



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Abererch
Abererch
Pwllheli
Gwynedd
LL53 6YU**

Date of inspection: February 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Abererch

Ysgol Gynradd Abererch is situated in the village of Abererch near Pwllheli in Gwynedd. It serves the village and the surrounding rural area. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work, and English is introduced in key stage 2. There are 81 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 13 part-time nursery age pupils. They are divided into three classes.

The average proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 7%. This is lower than the national percentage (19%). Approximately 67% of pupils speak Welsh at home and very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 21% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is similar to the national percentage. Very few have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in March 2012 and the school was last inspected in May of the same year.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress and achieve well. Most pupils across the school have positive attitudes towards learning, and concentrate and persevere well for extended periods. Nearly all pupils' behaviour in the classroom and around the school is excellent. They are very caring towards each other and treat adults and visitors with a high level of respect.

The quality of teaching across the school is good and there is an effective working relationship between adults and pupils, which fosters a purposeful learning environment. A range of interesting learning experiences is provided for pupils, which encourages them to enjoy their work and give of their best.

The headteacher provides robust and effective leadership, which ensures a clear strategic direction for the school and a culture that promotes continuous improvement. All members of staff work together very effectively to ensure that all aspects of the school's work have a positive influence on pupils' achievement and wellbeing. Governors have a sound understanding of strengths and areas for improvement, and they use their knowledge purposefully to hold the school to account for its performance successfully.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure better opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to develop their English writing and numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R2 Ensure that pupils in key stage 2 present their work neatly

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, most pupils' basic skills at least correspond to what is expected for their age. The oral skills of pupils from non-Welsh-speaking homes develop at a very early stage. Nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress and achieve well by the time they reach Year 6. Most develop thinking skills of a high standard by the end of key stage 2, and consider and identify with different points of view intelligently, for example when discussing a topic such as recycling.

Most pupils' oral skills are developing well across the school. They listen attentively and use an increasing range of appropriate vocabulary when talking to each other and adults. By the end of the foundation phase, many use similes and adjectives skilfully, for example when presenting an interesting talk about their favourite animals. Most pupils in key stage 2 discuss current affairs, such as the importance of reducing the use of plastic, meaningfully and maturely. Nearly all pupils at the top of the school attain a high standard of bilingualism and change freely from one language to the other.

Nearly all pupils in the foundation phase make good progress in their reading skills. By the end of the phase, many handle books confidently and recall different texts knowledgeably, for example when reviewing their favourite books by Angharad Tomos. By the end of key stage 2, many read with accuracy and fluency in Welsh and English. They develop their skills appropriately when gathering information in their investigative work, for example when using different sources in their study of the Victorian era and writing a report about the leather back turtle. Most older pupils' higher order reading skills are developing successfully. They predict, explain, question and summarise information very effectively.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their writing skills purposefully and vary their sentences skilfully. They enrich their work with a wide range of simple adjectives, similes and rhymes, for example when writing a poem about 'Living in the Garden'. Many pupils in key stage 2 write intelligently for different purposes in Welsh and English, and show a sound awareness of different forms of writing. By the top of the school, they choose varied vocabulary and spell, punctuate and paragraph correctly. Many write interesting, good quality extended pieces for a variety of purposes and audiences, for example when reviewing the book 'The Wreck of the Zanzibar'. However, they do not develop their English writing skills effectively enough across the curriculum, and a majority of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are not always neat.

Most pupils' numeracy skills are developing effectively. By Year 2, most handle money correctly and develop a good understanding of measurement, time and data. They develop their numeracy skills successfully across the areas of learning, for example when measuring and weighing vegetables that have been grown in the school garden. In key stage 2, most pupils have a good understanding of number strategies and use them successfully to solve problems. They measure angles correctly and calculate the area of a variety of shapes skilfully. Following

experiments on how to accelerate the process of melting ice, they present their work appropriately in the form of a graph, and interpret the results effectively. However, pupils do not develop their number skills consistently enough across a range of other areas.

