



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

A report on

**Ysgol Y Llys
Princes Avenue
Prestatyn
LL19 8RW**

Date of inspection: March 2019

by

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

About Ysgol y Llys

Ysgol y Llys is a designated Welsh-medium primary school. The school is situated in Prestatyn, in Denbighshire local authority. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 387 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 55 part-time nursery pupils. The school has 15 mixed age classes, including two classes for nursery pupils.

Over the last three years, around 5% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national percentage of 18%. Around 5% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. The school has identified around 21% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is similar to the national percentage.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in October 2007. The school was last inspected in December 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

Staff create a happy, caring and inclusive ethos at the school, which fosters a supportive and hardworking environment for pupils. As a result, nearly all pupils enjoy the school's life and work, behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. They treat their peers, staff and visitors with respect and show pride in their school. During their time at the school, most pupils make sound progress and achieve well.

Teachers have a highly effective working relationship with pupils and provide rich and interesting learning experiences for them, which meet most pupils' needs. The school has a very strong Welsh ethos, and provision encourages pupils to make full use of the Welsh language in all aspects of their life and work. As a result, pupils take pride in their bilingualism, culture and Welsh heritage.

The headteacher and management team provide effective leadership, which provides a clear strategic direction for the school. All staff are dedicated and enthusiastic, and work together closely and effectively as a team. They also show a strong commitment to promoting continuous and sustainable improvements.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Provide more frequent opportunities for foundation phase pupils to make choices in relation to their learning and act more independently
- R2 Ensure regular and appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress in their learning and achieve well.

Although the Welsh language is new to nearly all pupils on entry to the school, most pupils' oral skills develop soundly and very quickly in the nursery and reception class. Most pupils in the foundation phase listen attentively and communicate in Welsh with increasing confidence. By Year 2, they use the Welsh language confidently in their activities and at other times during the day. They are keen to talk about their work and experiences, for example when discussing characters from the story of Rala Rwdins. Most pupils in key stage 2 build well on this firm foundation. They communicate clearly in Welsh and English, and contribute purposefully to class discussions in both languages. At the top of the school, they discuss their work intelligently and maturely, and use extensive and rich vocabulary to create effect, for example when discussing the experiences of famous people from foreign backgrounds while growing up in Wales.

Most pupils enjoy reading and make good progress consistently. The youngest pupils recognise letters and sounds correctly and are beginning to recognise words confidently. By Year 2, most read meaningfully and with expression, and discuss the content of their books maturely. In key stage 2, most pupils read intelligently in both languages. They practice their higher order reading skills regularly and maturely to gather information from different sources. A good example of this is the work of older pupils when learning about the lives of well-known people from the sixties, such as Rosa Parks and Andy Warhol.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing well. By the end of the foundation phase, they extend their ideas effectively, for example when writing about the lives of children during the Victorian era. Most pupils in key stage 2 develop their writing skills successfully and, by the end of the stage, most draft and re-draft their work effectively, and show a sound grasp of spelling patterns, paragraphing and punctuation in both languages. Most adapt their style and structure to different texts skilfully, for example when writing a formal letter to the governing body about their efforts to recycle and reduce waste, or when writing a diary about the life of a child during the Second World War.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in their mathematical development. By Year 2, they have a sound grasp of number facts and measurement, and handle money correctly, for example when role-playing in the class post office. Most pupils in key stage 2 build well on this firm foundation. By Year 6, most use a wide range of methods confidently to solve problems, for example when pricing a meal for a family. They use their data-handling skills appropriately when comparing the favourite pizza of pupils in the class. However, they do not always use their numeracy skills to the same level in activities across the curriculum as they do in mathematics lessons.

Most pupils make purposeful use of their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support their work across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils in the foundation phase use electronic tablets effectively. Year 2 pupils, for example, record their work on building a shelter in the outdoor area electronically. They use simple databases confidently to record the favourite fruit of members of the class, for example. Most pupils in key stage 2 use the internet effectively to search for information, and create multimedia presentations successfully to present their findings, for example on the effect of plastic waste on the environment. They develop a good understanding of how to handle data to enable them to follow-up specific lines of enquiry across the curriculum.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and take pride in it. They feel completely safe there and know whom to approach for advice if they are worried about anything. They are confident that the school responds promptly to any concerns they may have. Nearly all pupils behave consistently well in lessons and around the school, and treat adults and visitors with respect and courtesy. This is a strong feature of the school. They show pride towards the Welsh language and choose to use it to socialise during playtime, as well as in their lessons. They talk confidently about their school and their community, and take pride in their bilingualism, culture and Welsh heritage.

Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning and become hardworking and enthusiastic learners. They work together in harmony and stay diligently on task over extended periods. They listen attentively to presentations and work consistently well individually, in pairs and in small groups. Most older pupils respond positively to the opportunities they are given to influence what they would like to learn within the term's theme. This strengthens their commitment to their work effectively. As a result, most show good levels of motivation and interest in their work. From an early age, most pupils respond positively to the opportunities they are given to evaluate what they learn. As a result, by Year 6, most pupils are aware of their personal targets and what they need to do to improve their work.

