



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

A report on

Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman

**Lôn yr Ysgol
Ammanford
Carmarthenshire
SA18 2NS**

Date of inspection: October 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Name of provider | Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman |
| Local authority | Carmarthenshire County Council |
| Language of the provider | Welsh |
| School category according to Welsh-medium provision | |
| Type of school | Primary |
| Religious character | |
| Number of pupils on roll | 288 |
| Pupils of statutory school age | 231 |
| Number in nursery classes | 20 |
| Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year <i>average</i> (<i>The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 22.9%</i>) | 7.6% |
| 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 11.1%</i>) | 2.2% |
| Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home | 61.0% |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language | 0.0% |
| Date of headteacher appointment | 01/04/2021 |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable) | |
| Start date of inspection | 07/10/2024 |

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

Summary

Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman is a homely and inclusive community that promotes the well-being of pupils and staff extremely effectively. The behaviour of nearly all pupils is exceptionally good and they demonstrate very strong attitudes towards the life and work of the school. The supportive relationship between the school, the community and parents is a strength.

The headteacher has a robust vision based on ensuring that all pupils learn to the best of their ability in a happy and safe environment. She is supported enthusiastically by the staff and governors, who work together effectively to improve the provision that is offered to pupils. One of the obvious strengths is the way in which the headteacher includes all staff and governors purposefully in the self-evaluation process. They conduct a number of monitoring activities each term, which are extremely effective in identifying the school's strengths and all areas for improvement.

The Welsh language and celebrating pupils' Welshness are at the heart of the school's life and work. As a result, nearly all pupils communicate enthusiastically in Welsh and show pride in the culture and heritage of their local area and wider Wales.

Staff have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of all pupils and respond to their needs extremely effectively. As a result, the sense of respect between staff and pupils is a strong feature.

Teachers use a range of learning methods which are effective in developing a wide range of pupils' skills and their knowledge and understanding of that they learn. The curriculum places a firm focus on the local area, which includes interesting opportunities for pupils to learn about the history of their local area, making connections between the lives of people in the past and their lives today. Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to work together in learning sessions, which has a positive effect on pupils' ability to use their thinking skills and develop their ideas with increasing independence. As a result, nearly all pupils develop into confident and happy learners.

Recommendations

We have made one recommendation to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Continue to implement arrangements to alleviate the lack of space in some classes over a short period, with a view to implementing a longer-term plan to expand the learning area.

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main evaluation

Under the headteacher's robust leadership, a dedicated team of staff acts to ensure that pupils learn and develop their skills to the best of their ability. The headteacher models and embraces the values of Welshness, happiness, respect and friendship which form the basis of her vision of creating 'A valley full of learning and healthy laughter, and fire for the language in every small child'. This vision is shared successfully with the school community. One of the school's obvious strengths is the strong sense of team that exists between staff and governors. They work together extremely effectively to improve the provision offered to pupils. In turn, this has a positive effect on the development of nearly all pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

Spotlight – The role and contribution of staff and governors in the self-improvement process:

The school uses a clear range of self-evaluation activities each term, including learning walks, scrutinising work and questioning pupils, which have a very positive effect on the ability of staff and governors to identify the school's strengths and all areas for improvement. Following the monitoring activities, staff and governors meet to evaluate what they have observed. Evaluations focus firmly on the effect of provision on pupils' standards, for example the need to improve pupils' reading skills. Leaders provide staff with training to address the aspects that are in need of attention. They then measure progress against the actions during the next monitoring period. As a result, staff and governors are able to see the effect of improvements to provision on pupils' outcomes quickly, before moving on to further action.

Teachers work together purposefully to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is rooted in the local area. By planning a variety of stimulating and engaging educational activities, they provide valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture, history and heritage of the local area and Wales. For example, staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn about local historical places, encouraging pupils to make comparisons between the lives of residents from different periods and their lives today. Staff work closely with members of the community, which is fundamental in deepening pupils' awareness and appreciation of their *cynefin* or local area.

