



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

A report on

**Ysgol Awel y Mynydd
Sarn Mynach
Llandudno Junction
Conwy
LL31 9RZ**

Date of inspection: December 2019

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Awel y Mynydd

Ysgol Awel y Mynydd is a new primary school that is situated in the area of Sarn Mynach in Llandudno Junction, in Conwy local authority. The school was established in 2016 following the closure of two local schools and merging them in a new building in September 2017. There are 494 pupils on roll, including 62 nursery age pupils who attend the school on a full-time basis following their fourth birthday. Pupils are taught either in the Welsh-medium stream or the English-medium stream, and most are taught in mixed-age classes within these streams. There are two units of the school grounds that provide specialist education for pupils in the foundation phase and key stage 2.

Over time, around 20% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is slightly higher than the national percentage of 18%. The school has identified around 29% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is slightly higher than the national percentage of 21%. Around 21% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes, and a few speak English as a second language. Most pupils come from white British backgrounds.

The headteacher has been in post since the school was established in 2016. Neither the headteacher nor the deputy headteacher were present during the inspection. An acting headteacher has been in post since September 2019 and the acting deputy headteacher since October 2019. This is the school's first inspection.

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

Although it has now improved, over time the school's leadership and management has not been effective. As a result, leaders have not acted strategically enough to ensure that the school's process for improvement have a positive enough effect on provision or pupils' standards. Nor have pupil assessment and progress-tracking procedures been robust or reliable enough. As a result, leaders and teachers have not targeted individuals or specific groups of pupils in enough detail to ensure that they make the best progress.

However, nearly all pupils are polite and behave well. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their work, and show enthusiasm and perseverance in their tasks. A majority of pupils make consistent progress in their literacy and numeracy skills, but pupils in the specialist units make sound progress against their targets.

Staff have a positive working relationship with pupils, which engages a majority of pupils' interest well and encourages them, overall, to work diligently in an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Staff promote the Welsh language appropriately and are skilful language models for pupils. Nearly all members of staff support pupils conscientiously and provide activities that correspond fairly appropriately with a majority of pupils' needs. However, activities do not always correspond to the needs of a minority of pupils. As a result, a minority of pupils, particularly those who are more able, do not always achieve to the best of their ability.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Establish robust and effective leadership
- R2 Strengthen self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes
- R3 Establish and make effective use of pupil progress-tracking processes
- R4 Ensure that teachers plan purposefully to develop challenging opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the areas of learning
- R5 Raise standards and improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills
- R6 Ensure that pupils contribute effectively to their own learning and to making wider decisions about the school's work
- R7 Comply with Welsh Government guidelines when planning the expenditure of specific grants

What happens next

Special Measures

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will produce an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress, usually every four to six months.

Main findings

Standards: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

During their time at the school, a majority of pupils make good progress in their learning. A majority of pupils with additional learning needs, including those in the units, make sound progress from their starting points. A majority recall previous knowledge successfully, but a significant minority of pupils do not make the expected progress, particularly those who are more able. A minority of pupils develop their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately across the areas of learning.

Across the school, most pupils listen attentively and develop their oral skills effectively in both languages in a suitable range of activities. In the foundation phase, they contribute appropriately to discussions and respect each other's contributions. Many are keen to give answers and develop their ideas successfully, for example as foundation phase pupils discuss the question 'are smaller objects lighter or heavier than bigger objects?' As they move through the school, many pupils' oral skills in the Welsh stream develop fairly positively in both languages and, by the time they reach the top of the school, they develop as competent bilingual learners. The oral skills of those in the learners' stream are developing appropriately in English. However, the Welsh oral skills of a majority of pupils in the learners' stream are not developing robustly enough.

