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

A report on

Ysgol Borthygest

Mersey Street
Borth y Gest
Porthmadog
Gwynedd
LL49 9UF

Date of inspection: November 2024

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for

Education and Training in Wales

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Borthygest

Name of provider	Ysgol Borthygest
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	Category 3 – Welsh-medium school
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	N/A
Number of pupils on roll	31
Pupils of statutory school age	24
Number in nursery classes	*
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 22.9%)*	6.9%
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 11.1%)*	29.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	20.8%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	11/10/2016
Start date of inspection	18/11/2024

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

The headteacher's strong leadership, along with the enthusiastic staff, provide an exciting curriculum for pupils and establish extremely attractive learning environments for them. They succeed in developing most pupils' skills in a good range of stimulating and exciting activities. This engages their interest and ensures progress in their understanding and knowledge effectively. However, at times, teachers do not provide learning activities that challenge pupils sufficiently.

The school is a safe space where staff nurture pupils' respect, well-being and care, in addition to ensuring their pride in their community and in Wales successfully. The headteacher and staff know the pupils and their families well. They promote the school as a homely and caring place, which encourages pupils to demonstrate empathy and positive behaviour and enjoy their learning in a happy environment.

An obvious strength of the school is the way in which pupils from all linguistic backgrounds come to speak Welsh quickly. The headteacher and staff work diligently to support pupils to continue to improve their Welsh language skills as they move through the school. They encourage pupils to use the language regularly in their learning and play.

Recently, staff have given pupils opportunities to share ideas and suggestions about different aspects of the school. Although pupils have established beneficial groups, such as the school council, their influence on the school's life and work remains limited.

Leaders identify the school's strengths and what needs to be improved appropriately. Overall, leaders have a good track record of implementing improvements, which leads to an increase in pupils' skills and nurtures their well-being well. However, evaluation arrangements do not measure progress against the improvement priorities effectively enough. As a result, it is not always clear whether improvements will be maintained consistently over time.

Recommendations

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

R1 Ensure that all learning activities challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability and that teachers' feedback moves learning forward

R2 Sharpen arrangements for measuring progress against the school's improvement priorities

R3 Extend opportunities for pupils to influence the life and work of the school

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Teachers and staff develop pupils' skills effectively and build well on their previous learning. Most pupils develop their knowledge and understanding and make sound progress in their literacy, numeracy and digital skills, along with a range of other skills in various areas of learning. Provision for promoting health and fitness is popular among pupils and valuable opportunities to develop their social and emotional skills have a strong effect on their well-being. There is extremely effective provision to support pupils to develop their creative skills and artistic talents successfully.

Whatever the pupils' linguistic background, provision ensures that they come to speak Welsh quickly. This is a strength and has a positive effect on their pride in their language, their roots in their local community and their Welshness. Leaders are aware of the need to continue to prioritise the aspect of developing pupils' Welsh language skills further. The school's current priorities continue to place an increasing emphasis on this aspect.

The headteacher, staff and parents are proud of the homely, caring and inclusive feel that is nurtured and developed at the school. Staff take pride in knowing the pupils and their families well. The supportive working relationship supports all pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning. This, along with the staff's high expectations, creates an environment that encourages pupils' willingness to learn. As a result, most pupils behave very well and greet each other, staff and visitors politely and respectfully. They are very willing to discuss their learning and aspects of the school's life and work. Pupils work together successfully, support each other to overcome difficulties and persevere successfully with their learning. They show empathy when learning and playing with each other completely naturally.

Across the school, teachers plan extremely stimulating and attractive learning environments to support teaching and learning effectively. Across the school, teachers make excellent use of the classrooms, the learning environments, the school's outdoor learning area, the forest area and their local area to reinforce learning extremely successfully. They use stimulating and polished learning resources, for example artefacts from the Second World War and a hammer and nails for pupils to use in the workshop. This provides pupils with valuable opportunities to connect directly with their learning in real-life situations.

Staff provide a purposeful, broad, interesting and exciting curriculum which covers the areas of learning and experience successfully. Teachers consider pupils' ideas regularly as they plan learning activities, which engages their interest in the termly themes. Teachers' skilful design of the curriculum means that activities give pupils valuable opportunities to apply their skills across different areas of learning. An obvious strength is the way in which the curriculum is planned carefully by using

community resources, external organisations and relevant visitors to extend pupils' learning experiences further. Teachers develop learning activities that encourage a sense of belonging successfully by incorporating the history and geography of the local area, Wales and the wider world in their teaching.

During learning activities, teachers use questioning methods and timely encouragement to support pupils' progress and ensure their understanding. They use assessment and feedback arrangements appropriately, overall. Teachers use assessments of what pupils achieve regularly and occasional assessment outcomes to plan the next steps in their learning appropriately. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning and that of their peers so they can identify what to do to develop their learning further. At times, teachers also do not provide activities that offer sufficient challenge to pupils to stretch them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Staff support pupils' spiritual and moral awareness successfully. By presenting themes such as loyalty, rights, and empathy, pupils consider the views and values of others successfully. Through this, pupils develop an appropriate understanding of themselves and of individuals who are different from them. To develop pupils' personal and social skills, staff provide a variety of opportunities for them to undertake leadership responsibilities such as through the activities of the school council, the Welsh language charter groups and the road safety council. However, overall, the work of the councils does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to influence the wider life and work of the school.

The headteacher and governors provide a purposeful and beneficial strategic direction for the school, which focuses effectively on developing an inclusive culture and ethos to improve pupils' well-being and learning. The headteacher has a clear vision based on providing stimulating and rich learning experiences for pupils in a happy and safe environment. The headteacher's strong leadership, along with the enthusiastic staff, provide an exciting curriculum for pupils. Staff vary the teaching and learning methods beneficially to support pupils to make consistent progress. Once of the school's notable qualities is the extremely attractive learning environment which supports pupils to enjoy and immerse themselves in their learning. This is a strong feature of the foundation learning provision.

Overall, leaders provide training for staff and support them to take part in professional learning activities appropriately. This helps the teaching team to refine their practice successfully which, in turn, has a positive effect on pupils' well-being and learning.

The school's self-evaluation procedures are appropriate, include all staff and are based on relevant first-hand evidence. This, together with the leaders' good awareness of pupils' progress and the school's context within the local area, enables them to identify the school's current strengths and set sensible priorities for improvement. However, the evaluation arrangements for measuring progress against the improvement priorities are not effective enough. As a result, it is not always clear how these improvements will be maintained over time, for example in providing more opportunities for pupils to influence the life and work of the school further.

Governors provide the school with firm and proactive guidance, which offers appropriate support and challenge. By talking to pupils and staff in the learning environment and receiving reports from the headteacher, they have a suitable understanding of standards and provision. They manage the school's resources prudently.

The headteacher has developed extremely productive relationships with parents. He is visible and communicates with parents regularly to inform them about the school's events and to raise awareness of pupils' achievements and successes.

Additional information

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

The school's arrangements for management 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.

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