



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Llanbryn-mair
Llanbryn-mair
Powys
SY19 7AB**

Date of inspection: November 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Llanbrynmair

Ysgol Gynradd Llanbrynmair is situated in the village of Llanbrynmair, in Powys local authority. There are 60 pupils between 4 and 11 years old on roll. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.

Over a three-year period, around 7% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals, which is slightly lower than the Welsh average of 18%. Around half of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and all pupils are from white British backgrounds. Welsh is the main medium of teaching and learning, and the aim is to ensure that all pupils are fluent in Welsh and English by the end of key stage 2.

The school has identified around 9% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is lower than the national percentage of 21%.

The school was last inspected in January 2015. Since 2014, the school has been part of a formal federation with Ysgol Gynradd Carno and Ysgol Gynradd Glantwymyn, under one executive headteacher and one governing body. The current headteacher was appointed in 2016.

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 innovative leadership and full co-operation of staff ensure that an ethos of continuous improvement is an integral part of the school's make-up. Leaders have very high expectations to ensure the wellbeing and progress of all pupils and develop them as independent learners from a very young age. Teachers plan stimulating and interesting activities for pupils, which develop them as ambitious, confident, aspirational and knowledgeable individuals. This leads very successfully to achieving excellent standards and provision in all areas. They work together very successfully to provide rich and challenging learning experiences for pupils, and to establish a very stimulating learning environment in which there is obvious respect between pupils and teachers. This contributes towards creating a healthy learning environment, in which pupils are very willing to work hard and create work of a high standard consistently. One of the school's exceptional strengths is the masterful way in which teacher weave literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills naturally throughout the whole curriculum, particularly in creative activities.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that progress-tracking procedures are manageable and that teachers use them efficiently to extend learning
- R2 Address the health and safety issue that was raised during the inspection

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study to be disseminated on Estyn's website on its work in relation to planning for improvement across the federation and the way in which the federation delivers an interesting curriculum to its pupils.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

On entry to the school, many pupils' skills are close to, or above, the expected level for their age. By the end of their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional needs, achieve well from their starting points. Many make very strong progress in lessons and produce work of a high standard consistently.

In the foundation phase, pupils in the reception class make particularly strong progress in their oral skills, considering their linguistic background. By the end of the foundation phase, nearly all listen carefully to others and discuss their work maturely, for example when discussing the reading skills that they need when reading aloud. Nearly all pupils have a sound knowledge of phonics and use their knowledge skilfully to read unfamiliar texts confidently. Most develop early writing skills successfully. By the end of the foundation phase, most use their writing skills creatively and naturally in different contexts. For example, they have used their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to facilitate the process of creating an information leaflet about the body.

In key stage 2, nearly all pupils speak confidently, enthusiastically and completely naturally with an excellent measure of accuracy in Welsh and English. The standard of nearly all pupils' reading is consistently good. Pupils of different abilities read challenging texts in lessons correctly. Most vary their tone of voice and contribute maturely to discussions about what they have read in both languages. Nearly all pupils use their higher order reading skills highly effectively in various ways. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 read different historical sources in both languages and use this information creatively to write a postcard home from the perspective of a soldier in the trenches during the First World War in Welsh. Nearly all pupils write extended work of a high standard in various ways with a very good measure of accuracy. A notable example of this is the scripts that pupils have written based on the journey of the Welsh men and women on board the Mimoso. Nearly all pupils use their written Welsh skills very effectively across the curriculum in a large number of subjects, and succeed in writing creatively and skilfully when writing poems for the 'Elements' project, for example.

Most pupils' numeracy skills are developing very soundly. In the reception class, nearly all pupils read and write numbers to at least 10 when counting shapes. By the end of the foundation phase, many have a very firm grasp of number facts to 100 and complete mental calculations highly skilfully, for example when using different ways of counting to reach a total of 24. By the end of the foundation phase, pupils have a very sound understanding of the properties of 2D and 3D shapes, and many use mathematical vocabulary correctly when discussing their work and applying it to different contexts.