In the foundation phase, a majority of pupils make suitable progress in learning to read. They develop their knowledge of letter sounds appropriately, and use a range of strategies to read with increasing confidence. However, a significant minority of pupils' reading skills are not developing purposefully enough and they do not make enough progress over time. In key stage 2, a majority of pupils in both streams read fluently and accurately in Welsh and English. A few in the learners' stream develop their Welsh reading skills appropriately. Pupils in both streams, on the whole, discuss the content of books confidently when learning about the life of a child during the war. By Year 6, most pupils of moderate ability develop their skills appropriately in both languages to gather and set out information effectively, for example when learning about Neil Armstrong landing on the moon. However, the progress that more able pupils make when using their reading skills to gather information is limited.

A majority of pupils' writing skills are developing consistently in both languages. Most pupils in the foundation phase develop their early writing skills appropriately in a variety of suitable activities, for example when labelling parts of the body. They spell simple words correctly and, on the whole, punctuate consistently, in line with their age and ability. By Year 2, a majority write in an appropriate variety of genres, for example when writing instructions for growing water cress. As pupils move through the school, a majority develop their skills suitably in a range of genres. They use extensive vocabulary in their creative work, and extend their sentences regularly when writing a story about the 'Geirios Greulon' (the Cruel Cherry). However, a significant minority of pupils do not develop their writing skills confidently across the areas of learning in either language. A majority of pupils in the learners' stream do not develop their Welsh writing skills consistently enough. As a result, they do not make enough progress over time.

Most pupils in the foundation phase make appropriate progress in their number skills. Their understanding of number facts and place value is developing suitably. By Year 2, pupils develop their skills effectively when measuring the time it takes for a parachute to land from different heights. A majority of pupils' number skills in key stage 2 build appropriately on their previous learning. For example, they solve a total in detail when ensuring the best value for money when buying food and drink in a local supermarket for a visit to the theatre. However, many pupils' numeracy skills are not developing successfully enough across the areas of learning. As a result, they do not make enough progress, particularly more able pupils.

Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing inconsistently. A majority of pupils in the foundation phase use an electronic tablet confidently and control a programmable toy skilfully. In key stage 2, many pupils develop their data-handling skills appropriately, for example when entering the results of a scientific experiment into a spreadsheet to create a suitable line graph, and then interpreting the data knowledgeably. However, a majority of pupils' skills are not comprehensive or developed enough across the school.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement

Nearly all pupils are respectful and polite towards each other, staff and people who visit the school. Most behave well in lessons and as they move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. Most pupils are clear about the school's expectations of their behaviour, which encourages them purposefully to behave well and foster positive attitudes towards their work. Nearly all pupils are happy at the school and feel completely safe there. They know whom to approach for advice if anything is worrying them, and are confident that the school responds to any concerns they may have in a timely manner.

Most pupils know how to make sensible choices about eating healthily, for example when choosing what to include in their lunchboxes. Most pupils understand the importance of exercise and keeping fit. An effective example of this is the way in which pupils undertake a 'mile a day' regularly. Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe on the internet.

A small number of pupil groups, such as the school council, the eco council and the 'Cewri Cymraeg' help to improve limited aspects of school life, for example as they organise a colourful clothing day to raise money for charity. However, very few develop effective leadership skills without adult support, particularly when developing ideas to improve aspects of the school's work. As a result, pupils do not feel that their voice has enough of an influence or effect on the work and direction of the school.

Across the school, most pupils work sensibly with a partner and in groups. They have fairly positive attitudes towards their work and, on the whole, show enthusiasm and perseverance in their tasks. A good example of this is the way in which they design a pamphlet and a video to explain how to walk to school safely. On the whole, a majority of pupils concentrate appropriately, enjoy learning and complete tasks within a specific time. However, a minority of pupils are not proactive enough in their own learning and, as a result, they are over-reliant on guidance from teachers.

Most pupils take pride in their community and take part regularly in a range of local activities, such as growing plants and vegetables in the community garden. They are active in supporting various local and national charities. This has a positive effect on their understanding of other people's needs within their community and the wider world. Most pupils develop appropriately as knowledgeable and intelligent citizens.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Staff have a positive working relationship with pupils, which promotes learning appropriately, on the whole. They engage most pupils' interest well and encourage them to work diligently in an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Nearly all members of staff support pupils robustly and provide activities that correspond to a majority of pupils' needs. However, activities do not meet the needs of a significant minority of pupils purposefully enough. As a result, a minority of pupils, particularly those who are more able, do not always achieve to the best of their ability.

