



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Wirfoddol Llanllwni
Llanllwni
Pencader
SA39 9DX**

Date of inspection: November 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Wirfoddol Llanllwni

Ysgol Wirfoddol Reoledig Llanllwni is situated in the village of Llanllwni, in Carmarthenshire local authority. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 38 pupils between 4 and 11 years old on roll, including three full-time nursery age pupils. Pupils are divided into two mixed-age classes.

Over a three-year-period, around three per cent of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national percentage of 18%. Sixty five per cent (65%) of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and 13% speak English as an additional language. The school has identified around 18% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is lower than the national percentage of 21%.

The school was last inspected in January 2013 and has been under the care of the headteacher of a nearby school since 2015, who spends two days a week there.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

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

The school is a caring and inclusive community that encourages its pupils to develop a high level of respect and tolerance towards others. Pupils' behaviour is very good across the school and they have positive attitudes to learning. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress from their starting points.

Staff work together closely and supportively as a team in a Welsh environment. However, teachers do not always have high enough expectations in terms of pupils' standards or academic aspirations. As a result, around half of pupils do not develop as independent or ambitious learners.

Leaders identify the school's strengths well and, on the whole, areas for improvement. However, monitoring procedures and improvement plans are not always robust enough to identify or address important areas for improvement.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all of the school's monitoring procedures and improvement plans are clear and focus firmly on improving standards and provision
- R2 Embed all the principles of the foundation phase to ensure that all pupils develop good independent learning skills
- R3 Raise teachers' expectations in order to provide an appropriate challenge for pupils to achieve to the best of their ability
- R4 Improve pupils' reading skills in Welsh and English, where appropriate

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, the basic skills of around half the pupils are higher than expected for their age. As they move through the school, many pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress from their starting points. However, a few more able pupils make limited progress.

Most pupils across the school listen well to their teachers and are very willing to offer answers or comments when discussing their work with each other. Most foundation phase pupils make good progress in their use of the Welsh language from the time that they start at the school. For example, they perform shows in the class theatre based on characters from the book 'Ryan a'i Wobr Benblwydd' naturally. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils communicate soundly in Welsh when discussing various subjects. A few less confident pupils communicate in English and change from one language to the other when discussing their work.

Most pupils' reading skills are developing suitably in line with their age and ability. The youngest pupils recognise letters and sounds and are beginning to create words confidently. By the end of the foundation phase, most develop to become purposeful readers, and read with accuracy and fluency. Throughout key stage 2, most develop as moderate readers in both Welsh and English. Many use their reading skills confidently to organise information from various sources when tracing the history of Christmas customs in the time of Queen Victoria, for example. However, only a few pupils show enjoyment when reading and elaborate when discussing their favourite books.

In the foundation phase, many pupils make sound progress in their ability to write for different purposes. They use increasingly complex vocabulary and phrases, vary their sentences simply and use punctuation purposefully, for example when writing a report about the autumn. However, many pupils use scaffolds often, which limit their ability to write independently. In key stage 2, a majority use various writing genres effectively in both languages. By Year 6, many pupils present their ideas and knowledge effectively, and show a sound grasp of spelling patterns, paragraphing and punctuation in both languages. A good example of this is the portrayal that they have written of Twm Carnabwth and the scripts that they have created from the story 'The Stick Man'. The standard of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work varies too much across the school.

Most foundation phase pupils have a good understanding of specific numeracy concepts. Many reception-age pupils develop their understanding of mathematical language by measuring the length of different scarves by using non-standard units. By Year 2, many use their knowledge of numeracy to discover the halves and quarters of numbers effectively. Most foundation phase pupils create graphs effectively. By the end of the phase, they interpret data sensibly, for example when collecting information about the most popular toy in the class. In key stage 2, most pupils make good progress in their mathematical skills in mathematics lessons and build on their previous learning successfully. Many pupils use their number skills

confidently to collect, record and analyse data. However, pupils do not apply their numeracy skills regularly enough or to the same level when working independently.

Many pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop positively as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, many create and present information successfully by using a word processing program, and a few pupils e-mail ideas to each other confidently. They use an electronic tablet effectively when collecting and presenting data, and to record lessons in order to assess them. Most pupils in key stage 2 use the internet effectively to search for information and create multimedia presentations successfully when presenting their work on their favourite interests. They are beginning to use spreadsheets suitably in order to calculate the capacity of different stadiums in Japan and create a database of pupils' favourite sports effectively. Older pupils in key stage 2 develop their control skills successfully by using a three-dimensional printer to create goods for the school's Christmas fair.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils show pride in their school. They feel safe there and are happy to discuss any concerns with members of staff. Most pupils have a sound understanding of how to stay safe online.

Nearly all pupils' behaviour is consistently good. They are polite and treat their peers, staff and visitors with respect. Most pupils are very caring towards each other, and work and play together successfully. The familial ethos and pupils' closeness to each other are very effective through the work of the 'playground buddies'. 'Buddies' keep a very close eye on the foundation phase pupils and offer immediate support to any pupil who needs a friend.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of how to stay healthy by eating a balanced diet and drinking water regularly. Most pupils' understanding of the importance of keeping fit is developing well. For example, through their theme 'how to keep the body healthy', Year 6 pupils discuss intelligently the effect that physical exercise has on the body.

