



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

A report on

Ysgol Henry Richard

**Tregaron
Ceredigion
SY25 6HG**

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 Henry Richard

Name of provider	Ysgol Henry Richard
Local authority	Ceredigion County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	All-age school
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	381
Pupils of statutory school age	349
Number in the sixth form	N/A
Number in nursery classes	19
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 all-age sector is 20.2%</i>)	17.4%
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 all-age sector is 8.6%</i>)	6.6%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	53.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/02/2018
Start date of inspection	14/10/2024

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 Henry Richard operates effectively as one caring community for pupils aged 3 to 16. Across the school, staff promote pupils' well-being successfully and provide strong pastoral support. As a result, many pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.

The headteacher and his senior leadership team share a clear vision based on celebrating the community of Tregaron and Welshness. In turn, teachers provide learning activities that are often inspired by the local area. This is a notable aspect of the school's work. Many lessons across the school are interesting and challenge pupils appropriately. In these lessons, teachers make skilful use of techniques such as questioning and modelling. As a result, many pupils make at least appropriate progress in lessons.

On the whole, many pupils make suitable progress in developing their skills. Provision for developing pupils' creative skills is a strength and pupils benefit from a variety of opportunities to perform in different contexts. Many pupils develop literacy skills successfully, particularly in Welsh and English lessons. However, although pupils are given opportunities to apply literacy, numeracy and digital skills in their work across the curriculum, these activities are not always planned purposefully enough to enable pupils to develop their skills progressively over time.

Leaders have suitable processes for self-evaluating provision and planning for improvement, but they do not always focus enough on the effect of their work on pupils' outcomes. Although pupils' attendance levels have increased recently, they have not improved to pre-pandemic levels. The number of pupils who are absent persistently is also too high.

Recommendations

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Ensure that self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes focus on the effect of provision on pupils' outcomes
- R2 Strengthen provision for pupils' progressive development in their skills
- R3 Reduce the rate of persistent absences

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Teaching and learning

Across the school, nearly all pupils behave politely and respectfully towards their peers and adults. Many have positive attitudes to their learning. During learning sessions, many pupils concentrate on their tasks and engage purposefully with their tasks. A majority work together effectively in pairs or groups and contribute confidently. A majority show resilience when facing challenges. Overall, many pupils across the school make adequate or better progress in sessions. In the few lessons where teaching is at its best, pupils make strong progress. In the few cases where teaching is less effective, they make limited progress.

Most teachers ensure a supportive and hard-working environment in their classes by setting high expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour and commitment to their work. In most sessions, teachers have sound subject knowledge. They use terminology and vocabulary purposefully to feed and support pupils to develop their linguistic skills, including pupils who are newer to the Welsh language. These teachers guide learning by giving clear instructions and explanations so that pupils understand the nature of the tasks set. They also ask suitable questions to help pupils recall previous knowledge and walk around the class purposefully to check that pupils complete their work. Many teachers plan valuable activities that build on each other gradually to enable pupils to learn and make suitable progress. For example, they plan '*Bant â'r Cart*' starter activities to engage pupils' interest and help them to recall previous knowledge. In these lessons, teachers ensure that there is an appropriate pace to the lesson and check learning regularly. In the youngest pupils' classes, teachers ensure that foundation learning methods are implemented effectively. As a result, many of the school's youngest pupils develop independent learning skills successfully.

In the few sessions where pupils make very strong progress, teachers motivate pupils by inspiring them to be curious and enthusiastic. They have high expectations in terms of what pupils can achieve and model how they could achieve work of the highest standard. These teachers plan extremely skilfully, explain subject concepts masterfully and ask questions skilfully. They identify mistakes in learning in a timely manner and adapt teaching to respond to pupils' needs skilfully. They offer constructive feedback on the spot to support pupils to make very strong progress.

In a few sessions, pupils make more limited progress. In these cases, teachers often plan a series of repetitive tasks that keep pupils busy rather than considering how all pupils' understanding can be developed and extended. Often, these teachers do not ask probing enough questions so that pupils are given an opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding or they do not challenge misconceptions in a timely enough manner. They over-direct learning, which means that there are fewer

opportunities for pupils to develop their independence. They miss opportunities to model work of the expected standard and ask and answer questions on behalf of pupils.