In key stage 2, most pupils have a very sound understanding of mathematical features, including addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Pupils gather, analyse and present information skilfully in different forms to support their work across the curriculum. A notable example of this is the way in which Year 5 and 6 pupils calculate the cost of arranging a holiday for an evacuee and her family within a

specific budget. The few more able pupils are able to use their mathematical understanding very skilfully when creating a formula to calculate the number of diagonals in polygons. This work is exceptional.

Pupils' ICT skills in all classes are one of the school's strengths. From a young age, pupils use different apps purposefully, for example when creating an information booklet about owls. By the end of the foundation phase, most program and control a toy to go on a journey to the stars and from one planet to another, then write the instructions in order. Nearly all pupils work together maturely to create creative work of a very high standard in the form of an animation, when recording the journey of the Mimosa to Patagonia, and combine investigative, scripting and expressive reading skills very skilfully.

Pupils in key stage 2 use their technological and creative skills masterfully when researching, planning, creating and performing in animations and films. Excellent examples of this include creating films on the life cycle of a plant, and performing a rap that was created with a famous performer. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils research facts about life during the war and use this information to create a class database of different ingredients. They interrogate data purposefully and order the information carefully. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' coding skills are developing very well as they persevere and understand the importance of being precise.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. These attitudes have been established firmly across the school. Nearly all pupils are very eager to learn, persevere maturely with their tasks and strive to complete them. A diligent atmosphere is evident in all classes, and most pupils have a high level of ownership of their learning activities, which stimulates them to develop as knowledgeable and conscientious learners.

Nearly all pupils are extremely polite and treat each other and adults with a high level of respect. Nearly all pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and at other times. They welcome visitors in an exceptionally mature way and are enthusiastic when discussing aspects of school life with them. Nearly all pupils take pride in their school and are proud to be part of its community. They feel completely safe there and enjoy their learning experiences completely.

One of the school's obvious strengths is the pupils' contribution and voice through the diligent activity of the school council, the eco council and the sports ambassadors. Nearly all pupils are extremely enthusiastic about shouldering responsibility and take pride in sharing information about what they are doing with others in governors' meetings and whole-school assemblies. For example, they take the lead on disseminating information about children's rights to their peers very effectively and respond proactively to other ideas. As a result, pupils have a positive effect on school life and the wellbeing of their peers. An exceptionally good example includes the way in which pupils self-evaluate the effectiveness of their activity throughout the year and act appropriately on the findings in order to improve. Through these procedures, they contribute significantly to weaving the four purposes of the new curriculum for Wales wholly naturally into the school's activities.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and suggest maturely how these practices can have a positive effect on their health. They take regular advantage of comprehensive opportunities to keep fit by visiting the leisure centre and running a mile a day.

Pupils' average attendance is consistently very high and compares very favourably with that of similar schools.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

One of the school's main strengths is the safe and very stimulating learning environment within each classroom, in which respect between pupils and teachers is wholly evident. This contributes very successfully towards creating an environment in which pupils are very willing to work hard, do their best and feel free to try without fear of making a mistake. As a result, pupils are very willing to learn from their mistakes and give purposeful responses, both orally and in writing, to useful feedback from teachers.

Teachers share lesson aims with pupils regularly and provide beneficial opportunities for them to discuss what will help them to succeed. They explain tasks clearly and question skilfully in order to ensure that all pupils understand. While pupils are completing their work, teachers rotate around the class effectively and give individuals timely feedback on how to improve their work further. As a result, pupils produce numerous pieces of work that are consistently of a very high standard.

Teachers present interesting lessons to pupils, and expect full attention and response from everyone. Lessons have a free and purposeful pace in nearly all classes, and all teachers have high expectations in terms of behaviour and presentation. As a result, the standard of presentation of pupils' work across the school is very high, and nearly all pupils show great pride in their work.

