



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

A report on

**Ysgol Pen Y Pil
Glan-Y-Mor Road
Trowbridge
Rumney
Cardiff
CF3 1RQ**

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by

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

About Ysgol Pen Y Pil

Ysgol Pen y Pil is situated in Trowbridge to the east of Cardiff. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 215 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 48 part-time nursery age pupils. Pupils are organised into eight single-age classes.

Around 21% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is higher than the national percentage of 18%. A minority of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 20% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, but very few have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher of a nearby school took responsibility for Ysgol Pen y Pil in September 2017. A headteacher in charge runs the school from day to day. The school was last inspected in May 2012.

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 executive headteacher works diligently with staff and has developed a strong team. By the end of their time at the school, most pupils make good progress from their starting points.

The school has an inclusive ethos and there is a sense of belonging and respect between pupils and staff. The school has effective systems to track pupils' progress and successful support is provided for many pupils.

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and show pride in their work. The pupil's voice is developing effectively. A good example of this is the positive effect of the 'llais llesol' group on pupils' behaviour during playtimes. However, not all teachers' expectations ensure acceptable behaviour during lessons, and there is not enough challenge for more able pupils.

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	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Raise the standard of pupils' spoken language
- R2 Ensure consistency in teachers' expectations in order to ensure good behaviour in the classroom
- R3 Ensure that teaching provides an appropriate challenge for pupils to achieve to the best of their ability and develop as independent and ambitious learners
- R4 Strengthen the role of governors in monitoring the quality of provision and standards to enable them to challenge the school's performance

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, many pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are lower than expected for their age. As they move through the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make strong progress and achieve well.

From an early age, most pupils listen attentively to adults and each other, but their grasp of the Welsh language during the early years is limited. By Year 1, many use the Welsh language confidently when undertaking their activities and, by Year 2, they are able to discuss their current work enthusiastically. A majority of pupils in key stage 2 develop purposeful oral skills and show pride in the language. They use the language to socialise at playtime and in their lessons. Most pupils express themselves clearly in English, but this is not as evident in Welsh. They are very keen to contribute to class discussions and use correct subject vocabulary, for example when discussing the events of the sixties.

Most pupils' reading skills in the foundation phase are developing soundly. They use an appropriate range of phonic strategies confidently to build unfamiliar words. By Year 2, nearly all pupils use their reading skills confidently, for example when following directions to find an object on a map. Most pupils in key stage 2 make positive progress in their reading in Welsh and English. They use their skills to gather information from different texts, including the internet, for example when presenting information about the Holocaust.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop their early writing skills successfully. By Year 2, they write independently for different purposes and begin to use appropriate syntax, for example when presenting information about beasts. Most pupils in key stage 2 build on their writing skills successfully in both languages, and use paragraphs and punctuation correctly. By Year 6, most write at length and show a sound awareness of the features of a wide range of different forms, for example when comparing a classroom today and in the Victorian era. They apply their literacy skills effectively in a variety of subjects across the curriculum. They express an opinion maturely, for example when discussing the racist experiences of Rosa Parks. The standard of presentation of pupils' work is too varied across the school, and only a minority of pupils improve their work effectively.

Most pupils' numeracy skills are sound. In the foundation phase, most make good progress. Many pupils in Year 1 handle money correctly, for example when buying fruit from the role-play shop. Most solve numeracy problems successfully across the areas of learning. For example, from an early age, pupils' sort autumn objects by size, and Year 1 pupils measure how much sugar there is in familiar drinks. In key stage 2, most pupils build well on previous learning and, by Year 6, they have a sound understanding of number strategies. They use a wide range of methods confidently to solve problems, for examples when pricing goods that provide the best value for money when planning for a party. Most pupils apply their numeracy skills purposefully in a few activities across the curriculum.

Most pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills purposefully to support their work across the curriculum. By Year 2, most use publishing software to present their work colourfully and attractively. Most pupils in key stage 2 use the internet successfully to search for information, for example when learning about ospreys. Pupils in Year 4 create multimedia presentations successfully in order to present their work, for example to advertise the Himalayas. Many pupils across the school develop a good understanding of how to handle data, for example when gathering evidence, displaying it in the form of a graph and interpreting it, or when creating databases to analyse evidence.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and there are sound working relationships between them and staff. Pupils are very polite towards staff and each other, and nearly all are kind and caring. This is evident during playtime when playground buddies support the youngest pupils. Most pupils take complete pride in their school and are keen to share their views and successes with visitors.