Spotlight – Developing pupils' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the history of the local area:

Pupils in years 3 and 4 have been studying old maps of the local area to develop their knowledge and understanding of how the town of Ammanford has changed over the centuries.

Pupils developed their map reading skills skilfully by acquiring knowledge of map keys and scales from different periods in history. Within their learning groups, they looked at changes in land use over the centuries and discussed the possible reasons for this. Pupils develop their thinking skills skilfully as they considered changes in the town's population over the ages and the need for more homes, shops and facilities within the area. Year 5 and 6 pupils make further learning connections by looking at

how religion has changed over the past century and a half, and collecting data from gravestones in local cemeteries in the form of a database.

Following this, pupils worked together to develop their writing skills by creating a report to summarise this information for others.

The purposeful use of the rich learning areas is a clear strength of provision. Staff provide engaging and stimulating learning activities in the learning areas which develop a range of pupils' skills very effectively. However, space is limited in some of the classrooms and on the playground. The school works around this through creative timetabling and appropriate use of staff.

The Welsh speaking and communication skills of nearly all of the youngest pupils develop soundly, for example when role-playing in the school cafe. As they move through the school, the literacy skills of nearly all pupils develop well in both languages. The oldest pupils' Welsh speaking and communication skills develop extremely securely, for example as they try to persuade visitors to the Pendine area.

Nearly all pupils make sound progress in their reading and writing skills, for example as the youngest pupils read books about important Welsh buildings and use this information to write interesting facts for others. Nearly all pupils' mathematics and digital skills develop soundly from an early age. Nearly all pupils apply their numeracy skills confidently and with increasing independence. For example, the oldest pupils create a bus timetable for a visitor tour around the local area, calculating the distance between bus stops and showing the arrival and departure times in the form of a 24-hour clock.

Teachers use a range of effective teaching methods successfully. They question pupils skilfully, which extends their knowledge and understanding of different contexts further. Teachers share the aim of learning sessions and include pupils purposefully when discussing what is important to achieve within activities in order to succeed. They maintain a suitable pace for learning sessions and provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas with discussion partners and within groups. They develop pupils' independent learning skills effectively, for example by encouraging pupils to consider the best way to plan and present their completed work.

Teachers provide purposeful oral feedback which enables pupils to identify the next steps in their learning. They provide timely opportunities for pupils to consider the quality of their own work and, at times, the work of their peers.

All members of staff have a close and warm relationship with pupils. They use a range of effective behaviour management techniques and, as a result, nearly all pupils behave well and demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. Staff promote important principles, such as kindness, respect and being friendly effectively. Within collective worship sessions, for example, pupils are given valuable opportunities to discuss the importance of being informed and caring citizens.

Through the various committees, pupils work together successfully in contributing their ideas on how provision could be improved across the school. For example, the Healthy Living Council has been at the forefront of purchasing new physical

education equipment while raising money by holding fitness activities on the school field.

The school has robust processes for identifying pupils with additional needs at an early stage. Staff provide purposeful support programmes that are effective in responding to pupils' needs and track their progress regularly. Staff work closely with parents to seek their views and share timely information about their children's development.

The productive relationship between the school, the community and parents is an obvious strength. The headteacher communicates effectively with parents and shares relevant information about the school's news and events in a timely manner. Staff work diligently to ensure that parents receive regular information about their children's progress. They seek parents' views regularly and use this information purposefully to make improvements to provision.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are not a cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for the safety of the site are not a cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's funding appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer questionnaires and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers, staff and the governing body/members of the management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers 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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report refers to different quantities and proportions, e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| nearly all = | with very few exceptions |
| most = | 90% or more |
| many = | 70% or more |
| a majority = | over 60% |
| half = | 50% |
| around half = | close to 50% |
| a minority = | below 40% |
| few = | below 20% |
| very few = | less than 10% |

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