The school has a highly effective and creative curriculum that develops pupils' skills across all areas of learning systematically and constructively. These exciting and original activities ensure that pupils apply themselves fully to their activities and progress far beyond the expectations in all of their skills. The curriculum is enriched very effectively by conducting visits to places of interest, and by using the expertise of visitors to the school successfully, for example a theatre company to present a performance about a person's life during the Second World War.

A very strong feature of the school's work is the masterful way in which teachers weave literacy, numeracy and ICT skills coherently throughout the curriculum, particularly through creative activities such as the 'Elements' project. During this project, pupils have been given exceptionally useful opportunities to create dance and pieces of art, and to write poetry based on the theme. They have published the poems and artwork in a book and have used the dances skilfully as part of the book launch. This fosters pupils' respect and pride in their work extremely effectively.

Teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop many of their skills through entrepreneurship activities. This work enables pupils to use their creative skills purposefully to create produce to be sold, in addition to their numeracy skills to calculate costs and profit.

Planning to develop pupils' scientific skills is very effective. They are given regular opportunities to develop their understanding of scientific elements, for example when reasoning whether there is bias in the evidence of different scientists.

Rich opportunities to promote the Welsh language and Welshness are a core and wholly natural part of all of the school's work. Teachers model language excellently and immerse pupils in polished Welsh, coloured with Montgomeryshire's rich accent. This has a very positive effect on the accuracy and standard of pupils' language. This provision strengthens all pupils' oral skills very successfully, particularly those who are new to the Welsh language. The school promotes the Welsh dimension wholly naturally through all curricular activities, which include numerous opportunities to study the work of Welsh artists, musicians and authors regularly.

The school is proactive in preparing to introduce the new curriculum for Wales by planning activities that develop pupils as ambitious, confident, aspirational and knowledgeable individuals. Pupils, in turn, discuss how their activities develop these purposes in an extremely mature way.

Staff have a very effective awareness of the principles of the foundation phase. They plan an effective balance of activities that are implemented under the guidance of staff, and other opportunities for pupils to work independently in the learning areas. A very effective example of this is the way in which staff encourage pupils to choose the way in which they want to make a model of an alien during the 'over to you' activity. This encourages their independence and their ability to make decisions about their learning exceptionally well.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a familial, welcoming and Welsh community of which nearly all pupils are proud to be a part. The highly effective and constructive working relationship between pupils and teachers is one of the school's excellent features. This contributes successfully to pupils' very positive attitudes towards their work and the school's inclusive ethos.

Teachers identify pupils' needs at an early stage and provide purposeful provision for them. All pupils with additional learning needs have an individual development plan, which includes relevant information and suitable and measurable targets. These plans are reviewed effectively with pupils, teachers and parents. As a result, pupils achieve well in their literacy and numeracy skills and make consistent progress over time.

The school has appropriate progress-tracking procedures that are a means of providing useful information for teachers to identify the needs of individuals and specific groups of pupils, and help them to provide appropriately for them. However, teachers do not always use the data that derives from these procedures astutely enough. Instead, they rely too much on their opinions to help them to set targets and tailor activities for specific groups of pupils.

The school provides particularly successful opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills. The schools in the federation have worked together effectively to develop pupils' art and music skills well by creating a creative composition, for

example the 'Elements' project. This contributes extensively towards nurturing pupils' self-confidence and ability to perform at school, in the local community and nationally. The school provides rich opportunities for pupils to take part in a large number of eisteddfod competitions, sports competitions and sing in a local concert as a unified choir from the federation in the Arts Centre in Machynlleth, for example.

Provision to ensure that pupils develop to become proud of their language, culture and heritage is sound and effective. As a result, Welsh is the language that pupils usually choose to use both inside and outside the classroom. The wide range of visitors and rich educational visits that are organised contributes very effectively to pupils' understanding of their culture and the local community.

All pupils' wellbeing is given a prominent place in provision. The school has effective arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking, and the school cook supports this highly effectively. A good variety of activities contributes successfully to ensuring pupils' understanding of the importance of a healthy living and keeping fit. Pupils know that it is important to make the right choices in terms of a healthy lifestyle and also how to stay safe online.