Many pupils always behave well. They work diligently in lessons and settle quickly to work purposefully, on the whole. However, a few pupils find it hard to behave appropriately, particularly when tasks are not challenging enough. This disrupts other pupils at times.

Most pupils undertake learning experiences effectively and persevere well with new learning tasks. Many pupils in the foundation phase contribute effectively to what they would like to do and learn, for example creating a cloak for superhero day. Although the school's oldest pupils do not contribute as often to their activities, they have begun to develop their skills to improve their own work successfully and respond more regularly to teachers' comments.

Many pupils in key stage 2 undertake responsible roles enthusiastically and are beginning to play an active part in the school. The Welsh Language Ambassadors, namely the 'Criad Cymraeg', are developing their roles well. Through the characters 'Seren a Sbarc', they ensure that pupils promote the Welsh language during break times. As a result, they encourage their peers to speak Welsh more often during lessons and incidentally.

The 'criw llais llesol' show a mature understanding of their responsibilities and the effect they have on behaviour during playtime. Members of the school council have begun to represent the pupil's voice appropriately by improving the outdoor play environment and organising a celebration for the school's tenth birthday. By holding an annual fashion show, the eco council succeeds in promoting sustainability purposefully. However, their contribution to school life is limited.

Many pupils in key stage 2 develop effective entrepreneurial skills by running a cafe for their parents and decorating and selling t-shirts. They give the profits to a well-known cancer charity, which strengthens their understanding of social issues well.

Most pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves fit and healthy. Many pupils participate enthusiastically in physical education as part of their curriculum and various extra-curricular activities, such as football and netball. Most pupils understand the importance of using the internet safely.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

The school provides a broad curriculum that engages most pupils' interest successfully. The curriculum is enriched effectively with various educational visits and by inviting visitors to talk to pupils. A good example of this is the visit by a teacher from the Welsh school in Patagonia to talk about his life and work in Argentina.

The principles of the foundation phase have been established successfully. Teachers provide interesting focus tasks and continuous activities, which include beneficial opportunities for pupils to role-play, for example as an astronaut. Teachers make creative use of the outdoor areas to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills effectively. A good example of this is the work of pupils in the foundation phase to create a cover to keep a banana fresh and to re-create a scene in Bute Park following their visit.

Many pupils are beginning to contribute to learning experiences, based on what they already know and what they would like to learn, for example when organising a celebration for the end of the Second World War. However, opportunities to develop independent learners are not as evident in key stage 2.

The school has begun to make good use of planning for the digital framework, and teachers plan regularly to develop pupils' ICT skills. Teachers promote the Welsh language and Welshness appropriately. This is beginning to nurture a sense of pride and knowledge among pupils about the local area and Welsh culture. Staff encourage pupils to study the work of authors such as T. Llew Jones and learn about Welsh princes when visiting the wider area.

There is a sound relationship between staff and pupils across the school. A majority of teachers maintain an effective environment in their classes, in which most pupils are eager to learn. They provide a clear aim for the lesson and valuable opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Many teachers remind pupils of their previous learning successfully and, overall, lessons have a purposeful pace. There is effective co-operation between teachers and assistants, who provide good support in order for pupils to complete their tasks and benefit from them successfully. However, across the school, a minority of teachers' expectations in terms of acceptable behaviour from pupils are not high enough. This disrupts pupils' ability to complete their tasks. A few teachers also do not ensure a purposeful challenge to stretch all pupils, particularly those who are more able.

A majority of teachers provide pupils with effective oral feedback and encourage them to persevere and reflect further on how to improve their work. They intervene sensitively to support pupils at appropriate times during the lesson, for example to encourage them to check their progress against the success criteria. Very recently, many pupils' written comments are beginning to provide pupils with beneficial feedback on how to improve their subsequent work. However, it is too early to see the effect of this on pupils' standards.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has robust system for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress. They identify pupils' educational and personal needs and use this information effectively to identify those pupils who need additional support. Through a number of beneficial

activities to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, staff ensure that all pupils receive the support necessary to succeed in their learning. Pupils with additional learning needs have detailed individual education plans, and targets are specific and measurable. Learning assistants are used very effectively across the school to support individual pupils and implement a range of support programmes successfully. Support helps pupils to engage well in their learning and contributes effectively towards improving standards and outcomes.

