



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

A report on

**Ysgol Tryfan
Lon Powys
Bangor
Gwynedd
LL57 2TU**

Date of inspection: October 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Tryfan

Ysgol Tryfan is a bilingual school for pupils between 11 and 18 years old, which is maintained by Gwynedd local authority. The school is situated in the city of Bangor and serves the urban catchment area.

There are 426 pupils on roll, including 80 pupils in the sixth form, which is lower than at the time of the last inspection in October 2013. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is 12.6% which is lower than the national percentage for secondary schools of 16.4%.

Twenty per cent (20%) of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is slightly lower than the national percentage of 22.5%. Around 3.3% have a statement of special educational needs, which is higher than the national figure of 2.2%.

Around 64% of pupils come from naturally Welsh-speaking homes, and very few pupils come from mixed ethnic backgrounds. No pupils receive support to learn English as an additional language.

The current headteacher was appointed in September 2019. The senior leadership team includes two permanent deputy headteachers and two temporary assistant headteachers.

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 Tryfan is a close-knit, inclusive and Welsh community. Most pupils behave excellently and take pride in the supportive environment, which derives from the school's familial, Welsh ethos. Many pupils make strong progress during their time at the school. Many show increasing maturity and become highly confident and independent learners. Pupils' valuable contributions to the school's life and work are a notable strength.

Leaders work together effectively and convey clear ambition for the school's work. They place a clear emphasis on improving standards and teaching, and providing the best for all pupils. Although the buildings are dated, pupils continue to benefit from comprehensive support, robust teaching and a variety of valuable experiences. All of this broadens their horizons and makes an important contribution to their Welsh identity.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the quality of assessment
- R2 Improve provision for information and communication technology across the curriculum
- R3 Work with the local authority to improve the learning environment and the condition of the buildings

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Many pupils make strong progress in their lessons and external examinations. They recall previous knowledge confidently and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding skilfully.

Pupils' oral skills in Welsh and English are an obvious strength. Most listen attentively and respectfully to each other and their teachers. They are natural, fluent and confident speakers and discuss their ideas enthusiastically in pairs and in group discussions. For example, in their Welsh lessons, they discuss and analyse confidently the effect of the tragedy at the Rana Plaza in Bangladesh on the world of fashion.

Many pupils are confident readers. They gather information skilfully, find facts and come to valid conclusions when reading evidence. For example, in science lessons, they use the information that they gather about the digestive system to write a monologue by a jam sandwich. Many pupils respond effectively to the content and style of literary texts, for example when describing the cold and inhospitable environment in an underground prison in London in English lessons.

When writing, many pupils set out their work sensibly and write extended pieces across a range of subjects. In art lessons, pupils write articles confidently on the designs and patterns of the famous artist, Cath Kidston. Many pupils write independently and express themselves clearly, for example when writing a personal letter to a friend describing the life and identity of a Jew in religious education lessons. However, a few pupils make careless mistakes and use English words in the written Welsh work. These pupils do not take enough responsibility for correcting their work before the teacher looks at it.

Many pupils have sound number skills. In mathematics lessons, many pupils complete mental mathematics work successfully. They apply their numeracy skills confidently to solve problems that are based on everyday situations. Overall, many pupils also apply their number skills appropriately in subjects other than mathematics. For example, in physics lessons, pupils draw and interpret graphs effectively when investigating the relationship between resistance and the length of a wire.

Many pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately for word processing, creating presentations and handling data in a few subjects across the curriculum. However, overall, their progress in terms of developing advanced ICT skills across the subjects is limited.

There are numerous examples of pupils developing their creative skills across a range of subjects. For example, in art lessons, pupils create a collage from company logos on a computer, and then paint a personal artwork from this.

Many pupils use their thinking skills successfully and are able to reason sensibly when presenting their views and evaluating them effectively. In science lessons, pupils discuss and work together enthusiastically in order to solve the problem of designing a spirometer from the resources that have been provided.

During the last three years, pupils have performed well at the end of key stage 4, in comparison with those in similar schools. Overall, they make more progress than expected.

The proportion of sixth-form pupils who complete their courses and gain at least three level 3 qualifications is higher than the national average and is a positive feature. Overall, sixth-form pupils perform similarly to expectations, considering their previous levels of attainment.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Pupils at Ysgol Tryfan are welcoming and respectful, and this is a striking element of the school's ethos. Most extend a very warm welcome to visitors, interact with each other in a friendly manner and treat all staff with a high level of respect. They take pride in being part of the school's Welsh community and speak the language naturally during break times and in lessons. Pupils thrive within a supportive and Welsh environment.

