



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

A report on

Ysgol Y Ddwylan

**New Road
Newcastle Emlyn
Carmarthenshire
SA38 9AB**

Date of inspection: May 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Y Ddwylan

Name of provider	Ysgol y Ddwylan
Local authority	Carmarthenshire
Language of the provider	Dual stream
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	296
Pupils of statutory school age	250
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	12
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 21.3%)</i>	25%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 20.6%)</i>	17%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	20%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	3%
Date of headteacher appointment	September 2014
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	October 2013
Start date of inspection	15/5/22
Additional information	

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

(a) The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

The school has a caring, inclusive and Welsh ethos where everyone feels that they are a valuable member of a team. Pupils behave well and treat their peers and adults with respect and tolerance. The school helps pupils to respect diversity and discuss their feelings maturely by acting on the principle of 'it's okay not to be okay'.

The leadership of the headteacher, governors and other co-ordinators encourages staff to act consistently in the interest of pupils and to support them to make progress continuously. Effective wellbeing support is provided for pupils and staff, which supports them to achieve well.

Teachers and support staff plan interesting and purposeful activities for pupils, while also providing them with opportunities to suggest ideas about the content of their themes. Staff support pupils of all abilities well and help them effectively to do their best. As a result, pupils take ownership of what they learn, are enthusiastic about their work and persevere well with their tasks.

Recommendations

- R1 Share best practices in teaching across all classes
- R2 Ensure consistency in teachers' methods of responding to pupils' written work
- R3 Provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum
- R4 Ensure that staff have consistent expectations when supporting pupils to communicate in Welsh in formal and informal situations, where appropriate

What happens next

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

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, most pupils' physical and social skills are in line with what is expected. Pupils' Welsh communication skills are lower than expected on entry to the school. However, nearly all acquire Welsh language skills quickly. Nearly all pupils' make appropriate progress in all aspects of their learning as they move through the school. This includes pupils who have been identified as having additional learning needs.

Nearly all pupils listen well to adults and each other. Overall, most pupils' oral skills are developing effectively in both languages. In the Welsh stream, most pupils in progression step one are beginning to develop simple vocabulary. For example, they use adjectives such as '*mawr*' ('big') and '*bach*' ('small') to describe equipment around the classroom. By progression step two, most expand their vocabulary appropriately to talk about their work and experiences in Welsh and English. Nearly all pupils' oral skills in progression step three build successfully in both languages. They discuss in a polished manner and use mature vocabulary to explain their work, for example when describing how they programmed the Mr Urdd character to light up in various colours. However, in less formal situations, most pupils have a tendency to turn to English when communicating with each other. In the English stream, nearly all pupils develop their Welsh vocabulary to respond to questions such as '*Ble rwyd ti'n byw?*' ('Where do you live?'). Their mastery of English enables them to speak confidently in different contexts. By progression step three, nearly all pupils' Welsh language skills build purposefully on their previous knowledge. With support, they explain their work simply by using extended sentences and appropriate vocabulary with some accuracy. Nearly all pupils discuss eloquently in English.

Most pupils' reading skills are developing well. In the Welsh stream, pupils in progression step one use an appropriate range of phonic methods confidently to identify letters and put them together to form simple words. In progression step two, they build on their understanding of Welsh and English reading strategies successfully to respond to questions on specific topics. Most in progression step three are developing as meaningful readers in both languages. They explain what they have read successfully and refer to a book's blurb to gain a taste of the content. In the English stream, nearly all pupils in progression step two are beginning to develop their understanding of the features of the text of Welsh books, for example when answering questions about a dialogue between two characters. They read a variety of English texts confidently and refer to the main events and character in the story successfully. By progression step three, nearly all pupils are developing their Welsh reading skills effectively. They explain the main events in stories with some accuracy. Most read English texts confidently in various contexts, predict the ending of a story and explain the reasoning behind their choices.

