



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Maesincla
Maesincla
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1DF**

Date of inspection: February 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Maesincla

Ysgol Gynradd Maesincla is situated in the Maesincla area of the town of Caernarfon, Gwynedd. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are currently 269 pupils on roll, including 30 part-time nursery age pupils. A little over 31% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is significantly higher than the national percentage of 18%. Eighty four per cent (84%) of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified slightly over 34% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is significantly higher than the national percentage of 21%.

The school was last inspected in June 2011 and the current headteacher was appointed to the post in January 2014.

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

Ysgol Maesincla is a happy, hardworking and highly inclusive community, where pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils speak Welsh with each other completely naturally in all aspects of the school's life and work. Most pupils of all abilities make good progress in their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and apply them confidently in an engaging range of contexts across the curriculum. Teachers and support staff work together effectively to ensure interesting and challenging learning experiences for pupils.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is excellent. Nurture classes respond highly effectively to pupils' emotional and behavioural needs. As a result, all pupils feel part of the school's family and participate fully in their learning.

The headteacher and other leaders set an excellent strategic direction for the school. They have established very thorough and robust procedures, which have been embedded successfully, and which lead to positive developments in provision. All staff have a very sound understanding of their role in implementing the school's development priorities and ensuring improvement.

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

Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' higher order reading skills

R2 Provide regular opportunities for pupils to make decisions about how and what they learn

What happens next

Estyn will invite Ysgol Gynradd Maesincla to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the effect of nurture classes on pupils' development, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, a majority of pupils' literacy, numeracy and social skills are lower than expected for their age. However, most make good progress over time. Most recall their previous learning successfully in lessons and show enthusiasm towards their work.

On entry to the school, many pupils in the nursery class lack confidence when speaking, and this reflects their relatively low starting point. However, they make sound progress quickly. Many pupils in the reception class speak confidently in various contexts, for example when describing the powers of their favourite superheroes. Many pupils in Years 1 and 2 express themselves eloquently, for example when they discuss different bones that they found in the sand pit. Most pupils in key stage 2 listen carefully to their peers and adults, and discuss maturely in class discussions. They use the Welsh language completely naturally and have a broad and rich vocabulary. Pupils' spoken language in both languages, where appropriate, is a strength.

Soon after starting at the school, many pupils develop early reading skills quickly. They come to recognise and use letters to create familiar, monosyllabic words confidently. By the end of the foundation phase, many show a good understanding of punctuation, and they use appropriate strategies when trying to read unfamiliar words.

Across key stage 2, many pupils read with increasing confidence in both languages, in line with their age and ability. They enjoy discussing their books and give due attention to punctuation in order to make sense of the text. Many find information in factual texts without any fuss, for example when discussing their work on the Second World War. However, many pupils' higher order reading skills have not been developed in full. This limits their ability to skim and gain a general idea of text without reading it in detail.

In the foundation phase, many pupils write simple sentences that convey meaning confidently. Many pupils in Year 2 write increasingly lengthy pieces in familiar contexts successfully. For example, they re-write and adapt the story of Owain and the Dinosaur.

Many pupils in Years 3 and 4 write effectively in a good range of genres across the curriculum. For example, they write a detailed factual report on Patagonia as part of their theme work.

By Years 5 and 6, many pupils write maturely and confidently in a range of factual and creative contexts. They develop and adapt their content by drafting their work and scrutinising the content in detail, in order to develop it to the best of their ability in Welsh and English. A notable example is the eyewitness account of the bombing during the Blitz in the Second World War.

In the foundation phase, most pupils count confidently and develop a sound understanding of number bonds. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a sound grasp of the properties of different shapes, and they use data to create graphs by using computer programs. They use standard units of measurement confidently, for example when building a shelter of a particular size. Many use weighing equipment successfully, for example when weighing dinosaur dung in the continuous provision.

Most pupils in key stage 2 use the four number rules confidently. They have a sound understanding of shape and space. They apply their number skills successfully when solving problems, for example when comparing the temperature in different cities across the United Kingdom.

Across the school, most pupils develop sound ICT skills. They apply their skills effectively to support their work across the curriculum. For example, many pupils in the foundation phase create presentations on how to stay safe online. They log in to different programs confidently, and save and retrieve their work confidently. Many pupils in key stage 2 build skilfully on their previous learning. By Year 6, they use a wide variety of programs purposefully to reinforce their work. For example, they choose the most effective methods of using a camera when preparing to create a film.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils develop as confident and kind individuals within the school's highly caring, supportive and inclusive ethos. Nearly all pupils feel safe and know whom to approach if they are worried about anything. Most respect the school's values and socialise with their peers in a caring manner.