Most pupils make effective use of their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support their work across the curriculum. By the end of the foundation phase, they input a series of instructions correctly in order to move a toy along a specified path. Most use a simple database well to record information about the height of members of the class. Most pupils in key stage 2 build well on this firm foundation. They create multimedia presentations successfully in order to present their work on life in the sixties. They use the internet successfully to gather information about aspects of life during the Victorian era and use a formula intelligently to make calculations related to selling and buying in the school's bank.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. They concentrate and persevere well for extended periods, and use strategies and a growth mindset to develop as confident and enthusiastic learners. From an early age, they develop a sound understanding of what they need to do to become successful learners. They understand how to improve their work and refer regularly to the 'niwronau nerthol' (mighty neurons) and various characters such as 'Gwenda Gwella', 'Cadi Canolbwyntio' and 'Twm Trïo' as they strive. During their lessons, they listen attentively to each other and wait patiently for opportunities to contribute. They are willing to try and many turn mistakes into useful learning targets. They contribute very positively towards supporting and improving each other's learning.

Nearly all pupils behave excellently in the classroom and around the school. They are very caring towards each other, and treat adults and visitors with a high level of respect. One of the school's exceptional features is the very kind and affectionate way in which the older pupils care for the younger pupils, and take their responsibilities seriously. This contributes well to the school's inclusive and caring ethos. Nearly all pupils feel safe and free from physical and verbal abuse at the school. All pupils develop their understanding of the importance of making correct and wise decisions about online safety and substance misuse.

The pupil's voice is important and nearly all pupils take full advantage of the opportunity to express concern, say thank you and offer ideas about the school's life and work. A cross-section of members has been elected to different groups, such as the eco group, the school council and the nurture group, and they fulfil their work skilfully. They have a successful influence on improvements for pupils and raise their awareness of the rights of the child successfully. Parents provide financial support to ensure that pupils' ideas are realised, for example to purchase ICT resources and develop a new garden for the school.

Most pupils understand how to stay healthy and express this clearly when discussing their eating and drinking habits. By taking part in a comprehensive programme of running regularly around the school, they have a good understanding of keeping fit.

Pupils take pride in the opportunity to support various charities and, recently, a significant amount was raised to sponsor the education of a pupil in Nepal. This has a positive effect on their awareness of the needs of others in their community and the wider world.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching across the school is good. Teachers have high expectations. They take advantage of regular opportunities to challenge pupils by questioning them skilfully and encouraging them to think. They use a variety of teaching styles and share appropriate learning objectives with pupils to ensure that they understand the purpose of learning. There is an effective working relationship between adults and pupils, which fosters a purposeful and supportive learning environment. This enables staff to provide suitable support to individuals and specific groups. Teachers and assistants work well together and pupils' behaviour is managed very effectively.

Teachers and support staff give pupils useful oral feedback and question them effectively to explore their understanding. This encourages them to reflect on their learning and evaluate their efforts regularly. Where appropriate, teachers also give pupils constructive written feedback, which enables them to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

The school is completely committed to the principles of the Welsh Language Charter and implements it successfully. Developing aspects of the Welsh language and culture is one of the school's strengths. Staff model language effectively, which strengthens pupils' oral skills very successfully and has a positive effect on pupils' linguistic development, particularly those from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds. In their family groups, pupils from each class have suggested interesting activities for 'Cymru Cŵl' week. They are given good opportunities to learn about old traditions, such as collecting Calennig and learning traditional Welsh songs. This raises their awareness of their Welshness and their identity successfully.

The rigorous way in which the curriculum is planned stimulates and engages pupils' interest successfully so that they apply themselves fully to their learning and make good progress. A range of interesting learning experiences is provided for them, which stimulate thematic work successfully. In the best examples, teachers provide valuable opportunities at the beginning of each theme for pupils to suggest ideas and make a decision about what they would like to learn.

The principles of the foundation phase have been established firmly. Continuous access to the outdoor area ensures that many pupils benefit from stimulating activities, both indoors and outdoors. Effective focus and continuous activities are provided, which include beneficial opportunities for pupils to investigate, role-play, build and practice their physical skills. This nurtures positive attitudes towards learning and encourages them to persevere for extended periods.

Teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh literacy and ICT skills in a variety of curricular areas. However, there are few opportunities for them to develop their English writing and numeracy skills as effectively across the curriculum in key stage 2.

Staff plan an interesting range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, which contribute effectively towards their learning experiences. These include various visits to the local area and further afield. For example, they have visited a local sailing centre and worked with Natural Resources Wales to learn about wildlife, rivers and safety at train stations.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes the importance of good behaviour, courtesy, respect and commitment very successfully. As a result, pupils behave excellently, treat each other and visitors with respect, and respond conscientiously to their activities. The school has established an effective system for caring for pupils around the school by giving older pupils responsibility for looking after the younger ones and playing with them. The school has appropriate arrangements for eating and drinking healthily, and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. As a result, nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily, feel safe at the school, and respond with passion and enthusiasm to the various opportunities that they are given.