Most pupils' writing skills are developing soundly. In the Welsh stream, most pupils' early writing skills in progression step one are developing effectively. They practise drawing patterns correctly, which leads naturally to forming letters successfully. By progression step two, most are beginning to write more at length in both languages and show a sound awareness of imperative verbs, for example when writing a

creative story. Nearly all pupils in progression step three show a sound understanding of spelling patterns, paragraphing and punctuation in Welsh and English. They understand the features of different genres of writing appropriately and adapt the style and structure of different texts suitably, for example when writing the diary of Merlin the wizard. In the English stream, nearly all are beginning to write simple sentences in Welsh and use adjectives correctly, for example when describing where they live. Most write more extensively and skilfully in English. With support, by progression step three, nearly all connect simple sentences in Welsh correctly and show an increasing understanding of audience.

Most pupils' mathematical skills develop confidently as they move from one progression step to the next. In progression step one, pupils count confidently and use natural resources, such as pieces of wood and pebbles, to make a repeating pattern. They enjoy digging for 'treasure' in the sand pit to correspond with a particular number to apply their understanding of one-to-one matching. This encourages pupils to enjoy mathematics from an early age.

Pupils in progression step two build confidently on their understanding and enjoyment of mathematics. They learn various skills, such as addition and subtraction, in addition to the mathematical link between them. Most have a sound understanding of place value and measure accurately in different contexts. They learn new mathematical skills in specific lessons and then use them in everyday situations as part of their termly theme.

In progression step three, nearly all round up, estimate and calculate confidently in different contexts. They build well on their previous understanding and apply their skills very confidently in appropriate situations.

Although nearly all pupils use their mathematical skills confidently in various situations, they do not apply their numeracy skills sufficiently in other areas of the curriculum.

Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing soundly. Soon after they start at the school, most pupils develop basic skills suitably. In progression step one, for example, they use a tablet computer appropriately and use various apps that promote their oral skills. By the end of progression step three, most foster good ICT skills and use different programs successfully to support their learning, for example to code digital Christmas messages.

Pupils develop their artistic skills highly effectively across the school. For example, the 'Creative Crew' have worked with a local artist to create high quality art and craft work based on the local story, *Gwiber Emlyn* (the Wyvern of Newcastle Emlyn). Pupils take pride in their work and take good care of it.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are proud of their school and feel safe within its inclusive and familial environment. They are happy to discuss any concerns with members of staff and are confident that they listen to them. Nearly all pupils behave exceptionally well both inside and outside the classroom. They are polite and treat their peers, staff and visitors with respect. Nearly all are very caring towards each other and work and play

together happily. The familial ethos and empathy towards others are supported highly effectively by the 'Crew Lles' (Wellbeing Crew). They are very vigilant on the school playground and are happy to respond to any worries among their peers. A notable example of this is the way that they keep an eye on the buddy bench, where pupils can take a break if they are anxious during break times and know that someone will come to comfort them.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of online safety. They have a mature understanding of the dangers that can arise as a result of unsuitable use of the internet. Most understand how to stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking water and keeping fit. After taking part in regular physical education lessons and sessions such as the after-school walking club, older pupils say confidently that arrangements to deal with wellbeing are extremely important to ensure a well-rounded life. They discuss maturely by referring often to the mindset that 'it's okay not to be okay'. A majority believe that facing challenges, making mistakes and persevering are a natural part of the development and life and all individuals.

Across the school, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They listen attentively to the instructions of teachers and support staff and concentrate well on their work for extended periods during sessions. A majority are enthusiastic learners who apply themselves to new experiences confidently. Most are happy to discuss their work with their peers. They respect the contributions of others and respond positively to their ideas. The pupil's voice is developing successfully, for example as they discuss ideas to be included in the termly themes.

Most pupils develop a sound and natural understanding of the importance of being moral and responsible citizens. They have a mature awareness of these values because they are promoted to them daily by the staff. Older pupils explain the importance of equality maturely.

Pupils who have been elected to the school councils are conscientious and take responsibilities seriously. They work together effectively to raise money for good causes and charities. For example, by undertaking the mile a day campaign, over a thousand pounds were raised recently towards the Ukraine appeal. This raises pupils' awareness effectively of the importance of contributions to create a caring society.