Many pupils across the school have positive attitudes to learning. They listen attentively to teachers' instructions and concentrate well on their work during lessons. Most are enthusiastic learners who apply themselves confidently to new experiences. For example, key stage 2 pupils show effective resilience and perseverance when creating a three-dimensional racing car from their own designs for the 'Cwmni' schools competition. This successful co-operation is a strong feature and can be seen in both classes. Pupils respect the contributions of others and most respond positively to each other's ideas. Many pupils are beginning to contribute beneficially to their own learning by suggesting ideas to be included in the theme's challenges. Year 3 and 4 pupils are keen to develop their physical skills, for example by playing a game of touch rugby. Older pupils in key stage 2 are beginning to develop a suitable understanding of how to improve their own work.

Pupils shoulder responsibilities enthusiastically. They are beginning to undertake their work conscientiously and confidently, and show an effective understanding of their leadership roles within the school. Members of the school's councils and the

Criw Cymraeg make a beneficial contribution to school life. For example, the Criw Cymraeg organised a folk dancing session to promote their fellow pupils' understanding of Welsh culture successfully during 'Cymraeg Cŵl' week.

There are close links between the school and the local community. Nearly all pupils take part in a number of activities, such as singing in a nearby food festival and working with young farmers, who are former pupils, to organise 'Llanllwni Fun Day'. Many older pupils socialise with elderly people in the village to listen to stories about the area. As a result, pupils expand their knowledge and understanding of their local area intelligently and develop well as moral and conscientious citizens. Many pupils take part in planning fundraising activities for local and national charities, which raise their awareness of community issues purposefully.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Staff provide effective opportunities for pupils to learn about the characteristics of their area, in addition to Welsh history and culture, through a beneficial range of activities at school and during visits to places of interest. A good example of this is the key stage 2 visit to Llyn y Fan Fach to strengthen pupils' knowledge of the legend of the Lady of the Lake. The school provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to compare their environment with contrasting ones, such as Cardiff and Llangrannog, successfully. The school's provision to develop the Welsh language enables many pupils to make good progress in learning the language and using it in different contexts. Staff use the 'Criw Cymraeg' efficiently to promote the Welsh language among their peers by playing Welsh games with them on the playground. On the whole, staff model accurate spoken language for pupils in Welsh, within lessons and at other times.

Teachers plan varied themes that promote learning and, on the whole, add soundly to pupils' knowledge and understanding. They provide various experiences for pupils, which engage their interest successfully. For example, a representative from a renewable energy company visited the school to present and discuss the argument for and against wind turbines to pupils in key stage 2. Activities such as this enrich learning effectively.

Very recently, staff have begun to adapt their planning in order to prepare to deliver the new curriculum for Wales. They have presented 'challenge' sessions in key stage 2 to encourage pupils to work together in small groups, and discover and investigate various subjects. A good example of this is the activity to create a database of the nutrition in different foods. There are many effective opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across other areas of the curriculum. Similarly, teachers plan successfully to deliver the requirements of the digital competence framework to pupils. They provide effective opportunities to enable them to use their ICT skills regularly in other subjects, such as presenting a Welsh legend by creating a sound clip. However, long-term plans do not always identify clearly enough how learning experiences in science or other specific aspects of the curriculum build methodically enough on pupils' skills, existing knowledge and understanding across the school. Opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in various subjects are also inconsistent.

Best practice in teaching is based on effective co-operation between teachers and support staff to provide interesting learning experiences for pupils regularly. In around half of lessons, staff remind pupils effectively about their previous learning and present learning objectives and instructions to them clearly. They ask a wide range of beneficial questions, which help to extend their learning successfully. However, across the school, staff's expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are inconsistent. As a result, activities are not always challenging enough, particularly for more able pupils.

Teachers give pupils purposeful oral feedback on the quality of their work. Written comments to celebrate pupils' success are consistent across the school; however, the next steps are not specific enough to develop pupils' skills further. Many pupils are beginning to assess their own work and that of their peers satisfactorily.

A majority of the principles of the foundation phase have been established suitably. Teachers provide appropriate focus activities for pupils, but opportunities for them to develop their independent skills through continuous activities are limited. Adults often over-direct activities and, as a result, limit opportunities for pupils to make specific choices about their learning. Use of the outdoor area to develop pupils' creative and physical skills is limited.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The quality of care, support and guidance that is provided by the school is effective and ensures that pupils develop a sound understanding of values, such as honesty and fairness. The caring and inclusive ethos has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and behaviour. Staff know the children very well and respond sensitively and effectively to their individual emotional needs. As a result, pupils feel that they are valued, and this helps to develop their self-confidence and self-respect.