By holding weekly 'Family Group' meetings, staff ensure that pupils are given valuable opportunities to discuss their concerns or express their views about the school's life and work within small groups. This has a positive effect on pupils' self-confidence and provides successful opportunities for them to develop their personal and social skills. The school holds effective collective worship periods regularly, which promote pupils' understanding of equality and diversity, and foster their spiritual and moral skills successfully.

The school has effective arrangements for tracking pupils' progress and wellbeing. This enables teachers to gather up-to-date information about their progress and attainment. Beneficial use is made of this information to target support quickly for individuals and specific groups. All pupils with additional learning needs have a relevant individual education plan. These identify strengths and areas for improvement, and teachers consider their contents carefully when planning their lessons, in addition to any other specialist support that may be needed. Staff monitor the progress of pupils who receive additional support carefully and adapt provision for them appropriately, where necessary.

The school has strong and useful partnerships with parents, the community, other schools and external agencies. The relationship between the school and parents is very robust. By sharing newsletters, updating the school website and through social media, the school provides regular information for parents about issues relating to everyday events and what their children are learning. The school also provides them with valuable information about educational resources that they can use at home to support their children's work.

The school has an effective relationship with the local community. A wide range of visitors is used successfully to broaden pupils' cultural experiences. For example, artists, poets, religious leaders and famous Welsh people visit the school regularly to share their experiences and special talents with pupils. This contributes successfully towards developing pupils' awareness of their area, their heritage and their Welshness.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides the school with robust and effective leadership, which ensures a clear strategic direction and a culture that promotes continuous improvement. She has a clear vision that is based on ensuring that the wellbeing of pupils and staff is at the heart of the school's work, and that there is a strong focus on encouraging learners to attain good academic standards. The whole school community is committed to the school's motto, namely 'Cyfle i Bawb Lwyddo' (An opportunity for all to succeed). One particular feature of the school is the way in which all members of staff work together effectively. This ensures that all aspects of the school's work have a clear and positive influence on pupils' achievement and wellbeing and ensures a homely ethos and an orderly community.

Procedures for evaluating the school's current standards are comprehensive, extensive and rigorous. The self-evaluation report identifies areas for improvement successfully and is based firmly on the findings of an effective monitoring procedure. The pupil's voice is an integral part of the self-evaluation procedures, and leaders respect pupils' views and give them serious consideration. A particular feature of this is the improvement plans that different groups of pupils prepare to identify the improvements that they consider to be important. All groups explain clearly what they will do, set challenging success criteria, refer to responsibilities and identify a realistic timescale for action. This has had a good influence on improving lunchtime arrangements and developing the school garden as a learning resource. Similarly, careful consideration is given to parents' views. A specific example of how their ideas have influenced the school's arrangements is the system for pupils to change their reading books and how often.

Priorities in the school development plan derive directly from the findings of the self-evaluation procedure and are identified clearly and in detail. The plan is a concise document with a suitable number of priorities for action over a period of three years. Actions allocate responsibility clearly and identify monitoring and evaluation activities effectively. The school's ability to plan and ensure improvement is evident over a number of years and includes the recent success in improving the reading skills of a number of pupils across the school.

The school has thorough procedures to manage teachers' performance. The headteacher, teachers and assistants have clear targets that link suitably with the areas for improvement. This has a positive effect on the standard of teaching and learning, and the consistent method that is used to implement strategies such as assessment for learning in lessons. The headteacher ensures that there are suitable opportunities for staff to benefit from effective professional learning activities. The school has forged an effective working relationship with other similar schools and has benefited greatly in areas such as planning for the foundation phase. This has led specifically to improving the various learning areas in order to stimulate pupils to become more independent learners.

Members of the governing body are supportive and dedicated. They have begun to visit classes and scrutinise pupils' work. As a result, their understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development is improving. The school has prepared a useful booklet for them, which lists examples of challenging questions for them to

ask the headteacher. The booklet is a useful guide, and the questions enable them to hold the school to account for its performance more effectively.

The headteacher and governors manage the budget efficiently, and expenditure links well with the school's plans for improvement. They use the pupil development grant prudently to raise the standards and improve the wellbeing of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, particularly their reading skills and self-confidence.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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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