Following the pandemic, inspectors are not reporting on pupil attendance rates during the 2021-2022 academic year. Instead, the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance will be reported on as part of inspection area 4.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has begun to plan purposefully to introduce the Curriculum for Wales. Staff plan jointly and provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to have a direct influence on the content of their activities, which motivates them to participate actively in their learning. The school has established a vision based on the principles of the Curriculum for Wales that is relevant to its context. As a result, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum based on interesting themes and a wide range of authentic learning experience that develop pupils' skills in literacy, ICT and creative

aspects, in addition to their desire to learn. However, pupils are not provided with regular opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Through regular use of visitors, specialists and visits to places of interest, staff ensure that they enrich the curriculum effectively. For example, a visit was organised recently to the town's castle to provide opportunities for pupils to work with a local radio broadcaster to create a podcast based on the local legend of Gwiber Emlyn. Older pupils take advantage of interesting opportunities, such as attending a residential course at a local canoeing centre, to develop their physical skills and encourage them to be healthy, confident and independent individuals.

The school is developing its curriculum to reflect the nature of its context fully, which includes planning learning activities that reflect the cultural, linguistic and diverse nature of their local area, Wales and the wider world. For example, the headteacher held a whole-school assembly recently to celebrate differences and pupils were given an opportunity to reflect on how to be tolerant of others. This supports pupils to be principled and knowledgeable individuals.

In all classes, the principles of the school's main aim, 'Working as a team to achieve our goal' are very prominent. There is a supportive, challenging and productive relationship between teachers, support staff and pupils. This encourages respect, courtesy and trust and contributes firmly to the ethos of inclusivity throughout the school. Most adults also model polished and accurate language and encourage and support pupils to use accurate language of a high standard consistently in both languages. As a result, most pupils' standards of language are developing successfully. However, the expectations of all adults are not always high enough when encouraging pupils to speak Welsh in informal situations, where appropriate.

The school's provision for independent learning through stimulating play experiences in progression step one and most other classes in the school is effective. Through a number of varied activities, teachers and support staff introduce new skills, information and understanding to pupils skilfully. They provide meaningful opportunities for them to learn through hands-on experiences in the learning environment in both the indoor and outdoor classroom. For example, in progression step two, pupils develop their problem-solving skills beneficially in a bridge building activity. Pupils take advantage of a wide variety of play provision in the outdoor classroom, such as the climbing wall, netball equipment and the climbing frame. This, in turn, encourages them to develop good physical skills.

The classrooms and other various areas are stimulating and engaging places where all groups of pupils, including the most and least able, can learn productively. For example, pupils' work is displayed purposefully in the classrooms and they take pride in their success. As a result, displays are stimulating and are a combination of those that celebrate pupils' work and those that support their learning.

Best practice in teaching, which is evident in many classes, is highly effective. In these classes, teachers ensure that there is a good pace to their lessons. They share the aim clearly and use a wide range of interesting resources to engage pupils' interest and question them effectively. A majority of teachers provide pupils with purposeful oral and written feedback that helps them to know how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. Teachers provide increasing opportunities for

pupils to review and make adjustments to their own work and that of their peers. However, the effective practice of responding to pupils' written work is inconsistent.

Teachers assess the progress and development of individuals and specific groups comprehensively. For example, they identify pupils who are at risk of underachieving or those who are more able at an early stage and adapt provision in line with needs. This ensures that nearly all pupils make good progress in their learning.

Care, support and guidance

Staff provide a caring, supportive and welcoming environment for pupils where all take pride in being valued members of the school 'family'. Staff promote Welsh culture, the Welsh language and Welsh heritage highly effectively across the school. As a result, pupils take pride in the area's traditions and their Welshness.