Most pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with respect and courtesy. During their activities and around the school, most pupils behave well. They play maturely with their friends and show care towards others. Pupils respect diversity and are tolerant of differences. They have a good awareness of the importance of fairness and equal opportunities. Pupils who face challenges in terms of maintaining good behaviour are supported effectively and respected by their peers.

Most pupils show an interest in their work and are ready to learn promptly at the beginning of lessons. They apply themselves fully to their work and contribute well during activities. Most concentrate for periods that are appropriate for their age and ability. They develop perseverance when facing difficulties confidently. Most pupils work maturely and realise the importance of responding to feedback when seeking to improve their work. They listen well to the views of others, for example when discussing ideas to be shared with the local council about increasing the number of refuse bins in the Maesincla area.

Most pupils show pride in their school and are very willing to play their part in the school's life and work. They are enthusiastic and their role as leaders is developing well. The school council considers the suggestions and views of other pupils to improve the school environment. For example, they have raised money to ensure climbing equipment for the playground by organising a sponsored walk. Members of the eco council encourage other pupils to recycle and save energy by turning off the light and closing the doors to save on heating. Digital leaders support pupils to develop their ICT skills successfully. They present information to the school and parents, which promotes their understanding of online safety successfully.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and keeping fit. They develop a good awareness of the importance of personal hygiene, including looking after their teeth. They also develop a good awareness of the effects of substance misuse. They take advantage of opportunities to take part in physical activities regularly during lessons and at break times. Many pupils compete successfully in local, regional and national sports competitions. This has increased their confidence and nurtures their co-operation skills successfully.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers use a range of teaching methods effectively, which ensures that most pupils apply themselves fully to their tasks. Most teaching across the school engages pupils' interest successfully.

All staff use consistent methods in leading learning, which has a positive effect on pupils' confidence and progress. Staff encourage pupils to persevere when facing difficulties. As a result, many pupils show good resilience when working.

Teachers and assistants develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding effectively by providing a range of stimulating learning experiences. Staff have high expectations of pupils, and the level of challenge is in line with their ability in nearly all lessons. Teachers, with effective support from assistants, provide an appropriate range of activities for pupils, and support and encourage them skilfully to succeed. As a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress. Staff provide effective opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills well, for example by studying the work of Welsh artists, such as Kyffin Williams. They use external agencies successfully to develop pupils' musical skills. A notable example of this is the local project, whereby music specialists work with different classes over time. Pupils learn about pitch and rhythm in music by taking part in fun, practical activities. These activities contribute significantly to their skills, confidence and wellbeing.

Across the school, staff encourage pupils to work conscientiously, to persevere with their tasks and to develop a growth mindset. As a result, most pupils make good progress, whatever their ability. However, in a few activities, opportunities for pupils to make purposeful decisions about how and what they would like to learn are limited.

Teachers share clear lesson aims and, from the outset in the nursery class, share success criteria with pupils in order to build their ability to evaluate their own work and measure their success. They plan opportunities for pupils to develop their own success criteria and, as a result, most understand how to evaluate their work against specific success criteria.

Staff provide pupils with regular and effective feedback, and provide valuable opportunities for them to respond to written feedback. Pupils are given effective and regular opportunities across the school to reflect on feedback and evaluate the work of their peers against specific criteria. As a result, most pupils have a sound understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

The school plans the curriculum effectively. Staff plan together successfully in order to ensure consistency in pupils' learning experiences across the different years.

Schemes of work provide a wide and effective range of learning experiences for all pupils. Teachers share their expertise successfully, both internally and with other local schools.

The principles of the foundation phase have been embedded in full. Staff make effective and flexible use of the school's resources, including the outdoor areas, in order to develop pupils' skills successfully. From the outset, activities encourage pupils' independence and, as a result, many develop as increasingly independent learners at an early stage. Teachers and assistants plan the continuous provision and enhanced provision effectively, and ensure an interesting range of experiences for pupils.

The requirements of the literacy, numeracy and ICT frameworks have been embedded firmly in the school's schemes of work. Teachers plan a wide and rich range of learning activities that allow pupils to develop their confidence in their skills, and practice them in a rich range of contexts across the curriculum. For example, pupils in the nursery class count how many blocks are needed to build a tower that is as tall as they are, and Year 2 pupils work independently to create a den that is 30cm wide and 30cm long.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school has very robust arrangements for tracking pupils' progress, and leaders and teachers use them very effectively. They draw on a detailed and rigorous range of information about pupils' achievement and aspects of their wellbeing. One of the school's greatest strengths is the highly successful way in which staff use this information to plan to develop pupils' social and emotional skills. Staff analyse and use the results of all of these activities and assessments highly effectively in order to measure and promote progress. Arrangements for identifying, responding to and acting on specific pupils' needs are rigorous and successfully.