Many teachers have high expectations and refer appropriately in lessons to pupils' previous knowledge. They set clear learning objectives and question them skilfully in order to develop their ideas. In a minority of classes in which teaching is most effective, teachers ensure that activities have a good pace and run smoothly. They vary the learning techniques successfully and encourage pupils to work proactively when completing tasks. For example, Year 2 pupils support each other meaningfully in developing their skills when designing and building a rocket. However, a minority of teachers do not encourage pupils enough to learn independently. Nor do they provide enough opportunities for them to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills methodically or constructively across the areas of learning. This hinders a minority of pupils' ability to make sound progress in various areas.

A majority of teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and provide many activities to pupils, which enable them to engage well with their learning. For example, pupils enjoy working within groups to conduct a scientific investigation on gravity and friction, film the experiment and present the results digitally. Teachers provide activities to develop pupils' creative skills regularly. For example, they provide a range of artistic activities in which pupils produce scripts and compose songs, and perform them in the style of pop stars in front of a green screen.

In a majority of classes, teacher now give effective feedback to pupils, which enables them to improve their skills and the quality of their work. They organise beneficial opportunities for them to respond to their comments and make improvements. However, this is not always consistent across the school and, as a result, teachers' feedback does not always lead to raising standards.

Although the school develops pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in specific lessons, plans do not ensure that they build on their previous learning regularly enough. Recently, in the foundation phase, teachers are beginning to plan jointly more effectively. As a result, increasing attention is given to practical experiences, which enable pupils to apply specific skills in different contexts. For example, pupils measure the length of shadows at different times of the day by using standard and non-standard units. In key stage 2, teachers are beginning to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the areas of learning. For example, at the beginning of key stage 2, pupils record a reference by using four

and eight compass points when completing map work. However, this is not consistent across the stage, and activities do not always meet a minority of pupils' needs well enough.

Teachers do not provide rich and challenging enough opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in wider contexts to the same extent as they do in language and mathematics lessons. Although the school provides a few valuable experiences for pupils to develop their ICT skills, these are limited and do not always build on their previous learning.

Provision for foundation phase pupils is developing consistently. Staff provide relevant activities for them in the learning areas, in order to promote their independent learning skills. The outdoor learning environment promotes learning beneficially in order to develop many pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. These activities are beginning to have a positive effect on standards.

Across the school, most staff are skilful language models and support pupils to develop their spoken Welsh skills effectively, particularly in the Welsh stream. Staff provide successful opportunities for pupils in both streams to learn about Welsh history, for example by learning about the history of Owain Glyndŵr and Hedd Wyn. They also encourage them to listen to contemporary Welsh music at school. This has a positive effect on many pupils' understanding of the Welsh language, history and modern Welsh culture.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

The school has very new procedures to track pupils' progress from their starting points, and teachers are beginning to use them appropriately to identify the next steps in pupils' learning. Over time, the school's pupil assessment and progress-tracking procedures have not been robust or reliable enough, which means that a significant minority have not made the progress that they could. However, the school provides a range of appropriate intervention programmes to support pupils who need them, and staff create a positive and caring learning environment to ensure that they make suitable progress. The units that develop pupils' speech and language provide them with supportive, specialist, inclusive and stimulating support.

Teachers work successfully with pupils with additional learning needs, and their parents, to provide them with individual education plans. Targets within these plans give teachers clear guidance on how to develop individuals' needs. Members of staff use the expertise of external agencies effectively, for example the 'Team Around the Family', to support pupils with social needs, and there is comprehensive provision for pupils with emotional needs within the nurture group.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. There are numerous water fountains around the school, which ensure that pupils are aware of the importance of drinking water regularly. Through personal and social education activities and scientific education about the body, pupils understand the need to eat healthily. The school provides regular physical education lessons for pupils, and activities, which include the local football club, promote pupils' understanding of the importance of keeping fit and choosing a healthy lifestyle effectively.