The school has effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and wellbeing on their journey through the school. Teachers use this information purposefully in order to identify pupils with special educational needs in literacy or numeracy, and provide intervention for them, when necessary. All pupils with special educational needs have an appropriate education plan that focuses very well on their specific needs. Targets are suitable and are shared purposefully with staff, parents and pupils. Staff provide beneficial intervention to support pupils to make good progress towards their targets. Teachers work with pupils and parents to monitor these plans regularly.

There is a robust link between the school and parents, and all members of staff promote an open and co-operative culture, which succeeds in ensuring their beneficial commitment and support. Increasing use of social media succeeds well in sharing the latest information with parents about the school's events and activities. The parents' association works closely with the school to organise activities during the day and in the local area. This strengthens the community ethos effectively.

The school provides numerous opportunities for pupils to have their say through a variety of pupil forums. These have a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and the school's day-to-day life. A good example is the school council's contribution to the new school uniform policy, which ensures that the policy's requirements are suitable for all genders.

Provision to develop pupils' moral and social skills is effective. Through joint assemblies, a close link with the local vicar and taking part in special services in the village church, pupils' spiritual skills are developed appropriately. Staff are beginning to plan opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and awareness of other parts of the world suitably. However, opportunities for pupils to consider different beliefs and cultures, and reflect on values, are very limited.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. Staff encourage pupils to eat a healthy diet by providing a fruit shop and encouraging them to drink water often throughout the day. Extra-curricular clubs and the work of the bronze ambassadors promote pupils' understanding of the importance of keeping fit successfully. The school has effective partnerships with a wide range of external agencies that provide good support for learners. A good example of this is the regular visits from the police liaison officer to teach pupils about a range of subjects in relation to keeping safe, such as substance misuse.

The school's provision to develop pupils' cultural and creative skills is sound. The school is developing a tradition that ensures regular and beneficial opportunities for pupils to take part in concerts, compete in the Urdd Eisteddfod and take part in the chairing ceremony at a nearby eisteddfod. Visitors are used appropriately to expand pupils' artistic experiences, for example as they work with a Welsh artist to create attractive banners. These opportunities enrich pupils' experiences suitably and increase their self-confidence efficiently.

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

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The headteacher, in consultation with other stakeholders, has developed a vision that provides a basis for the inclusive and caring ethos that exists within the school. All staff and the school community work well together to ensure that pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of their work. The mission statement, 'Inspiring Children – Inspiring the Future', is at the heart of a few of the initiatives that are presented to pupils, for example as they take part in a practical project to develop their communication and creative skills. On the whole, the school's leadership ensures that many pupils make sound progress during their time at the school.

Staff are dedicated, work together closely as a team and undertake their responsibilities conscientiously. They show a purposeful commitment to promoting improvements by coming together to discuss progress regularly and planning jointly. This provides an appropriate focus for staff's work. However, their contributions towards trying to ensure long-term improvements are inconsistent.

The school is beginning to respond purposefully to local and national priorities. For example, staff are preparing enthusiastically to begin to respond to the requirements of the new curriculum for Wales, and the positive effect of a specific initiative on improving the school's Welsh ethos can also be seen.

The school is developing as an appropriate learning community. Performance management arrangements make a satisfactory contribution to staff's professional

development and enable them to improve their practice. Recently, this has been developed further, for example as they work specifically with other local schools to develop the pupil's voice as part of planning. It appears that this has begun to improve opportunities for pupils to develop their skills independently and take more responsibility for their own learning in key stage 2, but it is too early to measure this strategy's true effect on standards.

Under the headteacher's leadership, the school, over time, has undertaken a wide range of self-evaluation activities. These include analysing pupil performance data, scrutinising their work, lesson observations and seeking the views of pupils and parents. Although these processes enable the school to identify useful priorities for improvement, actions are not robust enough and leaders do not allocate enough time for targets to become embedded and have a positive enough effect on provision and pupils' standards of attainment. The current priorities in the development plan do not reflect the school's true situation closely enough, in terms of identifying the need to improve important areas, such as ensuring a balanced curriculum for all pupils and ensuring consistency in the standard of teaching.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and fulfils its statutory responsibilities effectively. Through regular reports from the headteacher, data analysis and conducting visits to the school, governors have a sound understanding of pupils' attainment and progress. In their role as critical friends, members are beginning to challenge the school occasionally and hold it to account for its performance.

The school has a suitable level of teaching staff and support staff and it uses them appropriately to support individuals and enrich learning. Expenditure links closely with the school's objectives, targets and improvement plans. Although the headteacher and governors monitor and manage expenditure carefully, and ensures that financial resources are used fully to support priorities for improvement, the school is in a situation of overexpenditure. The pupil development grant is used prudently to improve provision to develop the literacy and numeracy skills and wellbeing of pupils who are eligible to receive it. As a result, these pupils make sound progress from their starting points. The school benefits from the significant and regular contribution of the parents' association to expand the opportunities that pupils receive outside school. A strong feature is the way in which the school succeeds in attracting significant sponsorship from a nearby energy production company to contribute towards buying technological resources. This has a positive effect on improving pupils' ICT skills.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read 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 classes, including learning support groups 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 and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- 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' wellbeing, 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

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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