physical development.

Most pupils across the school demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. They listen attentively in their classes and enjoy learning new concepts. They show an interest in their work and are willing to persevere to succeed with their tasks. Many older pupils work together maturely and make decisions about the most effective approach to addressing a task.

Across the school, most pupils respond intelligently to feedback from adults and their peers. At the top of the school, they discuss each other's work confidently and refer appropriately to the success criteria. Most pupils have a sound understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. They contribute purposefully to their learning by providing ideas and asking questions about the theme. As a result, they show interest and enthusiasm and persevere when pursuing different lines of research.

Through their awareness of the values that are promoted by the school, most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of moral citizenship. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of supporting others in society and are keen to raise money for local and national charities. For example, they have raised a significant amount of money for children in Ukraine by organising a sponsored walk. As part of their work on children's rights, older pupils are fully aware of the importance of equality. This raises pupils' awareness of the importance of their contributions to create a caring society. They respond very maturely to teachers' prompts when discussing tolerance and awareness of people's rights.

Members of the various school councils are proud of their roles and take their responsibilities seriously. They plan diligently to improve the school. For example, the Criw Cymraeg is very active and has encouraged the local authority to fund musical equipment to promote pupils' use of the Welsh language during break time. They also promote respect for the environment by picking litter and planting plants to make the school grounds more attractive. This develops pupils to become ethical and knowledgeable citizens.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that builds on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills effectively. Leaders have a clear vision to deliver the Curriculum for Wales, which is based on promoting a caring community where pupils are challenged and encouraged to do their best. Leaders, teachers and assistants meet the needs of different groups of pupils effectively, including those with additional learning needs and vulnerable pupils.

The school is developing a curriculum that reflects the nature and context of the community in full, which includes designing learning activities that reflect the linguistic and cultural nature of the area. The curriculum is based on the community of the Vale of Conwy and reflects the area's culture and history effectively. Activities that focus on modern Welsh culture reinforce the school's Welshness successfully. This promotes provision for pupils from different linguistic backgrounds. There is a very close relationship between the school and parents and the flow of information about pupils' progress ensures that parents have up-to-date information about their children's progress and well-being.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to learn about their area and share information about the work and interests of its families. For example, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to bring farm animals into school when preparing a presentation about their interests. This fosters pupils' pride and self-confidence successfully.

Teachers provide authentic and engaging learning experiences for pupils. Provision to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills is effective. The inclusive curriculum promotes a fair opportunity for all pupils to benefit from experiences, including those who are eligible for free school meals. The school plans and delivers learning outside the classroom, which links directly to the curriculum, for example by promoting the use of outdoor areas and using visits to support the development of pupils' understanding. The youngest pupils are given regular opportunities to develop their physical skills, strength and balance through different outdoor activities. Teachers use the school's grounds creatively to promote physical development.

However, opportunities for pupils to develop different skills, such as gymnastics and dance through physical education activities, are limited.

Teachers use pupils' ideas about the next direction for learning skilfully. They have suitable plans to ensure that the areas of learning and experience are given appropriate attention and encourage pupils to share their ideas so that they have ownership of the context for learning. Teachers have developed a specific procedure for recording pupils' progress and evaluate these arrangements to ensure that they provide them with useful information.

Teachers and assistants provide good quality feedback that helps pupils to improve their work. Activities are planned carefully and the level of challenge is adapted in line with the needs of individuals and groups. Where the relationship of written feedback has been developed in full, particularly at the top of the school, pupils have a sound grasp of how to use feedback from peers and teachers when re-drafting and developing their work.

Leaders and teachers respond enthusiastically to the needs of the Curriculum for Wales and plan in line with the areas of learning and experience. Within the foundation phase years, interesting areas provide a rich range of activities for pupils. In the discovery areas, for example, there is a challenge for Year 1 and 2 pupils to imagine that they live in Botswana. They choose clothing for the trip, use a green screen as a background and record themselves describing the experience of living in Africa.

The school has developed the *'p'nawn prysur'* initiative, which provides an opportunity for pupils to develop and apply their skills in various contexts. For example, as part of their work within the *'Rhyfeddodau'* ('Wonders') theme, pupils select activities from a rich range and work on them independently to complete them. They create a research booklet based on the national parks of Wales and research how artists convey mood and ideas by using different media. Pupils respond very eagerly to different activities and persevere exceptionally well during these sessions.

Teachers have developed councils for the four purposes of the curriculum, which are led by groups of pupils in the school's oldest years. They have worked with teachers to create specific project work. Projects that focus on interesting aspects, such as Welsh Music Day, and the work on the Ukraine walk, are an opportunity for pupils to develop their confidence and independence and to guide and make decisions about their learning. These features are very innovative and creative and are a prominent part of the school's vision to introduce the Curriculum for Wales.

Care, support and guidance

The school's staff create a safe, happy and caring community that succeeds in nurturing pupils' personal and social skills successfully. They provide an inclusive, supportive community that reflects the school's motto, *'Wrth gredu yn ein gilydd mae'r hud yn cychwyn'* ('By believing in each other the magic begins'). Support for pupils' emotional, health and social needs is embedded in all of the school's work. This has a positive effect on pupils' well-being and enthusiasm towards learning and is reflected in their behaviour.