Staff have a sound awareness of pupils' needs and, as a result, support arrangements are devised at an early stage to meet their individual needs. The school's arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are sound. Members of staff are knowledgeable and deliver a purposeful range of effective support programmes for pupils to address their emotional wellbeing and improve their self-respect. As a result, pupils receive comprehensive support that helps them to make sound progress in their skills.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is a highly robust feature. All pupils with ALN have an individual education plan, which includes specific targets that staff review with their parents regularly. Daily information conversations between support staff and teachers enable them to monitor the progress of these pupils effectively and adapt provision in a timely manner to meet any new targets they may have. Robust links with a range of external agencies, such as the speech and language service and counselling service, provide specialist and beneficial support for pupils who need it.

Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to take part in physical exercise sessions in lessons and extra-curricular courses, such as football. These effective arrangements motivate pupils to keep fit and deepen their understanding of healthy living. The school promotes pupils' emotional wellbeing and physical health successfully. Staff support pupils to foster a positive attitude towards solving problems and persevering that is embedded deeply in learning activities. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to their work and their ability to overcome challenges successfully.

The inclusive ethos ensures that pupils are given good opportunities to become members of various councils. Staff ensure that these councils meet regularly and their contribution to the work of the school and the community is highly valuable. The school's environment and collective worship services promote pupils' spiritual and moral development successfully. Staff encourage pupils to consider other people's views sensitively, acknowledge and respect diversity and the importance of values such as tolerance.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding with clear arrangements for monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

Leaders have a clear vision for the school, which is based on establishing a safe, bilingual and Welsh environment for pupils and to develop them as knowledgeable, adventurous and confident learners. They convey this vision clearly to the whole school community. Leaders ensure that all staff understand and promote a culture of safeguarding that is robust and effective.

Leaders at all levels have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils and promote everyone's wellbeing well. They ensure that staff understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively. Teachers and support staff work together productively as a team and model and promote professional values and conduct that contributes firmly to improving the school.

Staff performance management arrangements are rigorous, and leaders are willing to address issues relating to underperformance, as appropriate. Members of the senior leadership team monitor staff's progress against their improvement targets each term. These targets are based on supporting and raising pupils' standards, responding positively to the school's priorities for improvement and developing staff's professional skills.

The school's self-evaluation process is robust and includes co-ordinators and members of the senior leadership team, in addition to pupils who are willing to express an opinion about their learning and provision. They gather and analyse first-hand evidence of standards and provision, which include learning walks, formal observations, scrutiny of books and questioning pupils to identify strengths and any areas for improvement. They consider these in detail to produce relevant priorities and actions for improvement. Recent priorities include continuing to prepare to introduce the Curriculum for Wales and the new Additional Learning Needs Act. Leaders set regular milestones to evaluate progress against these priorities and adapt their implementation methods appropriately, as necessary.

Members of the governing body understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively. They have a sound understanding of the school's work and use this to set priorities for improvement and challenge and support the headteacher, where necessary. They ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements for eating and drinking healthily.

Leaders have a productive relationship with parents and share useful information with them. For example, the headteacher sends information to parents about relevant issues relating to the school's life and work on a weekly basis in a useful newsletter. This enables parents to raise any issues that may affect their child's learning and wellbeing with the school promptly.

Leaders have created a positive culture to provide regular professional learning opportunities for all staff. Staff are encouraged to develop professionally continuously by taking on additional responsibilities, appropriate secondments or accepting

temporary positions. Staff have recently taken part in professional learning activities that support them to develop effective approaches to improving standards of writing and develop staff and pupils' ICT skills. The priority on refining teaching and developing the Curriculum for Wales is beginning to have a positive effect on provision. Leaders monitor the effect of professional learning opportunities on the effectiveness of leadership and teaching and on pupils' progress and wellbeing effectively.

Leaders plan purposeful opportunities for pupils in both streams to develop their Welsh language skills in formal and informal situations. Since the recent lockdown periods, pupils in both streams have a tendency to speak English with each other in informal situations. On the whole, staff's expectations are not consistent enough in terms of improving this and encouraging pupils across the school to speak Welsh with increasing confidence.

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/members of the management committee 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, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), 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 (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- 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' well-being, 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 (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

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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