Pupils on the various committees and groups carry out their work enthusiastically. By doing so, they contribute effectively to the school's life and work, and develop their leadership skills effectively. For example, through the work of the digital leaders, most pupils understand clearly how to stay safe online. Through the work of the eco council to promote recycling, save energy and reduce the use of plastic in the school, many pupils are aware of the importance of sustainability and taking care of their world. Most pupils' understanding of moral values and equality is developing well. They deal with topics such as racism sensitively and maturely, and express their views clearly while treating other pupils' contributions and views with respect. As a result, they develop as knowledgeable and tolerant citizens who discuss contemporary and current affairs sensibly and thoroughly.

Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and understand the effect of exercise on their health. They participate enthusiastically in physical education lessons, in addition to extra-curricular sports clubs. Recently, pupils have begun to take part in a new 'Mile a Day' fitness scheme, which promotes their physical development effectively.

Nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of attending school regularly and punctually.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Staff work together effectively and the good relationship between adults and pupils has a positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing. There is a positive and supportive learning environment in nearly all classes, where teachers motivate pupils and manage their behaviour successfully. This leads to effective co-operation and develops pupils' enthusiasm towards learning. There is a very strong Welsh ethos, and provision encourages pupils to make full use of the Welsh language in all aspects of school life. All staff take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' language, which contributes successfully to their refined oral skills. As a result, pupils develop as competent and confident bilingual learners. There is a clear emphasis on developing a curriculum that is based on Wales and Welsh heritage. This contributes successfully to pupils' understanding of their local area, their history and their culture.

Teachers have good, up-to-date subject knowledge and use this information skilfully by planning interesting lessons and rich learning experiences for pupils. They use a variety of effective teaching methods, and link their lessons skilfully with previous learning. They explain new concepts clearly to pupils and provide tasks that are tailored appropriately for the range of ability within the classes. This motivates pupils to learn and contributes successfully towards ensuring that most make sound progress and achieve well. In the few classes in which teaching is at its best, imaginative presentations and the pace of lessons are strong features of teaching. In these classes, teachers have very high expectations and use open-ended questions successfully to encourage their pupils to think for themselves. As a result, pupils have the confidence to try, and undertake tasks enthusiastically and independently.

Teachers provide a varied range of valuable learning experiences for pupils, which meet most pupils' needs successfully. Interesting cross-curricular themes and work programmes extend their knowledge and understanding well, and strengthen their commitment to their work effectively. Foundation phase teachers provide a range of valuable learning experiences for pupils, which include effective opportunities for them to develop and practice their skills through investigation and role-play. However, they do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to make choices about their learning, particularly in the outdoor areas. There is a tendency for adults to over-direct activities, which limits pupils' ability to work independently. On the other hand, by adapting the curriculum to meet the purposes of the new curriculum for Wales, key stage 2 teachers provide increased and valuable opportunities for pupils to make important decisions in relation to their work. Learning experiences enable pupils to develop most of their skills, knowledge and understanding successfully across the curriculum. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning.

Teachers in both key stages plan purposefully to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Planning is methodical and helps teachers to create interesting tasks that build well on pupils' previous learning, for example in language and mathematics lessons. Teachers plan comprehensive opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh and English skills across the curriculum. As a result, most pupils

transfer and apply these skills successfully. However, there are not regular opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills to the same extent across the curriculum. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills and apply these skills regularly across the curriculum.

Most teachers intervene sensitively and provide pupils with useful feedback on their efforts during lessons. This helps pupils to concentrate, encourages them to reflect on their efforts and check their progress against lesson objectives and success criteria. Pupils are encouraged to take advantage of regular opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of other pupils. Although teachers also provide pupils with purposeful written feedback, opportunities for them to respond to comments regularly are inconsistent.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring and familial community that promotes good behaviour, courtesy and respect highly effectively. The supportive and friendly working relationship between staff and pupils is an excellent feature of the school. This is reflected in nearly all pupils' good behaviour and courtesy, and their positive attitude towards learning and their school.

The emphasis on promoting the Welsh language and Welshness is a strength and engages pupils' pride in their culture, heritage and bilingualism. As a result, Welsh is the language that most pupils choose to speak, both inside and outside the classroom. A large number of rich events and visits are provided for pupils, which promote their understanding of their culture and community successfully. Provision to develop pupils' creative and expressive skills is effective. The textiles workshop that was held recently, when key stage 2 pupils created colourful banners to carry as part of a St David's Day parade, is a good example of this. Pupils often display their artwork locally, for example in an exhibition to celebrate the centenary of Kyffin Williams. Pupils take pride in these opportunities, and also in the opportunities they are given to compete in eisteddfodau and perform in local concerts. This contributes successfully towards nurturing many pupils' self-confidence and ability to work together effectively.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Teachers ensure that children's rights are given due attention, and promote equality and diversity effectively. For example, pupils at the top of the school study the story of Rosa Parks and conduct research into the lives of famous Welsh people from foreign backgrounds. This leads to pupils having a good understanding of fairness and human rights.