The school has responded positively to the various challenges of COVID-19 over the last two years and the strong sense of co-operation between all staff has been key to

this. A great deal of emphasis was placed on well-being as pupils returned to school following the lockdown periods, including holding a series of outdoor sessions to promote their well-being, mental health and co-operation skills. The positive relationship with parents, alongside the strong provision within the school, has meant that nearly all pupils have returned to school life, work and routines successfully.

Celebrating Welshness and being fully bilingual are an integral part of school life. Visitors such as poets, musicians and authors are used extensively to enrich pupils' experiences. For example, pupils benefit greatly from learning about local history and myths, such as the story of the Garrog and the flooding of Cwm Celyn. Teachers provide rich opportunities for pupils to research the effect of events that have had an impact on the area, such as the great storm at Bodnant Gardens and the Dolgarrog disaster. These various links strengthen pupils' sense of belonging to the community and develop their knowledge and understanding of their local area successfully. Teachers also provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of the wider world. A good example of this is the work of older pupils on the leaders of the Senedd and the Westminster government and when researching information about the recent tragedy in Ukraine.

The school's ethos and collective worship assemblies promote pupils' spiritual and moral development successfully. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on values such as fairness, friendship and kindness and to consider the views of others sensitively, for example by discussing the effects of bullying. Discussions about global disasters, such as the war in Ukraine, promote pupils' understanding of the importance of tolerance and the right to be free from harassment.

The school follows established systems to gather information about pupils' progress and achievements. These include summative assessments and informal records, which weave together to create a comprehensive picture of the individual. Teachers use this information appropriately to identify the needs of pupils with additional learning needs at an early stage and provide intervention sensitively and appropriately. The school has responded positively to the reforms to the Additional Learning Needs Act. Teachers create appropriate individual education plans and review these plans regularly with parents. Staff work effectively with a number of specialist agencies, such as language therapists and educational psychologists who provide pupils with valuable support and guidance.

A clear emphasis is placed on pupils' views at the beginning of themes and when planning activities, and also give them regular opportunities to contribute well to the school's life and work, for example through the school council and the councils for the four purposes. Through these councils, pupils are given opportunities to plan, organise and hold a wide and rich range of activities, such as Owain Glyndŵr Day, Welsh Language Music Day, Children in Need and the Ukraine appeal. As a result, pupils play a full part in the school's life and work and develop well as confident and caring learners and citizens.

Provision to develop pupils' creative and expressive skills are successful. Visitors are used effectively to expand pupils' creative experiences, for example when musicians visit the school to compose and perform songs jointly with pupils. This contributes successfully towards increasing many pupils' confidence and their ability to work together effectively. Teachers provide regular and valuable opportunities for pupils to

work creatively with a variety of materials, for example as Year 3 and 4 pupils create an imaginary animal or emulate the work of famous Welsh artists.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Staff encourage pupils to eat healthily and develop their fitness through a variety of physical activities. This promotes pupils' understanding of how to make healthy lifestyle choices and the importance of keeping fit.

The school has appropriate procedures to monitor pupils' attendance. Staff work effectively with parents and welfare agencies to promote good attendance. The school addresses any persistent absences thoroughly.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision that is based on ensuring that pupils and staff maintain continuous improvement in a homely and caring environment. The headteacher has high expectations and sets strategic objectives that focus clearly on raising standards and supporting pupils' well-being. Teachers and assistant contribute towards realising this vision successfully by maintaining values such as caring for each other and fairness for all. Staff's roles and responsibilities are well-defined and all fulfil their duties conscientiously and effectively. Teamwork is a strength at the school, and the dedicated staff work together successfully.

Governors know the school as its community well. They support the school's work and fulfil their duties conscientiously. Many visit the school regularly, scrutinise books and talk to pupils about their work. As a result, they have a sound understanding of pupils' standards of attainment, in addition to the quality of teaching. By receiving and discussing thorough report from the headteacher, they contribute wisely towards setting the school's strategic direction. They use their knowledge and understanding of the school's progress successfully. They role as a critical friend has been established firmly.

Leaders plan carefully to meet national priorities and adapt current scheme of work to reflect the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. Leaders have a sound understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher ensures that there a regular opportunities for teachers to contribute to the school's self-evaluation procedures. Cohesive evaluation procedures contribute beneficially towards setting appropriate priorities to improve provision and raise standards, for example by working together to raise standards of reading. Leaders monitor progress against these priorities regularly. As a result, the school has a strong record of revising its practice and maintaining standards.

Leaders provide beneficial opportunities for teachers and assistants to improve their practice. Staff share good practice within the school by conducting class observations and working together to develop aspects of their curriculum. Following visits to other schools and specific professional learning opportunities, staff lead information-sharing meetings, gain confidence and enrich learning. As a result of training among the staff of local schools, there have been opportunities to scrutinise how pupils gain confidence to improve their work by responding to feedback. As a result of sharing good practice, pupils across the school are less reliant on teachers' feedback. These arrangements have a positive effect on the practical areas in the youngest pupils' classes and the quality of older pupils' written work.

The school works successfully with local schools to improve provision for pupils, for example by planning activities jointly within specific themes. The school works effectively with external agencies, such as social services, educational psychologists and medical experts. These partnerships support the most vulnerable pupils and their families successfully.

The headteacher and governors manage the budget carefully and expenditure links well with plans for improvement. They keep a close eye on expenditure to ensure value for money. The pupil development grant is used appropriately to support eligible individuals.

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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website:
http://www.estyn.gov.wales/

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).

© Crown Copyright 2022: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 20/01/2023