The various pupil councils are beginning to have an effect on school life, and there are very few examples of where the pupil's voice is effective. These include the 'Cewri Cymraeg', who ensure that contemporary Welsh music can be heard around the school. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to express their views about the school, guide their own learning or pursue lines of enquiry and themes that are of interest to them.

Teachers use positive behaviour procedures successfully. This has a positive effect on pupils' overall behaviour. Various strategies, such as 'y llaw dawel' (the quiet hand), are an effective means of calming pupils, ensuring eye contact between pupils and teachers, and ensuring that they are listening carefully. The school also promotes the values of fairness, respect and honesty appropriately. These can be seen in pupils' courteous attitudes across the school.

The school encourages pupils to live happily alongside each other in a supportive learning environment. For example, taking part in Anti-bullying Week and Odd Socks Day raises pupils' awareness of this successfully. Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss aspects of anti-racism and the importance of being tolerant towards others.

Provision to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound. The quality of collective worship sessions is effective, and pupils are given suitable opportunities to reflect on their learning and behaviour regularly. Opportunities are provided for them to learn about the importance of caring for others, both locally and nationally, for example by contributing to the local food bank.

Valuable educational visits, for example to Cardiff when learning about the geography of Wales and to a local historical site to learn about the Celts, make a suitable contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the humanities.

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

Leadership and management: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Over time, the school's leadership and management have not been robust or effective enough. Leaders have not acted strategically enough to ensure that the school's processes for improvement have had a positive effect on provision or pupils' standards. Pupil assessment and progress-tracking procedures have not been robust or reliable enough. As a result, leaders and teachers have not targeted individuals or specific groups of pupils in enough detail to ensure improvement.

Following significant support and guidance from officers from the regional consortium, the local authority and governors over the last year, the school's leadership and management are now beginning to improve. The acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, other members of the new senior management team and staff are now beginning to work together purposefully to create an appropriate learning environment for pupils. They fulfil their roles and responsibilities appropriately and energetically, and support each other well. However, the school's long-term leadership situation currently remains uncertain.

Teachers and leaders have conducted appropriate self-evaluation activities during the last year, which have been based on evidence of teaching, learning and provision. However, due to the unstable leadership situation, the school has not acted effectively enough on monitoring findings. The acting headteacher and new senior management team now have a sound understanding of the school's current main priorities. The current improvement plan includes a suitable number of priorities to be achieved within a year. However, success criteria and evaluation arrangements are not incisive enough. This limits leaders' ability to measure the effect of the plan on the quality of provision and pupils' standards.

Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are inconsistent. Although teachers meet with leaders to discuss their priorities annually, objectives are not always purposeful. There are no consistent procedures in place to consider progress against priorities or opportunities to evaluate them. As a result, leaders do not fulfil statutory requirements in full.

Leaders are committed to providing purposeful training for all members of staff in order to support whole-school priorities. Where this is successful, the effect of training can be seen in the high standards of teaching and in pupils' standards and wellbeing. A good example of this is teachers developing the principles of the foundation phase further by visiting local schools to observe good practice.

Governors have recently been very supportive of the acting headteacher and staff, and contribute effectively towards setting a clear strategic direction for the school. They know the school well. Governors meet regularly and now fulfil their duties effectively. They have a sound understanding of performance and leadership, and challenge all aspects of the school's work for the benefit of pupils and staff. They are beginning to undertake activities skilfully in relation to teaching and learning. As a result, they are beginning to hold leaders to account effectively for standards in the school.

Classrooms provide an attractive and stimulating learning environment, and foundation phase pupils make good use of the open areas for learning and play. Leaders, with support from the business manager who was appointed recently, now manage the budget soundly. However, the pupil development grant has not been used purposefully in the past. No steps have been in place to ensure that it is targeted correctly or to measure its effect. As a result, grant expenditure has not contributed purposefully towards improving the outcomes or wellbeing of the school's 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:

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