The pupil's voice is at the heart of all of the school's wellbeing and extra-curricular activities. Members of the children's councils and committees are given useful opportunities to meet often in order to act on specific targets. These have a positive effect on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in creative tasks to create goods to be sold in school fairs. Through these activities, all pupils are given an opportunity to plan, organise and evaluate an interesting range of products and develop their entrepreneurial skills effectively.

The school provides skilfully to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural attitudes. Pupils are given regular and suitable opportunities to respond in collective worship sessions and daily assemblies, for example by listening and responding to various religious and moral stories. Pupils are given purposeful opportunities to discuss the 'right of the month' as part of the Rights of the Child provision, and teachers ensure that this permeates all relevant areas of learning effectively. A good example of this includes giving pupils an opportunity to identify and choose specific rights to accompany the class themes. All pupils are given good opportunities to appreciate diversity, tolerance and equality, and to relate this to global needs, for example by deciding on fundraising activities to sponsor a child in Gambia.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements. However, a health and safety issue was brought to the attention of the headteacher and the chair of governors.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The innovative leadership of the headteacher, assistant headteachers and governors, alongside the strong co-operation of staff, means that there are obvious benefits to the federal arrangement between Ysgol Carno, Ysgol Glantwymyn and Ysgol Llanbryn-mair. As a result, an ethos of continuous improvement is an integral part of the schools' work, which leads to standards and provision that are at least good and have obvious features of excellence across the whole federation. Through clear leadership and management structures and transparent staff responsibilities,

everyone within the federation works diligently to achieve a shared vision. This is based on raising standards and ensuring educational provision of the highest standard for the schools' pupils. Sharing staff expertise, good practice and resources are effective features of the federation. A notable example of this is the work that leaders have done in order to strengthen the leadership role of the schools' subject co-ordinators. Co-ordinators now play a core part in contributing to self-evaluating provision and leading improvements in their areas of responsibility across the schools in the federation. By doing so, leaders ensure that the curriculum and provision for skills are extremely interesting and support all pupils to make good progress consistently.

Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the quality of provision and standards. By visiting the schools regularly to scrutinise quality and receiving detailed progress reports from the headteacher, they identify the schools' strengths and areas for improvement thoroughly. The curriculum sub-committee is an effective forum for evaluating the effectiveness of provision and holds the school to account for its performance successfully.

Procedures for self-evaluation and planning for improvement are excellent. The self-evaluation reports are honest documents that identify the schools' strengths and areas for improvement in detail. They include probing comments that derive from robust techniques for gathering evidence. As a result, the self-evaluation procedure creates valid and credible evaluations of the quality of provision, standards and the effect of leadership.

Through careful consideration, which includes input from members of the senior management team and staff, leaders use the outcomes of the self-evaluation procedure very effectively to set sensible priorities within a coherent improvement plan. There is a manageable number of priorities, and financial resources and staff time are earmarked sensibly in order to achieve them successfully. The way in which leaders ensure that these priorities are achieved is excellent. They commit staff performance targets to achieving priorities skilfully, which gives them very effective opportunities to identify their contribution to the improvement process. This promotes staff ownership and accountability for producing ideas on how to address the priorities effectively. The headteacher and senior management team's 'impact reports' identify clearly the progress made towards achieving the priorities very effectively. This ensures that leaders and staff are aware of the rate of progress regularly, and adapt improvement plans where necessary. As a result, the schools have a successful history of improving their provision and raising standards in nearly all priorities over a number of years.

The schools' budgets are managed effectively and specific grants, such as the pupil development grant, meet pupils' needs appropriately, for example to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Leaders manage their resources, including human resources, skilfully, which means that they are able to achieve more together as a federation than they could as individual schools. The way in which the schools are preparing for the new curriculum and providing broad experiences for pupils, and maintaining and improving outcomes and provision for the Welsh language, are recent and successful examples of this.

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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