In most cases, teachers provide appropriate written feedback. Spelling and grammatical errors are often given beneficial attention by using a common marking code. In the few best examples, teachers provide purposeful and specific feedback which enables many pupils to enrich the content and quality of their written work. For example, the effective use of the 'yellow box' strategy in Welsh books helps pupils to improve the quality of their work. Across the school, there is too many variation in the quality of the oral and written feedback provided and, as a result, it does not have enough of an effect on improving the standard of pupils' work.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that incorporates and celebrates the context, culture and heritage of the local area extremely successfully. This realises the school's vision of 'developing learners who are an active part of their local communities'. Staff have worked effectively with pupils, parents and the wider community to establish a vision where the school provides learning experiences that engage pupils' interests, spark their imagination and are accessible to all.

Spotlight – providing a curriculum that considers the local context effectively

The provision offers valuable opportunities for pupils to influence their learning purposefully. They suggest exciting and imaginative activities they would like to complete to answer the 'prompt' question that is set at the beginning of each unit of work. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 consider 'How can we build a community?' before planning the 'climax' of the unit, which is a visit to the local hospital to play games and keep the oldest patients company. As a result, pupils develop important values, such as empathy, along with a sense of pride and love towards their *cynefin*, or local area.

Pupils' spiritual and moral awareness is supported appropriately through the 'Munud i Feddwl' (Pause for Thought) programme and school assemblies. A few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their awareness of different identities and to challenge stereotypes and prejudice in their work across the curriculum. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 offers a range of subjects that reflect the context of the school and pupils' interests well.

Most of the school's youngest pupils develop sound speaking and listening skills from a young age. During their time at the school, a majority of pupils develop into confident speakers who use subject terminology purposefully. A minority of the school's oldest pupils contribute short answers and a few are shy and reticent when giving answers orally or when discussing with a partner.

By the time they reach Year 2, many pupils read with a fluency that is appropriate for their age and use purposeful strategies to read less familiar words. By Year 6, most read confidently in both languages, with many showing an enjoyment of reading, and referring to their favourite authors. Pupils' positive attitudes towards reading across the age range is a strong feature of the school. Many of the school's oldest pupils are able to recognise stylistic features and annotate purposefully within texts, for example to analyse how authors create atmosphere effectively within text. In subjects

across the curriculum, many pupils locate information appropriately. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to apply higher-order reading skills in these areas, for example to find implied meaning in sources and consider the reliability of a text.

Beneficial activities in the foundation learning areas support the school's youngest pupils to develop their fine motor skills effectively. This, in turn, enables many of them to acquire early writing skills appropriately. In the best practices, which can be seen in Welsh and English lessons in Years 7 to 11, many pupils develop the ability to write successfully in a variety of genres. They consider the audience and purpose of the task effectively. For example, they write a monologue of 'the wall', inspired by the history and local characters of the Tregaron market. However, where provision is less effective, pupils are not given enough purposeful opportunities to write at length.

Across the school, many pupils make appropriate progress in their numeracy skills over time. The youngest pupils, for example, begin to recognise simple shapes. They build on their understanding over time and, by Year 6, they use formulae effectively to calculate the area of squares and rectangles. Many Year 9 pupils use data correctly, for example to analyse a graph and predict the resistance in a wire. However, at times, numeracy tasks are not planned in a coherent or purposeful enough manner in work across the curriculum.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of how to stay safe when working online. Many use an appropriate range of digital packages to support their learning appropriately. On the whole, they make suitable progress when applying digital skills in their work across the curriculum. However, opportunities to apply digital skills are not planned purposefully enough.

Across the school, many pupils' creative skills develop successfully, for example in art and textiles lessons. Many benefit from purposeful opportunities to apply their creative skills through specific projects, for example when creating a music video with well-known singers to promote a local rock event. Many perform in a polished manner in different contexts, for example in Eisteddfodau, concerts and shows. Many pupils develop physical skills successfully through a good range of activities in regular physical education lessons.

Well-being, care, support and guidance

Ysgol Henry Richard excels in the care and well-being of pupils. Staff have excellent knowledge of the pupils and their families. It is a close, caring and inclusive community with a family feel and a strong sense of belonging to the school.

Nearly all pupils feel that they are respected and treated fairly. The school's values of respect, belonging, ambition, kindness, fairness, Welshness and perseverance are central. Moral messages are shared purposefully to promote inclusive and strong attitudes among pupils in relation to equality, diversity and racial tolerance. A few opportunities are provided to develop pupils' understanding of different identities, perspectives and values. The pastoral team provides valuable pastoral support and assistance, including the 'Hafan' and 'Caban' provision.

Spotlight – working with the community to support pupils’ well-being

Leaders identified the need to ensure that pupils and families receive information about how to stay safe during the summer holidays. Staff organised a valuable family health and well-being market called ‘Llwybrau Lles’. This was an opportunity for families to visit information stands run by pupils and staff, along with a range of external partners. Emphasis was placed on pupils’ interests. For example, information was provided on how to stay safe at the beach, online and in agricultural contexts. Valuable information was also presented about healthy eating, mental health and period dignity to help pupils develop their understanding of their personal health and well-being over the holiday period.

