



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

A report on
Ysgol Cwm Banwy

Llangadfan
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 0NW

Date of inspection: May 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Cwm Banwy

Name of provider	Ysgol Cwm Banwy
Local authority	Powys County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School
Number of pupils on roll	50
Pupils of statutory school age	40
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	10
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 23.7%)</i>	10.9%
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 13.2%)</i>	26.5%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	64.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	20/05/2024
This is the school's first inspection since it was opened in September 2020	

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

Pupils' happiness, satisfaction and complete enjoyment in their learning are impressive features of the ethos and provision of Ysgol Cwm Banwy, which permeates every aspect of the school's work. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they treat each other and adults with highly commendable respect and courtesy. The school's culture of safeguarding is strong and pupils feel happy and safe in their work and play. They are excited when talking about their experiences and are extremely proud of their school.

Over time, most pupils make sound progress in their language and digital skills. They apply their skills confidently across the curriculum and across a wide range of interesting contexts. The school's arrangements for developing pupils' numeracy skills are an obvious strength. Pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to the cohesive and imaginative experiences they are given and make exceptionally strong progress in this aspect of their education.

The school provides an exciting curriculum that sparks pupils' imagination and engages their interest successfully. Staff establish a supportive and productive working relationship with pupils and the learning areas are lively spaces that are full of curiosity. Across the school, teaching is strong and teachers use a good range of effective teaching methods that promote pupils' motivation and progress. However, teachers do not provide regular enough opportunities for pupils to make independent choices about how to complete tasks and present their work.

The headteacher is a passionate and firm leader who aspires for the best possible learning experiences and well-being for all pupils. The headteacher is supported by a dedicated and effective team of staff who strive diligently to ensure that pupils enjoy their learning experiences and make the best possible progress. Governors fulfil their roles and responsibilities skilfully and are genuine advocates for the school. They provide purposeful and tireless support to leaders and staff and ensure that the school uses its resources effectively.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure regular opportunities for pupils to make independent choices about how to complete their tasks and how to present their work

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare case studies on its work in relation to:

- Developing pupils' numeracy skills by providing rich, authentic experiences

- Whole-school planning to develop skills across the curriculum

Main findings

Learning

Over time, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress from their starting points. They apply their skills confidently across the curriculum.

Most pupils across the school listen attentively to adults and their peers and respect each other's views and opinions. Most pupils have good oral skills. Many pupils in the foundation learning class speak confidently by using an appropriate tone of voice and language. For example, they use relevant vocabulary when discussing how many elephants it would take to balance a dinosaur on the scales. Most older pupils speak skilfully and make mature comments about what they are learning. They express and communicate experiences, ideas and information clearly in wider contexts. For example, they hold a class discussion to give their opinion on children's rights to protest.

Most pupils make sound progress in their reading skills. The youngest pupils recognise an increasing number of letters and begin to build words correctly. They begin to use an appropriate range of strategies to read and find meaning in text. By Year 1 and 2, pupils read more extended pieces with increasing confidence and show a good understanding of what they read. Most older pupils use relevant terminology when discussing the features of more complex literary texts confidently. They speak enthusiastically about their favourite authors and give valid reasons to support their choice.

Most of the youngest pupils develop their writing skills successfully. They make imaginative choices of vocabulary and spell a majority of words within their experience correctly. By Year 2, pupils begin to use paragraphs skilfully when writing increasingly extensive texts. For example, they write an extremely interesting news item about the day a dinosaur came to visit the school. They build on these skills well over time. By the top of the school, most pupils write correctly in various contexts and consider the reader skilfully. For example, they write a diary to personalise the story of William Kamkwamba and convey personal feelings, such as frustrations and fears, extremely effectively.

Most pupils make good progress in their numeracy skills. The youngest pupils develop an early understanding of number value and apply this understanding skilfully. For example, they recognise number bonds of 10 and 100 confidently. Pupils build on these skills and, by the top of the school, they solve problems skilfully and use a range of appropriate methods. Across the school, the way in which pupils apply their numeracy skills across many areas of the curriculum is an obvious strength. For example, the oldest pupils apply their understanding of area, perimeter and circumference competently when designing a castle for Owain Glyndŵr.

Over time, most pupils' digital skills develop well. Pupils in the foundation learning class create interesting digital presentations to support their learning about homes in Africa. They import appropriate pictures and add text and change its colour purposefully. Pupils build on their skills regularly and, by the top of the school, they create comprehensive and useful websites that present, for example, information about the body.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to physical activity. They enjoy physical education sessions and apply themselves purposefully to develop their skills. For example, the youngest pupils develop increasing control of the shape of the body and their movements when creating a dinosaur dance. The whole school enjoys dancing and exercises energetically in the *Chwarter Chwysu* sessions. Across the school, most pupils develop their creative skills successfully. For example, they work with a well-known artist to create imaginative pictures that combine paintings and torn paper.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

The school is a welcoming, happy and caring community. Pupils are friendly and polite and take pride in their school. They value the experiences and opportunities they are given and feel safe and comfortable within the homely and cosy environment. Pupils and parents welcome the comprehensive support provided by staff and feel that staff listen to any concerns they have in a timely manner, where appropriate.