The school's procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress are sound. Teachers use the information that derives from these procedures successfully to respond to the needs of individuals and specific groups of pupils. Staff identify pupils' additional learning needs at an early stage and provide for them effectively. Teachers use a wide range of interventions to expand provision for them. This includes using external agencies to ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. Teachers create detailed individual education plans for all pupils with additional learning needs. These include the pupils' views and, as a result, most pupils who receive intervention are aware of their targets and make sound progress.

Arrangements for responding to pupils' emotional needs are successful and have a positive effect on them. Teachers organise purposeful support for pupils to discuss their feelings during difficult times in their lives, and to raise their self-confidence and enables them to persevere and overcome any difficulties that they experience in their learning.

The school establishes productive relationships with parents. Parents are informed regularly about the school's activities and events, in addition to the term's themes, through newsletters and social media. Regular meetings are held for them to discuss their children's progress and development targets, and to reinforce what parents can do to support their children with their work. As a result, parents feel a part of the school. They support the school and work effectively with staff.

Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to express their opinions about provision. They provide effective opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas when starting a new theme, and choose aspects that are of interest to them. As a result, pupils feel that the school values their ideas and opinions. Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to shoulder responsibilities by joining influential groups, such as the school council, which organised a film night recently to raise money to purchase a 'buddy bench' for the playground. The Welsh Language Charter group promotes the use of the Welsh language enthusiastically in the school's day-to-day life, for example by preparing a booklet for parents and kitchen staff to support them when speaking Welsh. This develops pupils' leadership skills effectively and develops them to become active and conscientious citizens of the future.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting eating and drinking healthily, in addition to keeping fit. This has a positive effect on pupils' understanding of issues relating to their health and wellbeing. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides effective leadership, which ensures a clear strategic direction for the school and promotes a close-knit and inclusive community. He has high expectations and a clear vision, which is based on ensuring a range of rich learning experiences for pupils in a happy and supportive environment. Promoting the Welsh language and Welshness is one of his priorities, and is at the heart of all of the school's work. The headteacher works successfully with members of the senior management team, pupils, staff, governors and parents to implement this vision successfully.

Under the headteacher's modest leadership, the senior management team, which includes the deputy headteacher and unit leaders, are developing as confident leaders. Staff are dedicated, work together closely as a team and fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. They show a strong commitment to promoting continuous and sustainable improvements by coming together to discuss regularly and planning jointly. These meetings focus firmly on standards and priorities for improvement. This provides a clear focus for the work of all staff, and contributes well towards ensuring continuous improvement. It also helps successfully to reduce teachers' workloads.

Leaders plan thoroughly to meet local and national priorities. Staff address recent development in education enthusiastically, for example by preparing for the new curriculum and introducing the digital competence framework. Staff's commitment to introducing strategies that increase pupils' confidence and develop their resilience contributes effectively towards ensuring that they show high levels of motivation, interest and pride in their work. The school has a strong culture and ethos of supporting staff's professional learning. There are good opportunities for all members of staff to improve their practice and raise standards. This, for example, has led to an improvement in staff's use of assessment for learning practices, in addition to pupils' ICT skills across the school.

The self-evaluation procedure is at the heart of the school's life and work. It has been embedded firmly and focuses clearly on pupils' outcomes and the effect of provision, teaching and care. Regular monitoring activities are a key part of the school's continuous procedures to raise standards. They are based on a good range of first-hand evidence in relation to pupils' achievement, which includes lesson observations, scrutinising their work and conducting learning walks. All teachers are part of the monitoring procedure. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders provide beneficial opportunities to seek and respond to the views of pupils and parents, for example when facilitating the arrangements for going home at the end of the day. There is a clear link between the findings of the self-evaluation procedure and the priorities in the school development plan, which focuses clearly on improving provision and raising standards.

By playing a prominent part in its monitoring, self-evaluation and strategic planning procedures, members of the governing body have rigorous knowledge of the school's performance. By visiting the school to scrutinise books and discuss the effect of new initiatives with teachers, they have a sound understanding of the strengths of provision and areas for improvement. This enables them to hold the school to account for its performance effectively.

Leaders manage resources efficiently to provide a range of varied and rich learning experiences for pupils. They allocate funding appropriately in order to meet priorities for improvement and monitor expenditure carefully. The school uses a range of grants purposefully, including the pupil development grant, to enrich provision. It provides a number of effective intervention programmes to raise standards and promote the wellbeing of pupils who are eligible to receive it. As a result, clear progress can be seen in pupils' reading skills and in their desire and enthusiasm to learn.

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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