Most pupils behave very well during lessons and around the school. They show an interest in their work and persevere with tasks in lessons. Many work very effectively in groups and pairs, give careful consideration to the contributions of others and support each other successfully.

Most pupils enjoy attending school and feel safe there. Many show strong ambition. Many pupils develop highly beneficial creative skills and self-confidence by taking part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities that are available at the school. These include a jazz band and a musical ensemble, the choir and an art club. Some have been very successful at regional and national level. For example, recently, the school's pupils have been victorious in the Life Sciences Challenge, 'Codio Cymru' and 'Band Cymru' competitions. Pupils have also been given rare opportunities to take part in excellence workshops, such as the 'Youth Orchestra of Great Britain' summer workshop.

A number of pupils take advantage enthusiastically of a wide range of opportunities to undertake formal and informal leadership roles within the school. The school council and education, health, sports and Welsh committees are dedicated and work effectively. They have co-operated with leaders and pupils to reduce the use of plastic within the school, promote healthy eating and refine strategies to help pupils to improve their work in lessons.

Most pupils have a clear understanding of how to eat and drink healthily. A number of pupils take advantage of a wide range of opportunities to take part in sports and fitness activities, both inside and outside the school. Several compete as part of sports teams at school and regional level and have experienced notable success regularly over the last few years.

Most sixth-form pupils behave maturely and apply themselves enthusiastically to their studies and to wider aspects of school life. They show mature emotional intelligence when tutoring the school's younger pupils, for example by helping pupils in Year 7, 9 and 11 to develop their reading and mathematical skills. Sixth-form pupils are very hard-working in organising activities in aid of local and national charities.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Most teachers establish an inclusive and homely environment in their classes. They forge strong and constructive working relationships with pupils. They have strong subject knowledge.

In many lessons, teachers use a range of activities and beneficial resources to engage pupils' interest successfully. These lessons have a good pace, tasks are coherent and, as a result, pupils make consistent progress. These teachers nurture pupils' independent learning skills successfully.

A few lessons are particularly effective. These teachers are very enthusiastic, plan skilfully and ignite pupils' interest by providing challenging tasks. They ask incisive and probing questions that stimulate pupils to think more deeply, extend their understanding and justify their opinions.

In a minority of cases, teachers do not ask probing enough questions to help pupils to develop their understanding and thinking skills in full. A few teachers do not plan purposefully enough or tailor their teaching skilfully enough in order to meet pupils' needs across the range of ability.

Many teachers monitor their pupils' progress regularly throughout the lesson by circling the class effectively. They give constructive oral feedback on pupils' work and explain clearly what they need to improve. However, the quality of written feedback for pupils is too varied within and across subjects. A minority of teachers' comments are too superficial and complimentary, and they do not give enough advice or purposeful opportunities for pupils to improve their work.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that succeeds in meeting the needs of all pupils across all key stages. Through Gwynedd and Anglesey consortium, the school provides a wide range of academic and occupational courses for pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form. The school provides subjects such as triple science, further mathematics and courses that support less able pupils. The school's purposeful planning ensures that all pupils study the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification in key stage 4 and the sixth form, and are given a variety of interesting experiences. Meetings between primary teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator and the head of Year 7 ensure purposeful progression as pupils transition from the primary sector.

The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators provide very beneficial support for teachers to improve pupils' skills through valuable training. The school plans purposefully in order to develop pupils' literacy skills. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in the relevant subjects and tutorial sessions. Through a range of purposeful interventions, including the effective use of sixth-form mentors, the school provides strong support to improve all pupils' skills. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills across the curriculum are limited.

One of the school's notable strengths is a broad programme of valuable extra-curricular experiences. Through these beneficial arrangements, the school provides excellent opportunities to promote the Welsh language. These opportunities enrich pupils' learning experiences. The school has experienced

success regionally and nationally over time, which includes winning English public-speaking competitions and Band Cymru in 2018. The school organises valuable visits to places of local historical interest, such as 'Yr Ysgwrn', competes annually in the Urdd Eisteddfod and has organised an educational and musical trip to Paris.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Ysgol Tryfan is an inclusive, caring and friendly school. The values of 'teulu Tryfan' (the Tryfan family) set a firm foundation for its work. As a result, pupils behave very well, treat others with care and respect, and succeed in their work.

The school provides very valuable support for pupils with special educational needs. There are robust procedures to identify pupils' needs at an early stage. Individual education plans provide competent and purposeful strategies to help teachers plan to meet specific pupils' needs. Support staff are used effectively to ensure that pupils with special needs make progress. The school tracks and reviews these pupils' progress appropriately against their targets.

The school has suitable systems to track pupils' academic progress and attendance. The school uses this information purposefully to support pupils who are at risk of underachieving and intervenes immediately in order to meet their specific needs. There is a successful programme of purposeful interventions to support pupils with weak basic skills.