The school places a strong emphasis on develop all pupils' emotional and social needs. Many pupils attend official sessions and drop-in sessions with an assistant. These have a very successful effect on raising pupils' confidence and help them to cope well with daily life. Some older pupils use their personal experiences as a tool to support other pupils successfully during break times.

Staff create a comprehensive familial ethos, which ensures that there is obvious respect between pupils and staff. Staff promote courtesy and tolerance among pupils, which is reflected well in the relationship between older and younger pupils. They are given regular opportunities to reflect on moral aspects through circle time sessions and in relevant lessons.

There is a robust relationship between the school and parents, and all members of staff promote an open and co-operative culture, which succeeds in ensuring beneficial commitment and support. Successful arrangements include sharing termly theme sheets about class work, being visible on the school grounds every day and sharing information very regularly through social media.

Through a number of extra-curricular and curricular activities, the school promotes healthy eating and drinking soundly. Provision to develop pupils' moral and social skills is purposeful. Staff are beginning to plan opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness and knowledge of other parts of the world and different cultures, for example by comparing different religions. Pupils' empathy is developing appropriately by supporting charities, such as Children in Need, a youth cancer charity and Show Racism the Red Card. There are valuable arrangements through the curriculum and joint services to promote pupils' spiritual development.

The school is beginning to provide comprehensive opportunities for pupils to undertake leadership roles. These have a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and on the school's day-to-day life. For example, the school council has reorganised the lunchtime structure, which is having a positive effect on the wellbeing and happiness of nearly all pupils during this time.

The school's provision to develop pupils' creative skills is appropriate. The school is developing a tradition that ensures opportunities for pupils to take part in concerts, sing in the school choir and compete in the Urdd Eisteddfod. This contributes successfully towards increasing pupils' confidence. Staff plan a wide range of interesting activities that develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of Welsh culture. For example, pupils learn about contemporary Welsh artists and songs, and educational visits to places of interest, such as Castell Henllys, develop pupils' awareness of Welsh history effectively.

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

Leadership and management: Good

The executive headteacher works conscientiously on leadership and management in his limited time at the school every week. He is supported effectively by the headteacher in charge who runs the school from day to day.

Since being appointed, the executive headteacher has established a clear vision for the school. He has developed a sound relationship between all staff, governors, pupils and parents, and provides a clear identity and an obvious direction for the school. He provides strong leadership and ensures that all staff share their decisions to enable all pupils to reach their potential. The headteacher promotes a strong sense of teamwork.

Following a period of instability in the leadership structure, managers have redefined staff's roles and responsibilities successfully. The headteacher in charge has strengthened provision to improve pupils' wellbeing very effectively, and his strategic role is developing positively. Regular staff meetings ensure that teachers take responsibility for the progress of pupils in their classes and are beginning to improve provision. The good effect of this can be seen on pupils' consistent standards across the school.

The governing body receives information about pupils' performance and the school's financial situation regularly. Occasionally, members challenge the school's performance about the difference between the attainment of boys and girls, and expenditure on supply staff is questioned. Members of the governing body have begun the work of getting to know pupils' attainment and the school's procedures, but they very rarely hold the school to account for standards and pupils' attainment.

The current self-evaluation report is a comprehensive document and provides a clear picture of the school's situation. There is a timetable for conducting detailed self-evaluation activities, and this links closely with areas in the improvement plan. The senior management team scrutinises work, analyses data, observe lessons, conducts learning walks and shares good practice. Feedback from these activities contributes directly to improving pupils' standards. The improvement plan includes a number of sensible priorities. Leaders identify purposeful activities in order to meet the priorities and earmark resources and staff effectively in order to fulfil them.

Leaders have suitable performance management processes in order to develop teachers and ensure that the quality of their work improves. Staff have good access to a relevant range of continuous professional development and useful training. The school has benefitted from a significant grant in order to promote co-operation with a nearby school. As a result, staff work successfully with the partner school, which is beginning to strengthen their ability to improve provision by planning curricular areas jointly and sharing expertise. The school has recently begun to adapt its planning to meet the needs of the new curriculum for Wales.

The school's indoor areas are used purposefully to promote pupils' learning experiences. The foundation phase makes effective use of the outdoor area to promote pupils' creativity and physical skills. Leaders manage the school budget carefully and effectively. Decisions on expenditure link closely with the school's strategic priorities. Good use is made of the pupil development grant to improve

provision to develop the literacy and emotional skills of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. As a result, these pupils make sound progress from their starting points.

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.

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