The school holds nurture classes of excellent quality, which have been planned very skilfully. This provision meets the needs of vulnerable pupils highly effectively and successfully. One of the greatest strengths of this provision is the gentle way in which staff ensure that pupils develop robust social skills. As a result, pupils in these classes develop a very sound understanding of what they need to do in order to forge a good relationship with others. Transition arrangements between the induction classes and the mainstream are highly successful. Staff include pupils fully in the activities of the mainstream classes and, as a result, they participate purposefully with their peers. Across all classes, staff have high and consistent expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour. Staff implement simple rules and strategies successfully and consistently in order to ensure that the learning community is happy and inclusive.

The school uses very creative methods to include parents in their children's work. A successful example of this is the regular periods that are provided for parents and carers to visit classes and attend literacy and numeracy lessons with their children. Regular meetings with parents and the very good quality of the written reports on their children's progress and development provides them with rigorous and valuable information. As a result, the school has a very close and supportive relationship with parents. This is a very positive and successful feature of the school's work.

Leaders and teachers track pupils' literacy and numeracy skills very carefully. They prepare purposeful activities to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Intervention programmes for pupils with additional learning needs are very effective. Individual education plans include detailed and measurable targets, and respond very well to pupils' specific needs. They are evaluated regularly and discussed with parents and pupils. As a result, most pupils make good progress from their starting points.

The school provides rich opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The school has appropriate arrangements for eating and drinking healthily. Staff promote a balanced diet and keeping fit successfully. For example, by providing an effective range of extra-curricular activities, and through specific activities such as yoga, the school encourages pupils to exercise regularly. Teachers promote a sound awareness of online safety among pupils very effectively. Through visits by local agencies, such as the police, the school ensures that pupils understand the dangers of substance misuse.

The school provides effective opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a range of assemblies and other specific periods. It organises regular visits to local areas to support theme work. As a result, most pupils know their local area very well and show a thorough understanding of Welsh culture. The school promotes pupils' understanding of other beliefs and religions successfully. For example, it teaches them about the Diwali festival and the Chinese New Year. The range of visitors, including weekly musical workshops and workshops by various artists, contributes very successfully to pupils' ability to take creative risks and persevere with their work.

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

Leadership and management: Excellent

The school's management procedures are coherent, rigorous and highly effective. The headteacher's vision is based firmly on ensuring the wellbeing and raising the standards of all pupils. The school's strategic objectives support this vision very successfully. All members of staff understand their responsibilities rigorously and fulfil their duties very conscientiously. Staff's leadership skills at all levels have been developed in full, and the effect of their work on the quality of teaching and pupils' standards is very clear. They have high expectations and share positive features of provision with each other highly effectively in order to ensure continuous improvement. The ethos of teamwork is one of the school's strengths.

Arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching are very effective. The headteacher's observations of teaching sessions go hand in hand with a mentoring programme that is led by teachers. As a result, there is a very good balance between the level of challenge and the support that is given to staff. These arrangements contribute very successfully towards ensuring a good and consistent quality of teaching across the school.

The school succeeds in achieving local and national priorities successfully. For example, provision to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is thorough and has a very positive effect on pupils' progress. One of the school's greatest

strengths is the way in which leaders have reduced the effect of poverty on pupils' achievement. As a result, most pupils make sound progress from their starting points.

Members of the governing body have extremely thorough knowledge of the school's work. They contribute fully to the self-evaluation process and work effectively with leaders to set a clear strategic direction for the development of the school. By scrutinising books, tracking pupils' progress and conducting learning walks, they have a detailed understanding of the school's performance. Their knowledge enables them to be successful critical friends.

All members of staff have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Self-evaluation arrangements are effective and based on a wide range of reliable evidence. The school improvement plan includes purposeful and detailed actions. Leaders measure progress regularly and rigorously, and respond quickly to adapt action when necessary. As a result, the improvement plan guides the school's work very effectively.

The school is a very successful learning community. Performance management arrangements are efficient and link directly with the school's priorities and the needs of individual staff. Leaders ensure that there are rich opportunities for staff to improve their practice. For example, following training, staff have created a very special ethos at the school. They model the excellent practice of treating others with respect and courtesy highly skilfully. As a result, the school is a safe, happy place where everyone can learn productively. Leaders promote the development of staff as leaders highly effectively, both inside and outside the school. For example, members of staff lead on specific areas across the local authority, such as providing additional support to promote the wellbeing of vulnerable pupils.

The school uses its resources efficiently and proportionately. There are enough experienced teachers and effective assistants to deliver the curriculum successfully. Assistants are an asset to the school. They work extremely successfully with teachers to ensure excellent care and support for pupils. The school's expenditure links appropriately with its strategic priorities. Leaders keep a close eye on expenditure to ensure value for money. The school makes very good use of the pupil development grant to improve provision to develop the literacy and numeracy skills, and wellbeing, of those who are eligible for free school meals.

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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Publication date: 24/04/2019