The school has beneficial systems to support pupils with emotional, behavioural or social needs. The school provides positive intervention, which ensures excellent support for the wellbeing, personal development and progress of vulnerable pupils. The school's staff work effectively with external agencies to support pupils' wellbeing and mental health. This enables these pupils to overcome barriers to progress.

The school has a close and productive relationship with parents. Additional meetings are held in addition to the usual information evenings in order to deal with specific priorities for groups of pupils. The school presents regular reports on pupils' work and progress. However, these are very concise and the quality of comments of attainment and targets for improvement are too varied.

The school has robust arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. The school plans and provides a 'Gorwelion' (Horizons) programme to promote a healthy lifestyle and develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural attitudes successfully in key stage 3. The positive contribution of guest speakers, the police officer and the school nurse enriches pupils' awareness and understanding of personal wellbeing. The summer activity week provides a valuable programme for pupils to enjoy outdoor activities in the local area.

The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to participate and lead through the school councils. It also provides a valuable range of extra-curricular activities for pupils in the arts and sports. This includes sports teams, music and drama workshops, and mathematics, technology and computer science competitions.

There is a strong emphasis on shared values, and this has a positive influence on pupils' behaviour towards each other and staff. The school succeeds in raising pupils' awareness of many aspects of equality appropriately, such as through activities for 'Show Racism the Red Card' day.

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

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has a clear vision to provide bilingual education of a high standard in an inclusive, caring and Welsh organisation. He provides sincere and wise leadership that reflects the school's objectives, 'To support, to inspire, as one family'. In a short time, he has succeeded in sharing this vision with staff, governors, parents and pupils. He is supported fully by members of the senior leadership team, which share the same vision. Over time, strong leadership has led to a strong sense of an inclusive family in an organisation in which Welshness, maintaining and raising standards, and ensuring high levels of pupils' wellbeing are at the heart of all of the school's work.

The senior leadership team has appropriate roles and responsibilities and works effectively as a team. The staffing structure and lines of accountability are clear and suitable. Accountability processes have improved recently in order to ensure that everyone is clear about what is expected of them at different times of the year. This includes a programme of regular meetings that focus purposefully on the school's priorities for improvement. Discussions in these meetings lead to purposeful actions and there are appropriate arrangements to monitor progress against them.

Many middle leaders fulfil their roles effectively. They take full ownership of raising standards and improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility. The team of heads of year work effectively to ensure high levels of attendance and pupils' wellbeing. However, leadership in a few subjects has not been effective enough in improving the quality of teaching and raising standards.

Governors are very supportive and have a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities and the school's priorities for improvement. Governors have useful links with individual departments, which allows them to challenge them appropriately. Recently, the school has re-structured the governors' sub-committees suitably in order to strengthen their quality assurance processes. By doing so, they monitor progress against the school improvement plan in detail. They understand their role as critical friends and have already shown their willingness to work with the headteacher to address any underperformance.

The school has developed effective self-evaluation processes over time. Self-evaluation activities ensure that leaders and staff understand the purpose of activities and what is expected of them. As a result, everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in full. Leaders gather and use information from important aspects of the school's work effectively, for example through lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and seeking the views of pupils and parents. As a result, leaders at all levels have a clear picture of strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders use this information effectively to plan for improvement at whole-school and departmental level. Effective self-evaluation processes have ensured high standards, effective teaching and pupils' wellbeing over time.

The school's performance management processes are appropriate. There is a close link between the objectives that are set and the school's priorities for improvement.

The senior leadership team has created a culture of supporting the professional development of staff at all levels. The school has effective processes to identify staff's professional learning needs, and there is a coherent programme that meets staff's needs and the school's priorities. This includes a useful programme of action research by all teachers. The school has effective strategies to share good practice among teachers, including effective training sessions, professional networks and shared lesson observations. These activities provide valuable opportunities for staff to share good practice and professional learning outcomes with other staff.

Staff expertise is used effectively to ensure provision of a high standard. The school works productively in partnership with local schools and a further education college in order to enrich the experiences of pupils in key stage 4 and ensure that sixth-form provision is viable. Over time, the bursar, leaders and governors have managed resources and expenditure very carefully. As a result, the school has some money in reserve. Careful planning ensures that expenditure corresponds closely with the school's priorities for improvement. Although the building is dated and deteriorating, and although there are shortcomings in terms of facilities, particularly for physical education, the school succeeds in providing a safe and purposeful working environment for its pupils.

The school makes beneficial use of grants to support the wellbeing and achievement of the most vulnerable pupils.

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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).

© Crown Copyright 2019: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 23/12/2019