Most pupils are confident that the school responds appropriately and effectively to any instances of bullying. They feel happy at school. The school promotes healthy attitudes and behaviours effectively, which leads to high levels of awareness of healthy choices among pupils. Health and Well-being lessons provide a variety of opportunities to discuss important issues, for example, when considering how to alleviate anxiety and how to keep the mind healthy.

The school has effective procedures to ensure that pupils settle quickly on entry to the school. Staff get to know pupils’ needs at an early stage by forging links with families before pupils start nursery or before they join in Year 7, in addition to discussing pupils’ needs as they transition from one phase to the next. This ensures a strong transition experience for pupils. There are comprehensive systems in place to support and advise pupils as they prepare to embark on the next stage of their journey, whether it be educational or into the world of work.

Nearly all pupils are encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities. There is an extensive offer for a myriad of interests across several areas, including sports and the arts. The Welsh ethos and activities to promote Welshness across the school are a notable strength. For example, pupils are rewarded with language tokens to spend in the Welsh language shop every half term. This contributes to their enthusiasm to speak Welsh at school.

Through a wide variety of councils and committees, pupils benefit from opportunities to develop important leadership skills. They undertake responsibilities that have a very positive influence on the life and work of the school. The School Council operates very effectively and ensures valuable changes, for example by contributing to the process of redesigning the toilets and providing period dignity boxes. As a result, most pupils feel that the school considers their views and acts on their ideas.

The additional learning needs (ALN) team has good knowledge of pupils’ needs. They monitor pupils’ progress appropriately from their starting points and co-ordinate the interventions that are available to these pupils purposefully. The school works closely with a variety of external agencies to provide additional support for these learners. Purposeful training is organised for the school’s staff on methods of supporting pupils who need additional support. All of this enriches staff’s understanding of the needs of individual pupils and ensures that these are met successfully.

Leaders raise the awareness of pupils and families of the importance of attendance through assemblies and correspondence. Leaders track pupils' attendance effectively, including tracking the progress of specific groups of pupils. They work with external agencies to provide appropriate support to support pupils to re-engage with their learning by making valuable adjustments to the school curriculum. Although pupils' attendance has improved since the pandemic, the rate of persistent absences is too high.

Leading and improving

The headteacher is a passionate leader who has conviction in his mission to develop independent pupils who show personal resilience and high aspirations for the future. This is based firmly on placing the school at the heart of its community and on the school's motto, '*mewn llafur mae elw*' ('in labour there is gain'). The headteacher has a clear and ambitious vision of a school that provides valuable opportunities to ensure that pupils leave ready to contribute fully to their local communities. This vision is embraced by the school's stakeholders.

The responsibilities of the senior leadership team have been allocated sensibly. They support the headteacher effectively, undertake their roles diligently and work together successfully. They identify appropriate improvement priorities that place a suitable focus on important aspects, such as leadership and teaching.

Middle leaders are passionate about their work and have an appropriate understanding of their role. Senior leaders have strengthened line management arrangements and, as a result, regular line management meetings provide beneficial opportunities to discuss suitable issues. The school has an appropriate calendar of activities for self-evaluation which include learning walks, scrutiny of books and seeking the pupils' voice on a regular basis. Overall, although leaders at all levels consider provision, they do not evaluate the effect of provision on pupils' standards effectively enough. As a result, they are not completely aware of the strengths and areas for improvement in their area of responsibility.

Leaders have been successful in responding to national priorities, such as reforming ALN provision, focusing on the Welsh language and developing a curriculum that reflects the school's vision in full. Leaders have introduced a variety of strategies to alleviate the effects of poverty. They use data and strong knowledge of their pupils to identify and provide these pupils with educational and well-being support. Although leaders have implemented appropriate strategies, they have not had enough of an impact on improving the attendance of pupils who are absent persistently.

The school includes all staff in an appropriate range of professional development activities. There is a clear link between these activities and the improvement priorities. Nearly all members of staff value the professional learning opportunities and have taken advantage of regular opportunities to share good practice and work with external agencies and partners. The school has suitable performance management arrangements. Staff targets focus appropriately on the school's improvement priorities.

Governors are enthusiastic supporters of the school. They have an appropriate understanding of the school's priorities and are developing their role as a critical

friend. Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding within the school, where the well-being and safety of pupils is a priority for all staff. Governors and the headteacher, with the support of the local authority's finance officer, monitor expenditure carefully.

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:

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).