Most pupils' attitudes towards their learning experiences are highly commendable. They are enthusiastic about their activities and respond to new challenges with infectious energy and curiosity. They work effectively with peers in pairs and small groups and persevere for extended periods to solve problems and complete tasks. They treat each other with respect and courtesy and pupils' behaviour is excellent in all aspects of their work and play, almost without exception. They respond positively to feedback from staff and, on the whole, act on it and make valuable improvements to their work.

Pupils undertake leadership roles and responsibilities within the school in a dedicated and conscientious manner. They take these roles seriously and with maturity and develop useful planning, communication and organisation skills as a result. The '*Criw Tanio'r Ddraig*' group promotes Welsh culture and pupils' awareness of Welsh artists purposefully by organising for music to be played during break times. Pupils contribute diligently to the safety of the site by conducting a termly health and safety audit with members of the governing body.

Most pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of being ethical and principled citizens. For example, by studying the history of Betty Campbell and the challenges she faced, they learn about unjust situations. As a result, they discuss issues relating to fairness, equality and human rights maturely.

Most pupils show a sound understanding of how good choices in terms of healthy eating and exercise affect their health. They enjoy taking part in physical activities during their lessons, for example when investigating the effect of different sports on the heart rate. They are dedicated and enthusiastic when representing the school in

competitions across a range of sports, such as hockey, football and cross-country running and give of their best on all occasions.

Most pupils have an appropriate understanding of how to stay safe when working online. They have an appropriate awareness of which programs and apps are suitable for them to use and whom to approach if a stranger tries to contact them through digital media. Pupils create fun digital animations to share important messages about how to work and learn safely online with their peers.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff have worked with parents and pupils to develop a vision for the school's curriculum which is based on providing fun and stimulating learning experiences that build on pupils' innate desire to learn. They provide a balanced and exciting curriculum that meets most pupils' needs effectively. Good attention is given to the local context when planning rich and interesting activities and, as a result, pupils take ownership of the curriculum and immerse themselves fully in their learning.

Staff ensure that the indoor and outdoor learning areas are stimulating and attractive and promote learning successfully. The youngest pupils, for example, develop their oral skills purposefully when discussing the characteristics of creatures and sorting them in the water area. Year 1 and 2 pupils develop their mapping and scientific skills when investigating feeding relationships in the memorial garden.

The quality of teaching is consistently strong across the school. Teachers and assistants are passionate and conscientious and are tireless advocates for the pupils. They have high expectations of all pupils and aspire for the best well-being, standards and progress for them. Staff have established an effective working relationship with pupils and know their needs well. They ensure that provision builds on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills effectively. They use a good range of probing questioning methods that recall previous learning and identify the next steps in learning purposefully. Activities are well-paced and the learning areas are energetic and lively spaces. Staff work together purposefully to devise themes and activities that engage most pupils' interest and spark their imagination successfully. Staff provide regular feedback on pupils' work and, as a result, pupils have a good understanding of how they have succeeded and where they could improve their work.

Staff are robust linguistic role models and provision for developing pupils' Welsh language skills is strong. Staff promote pupils' knowledge of common vocabulary and language patterns regularly by repeating stories and legends, for example. Pupils apply their skills purposefully across a range of contexts. For example, pupils in the foundation learning class use imaginative and adventurous vocabulary when presenting a news bulletin to report on important local events.

Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to influence what they learn within their termly themes. Valuable opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute ideas about what they would like to discover and learn at the beginning of their themes and as new ideas emerge during thematic work. As a result, pupils have an obvious interest in their experiences and apply themselves excitedly to their tasks. However,

on the whole, teachers do not provide regular opportunities for pupils to make independent choices about how to complete tasks and present their work.

Effective use is made of the local area and visitors to the school to broaden pupils' experiences. A local farmer, for example, attends the school to talk to pupils about his work and pupils visit a nearby farm to reinforce their thematic work. Pupils visit the churches of St Cadfan and St Erfyl to investigate stained glass window patterns to support their project work back at the school.

Leaders monitor and track pupils' progress carefully. They use this information wisely to respond to the learning needs and well-being of individual pupils and steer the direction of learning purposefully. Annual reports for parents share comprehensive information about pupils' progress, along with the next steps in their learning.

Care, support and guidance

Ysgol Cwm Banwy provides excellent care, support and guidance for pupils. The school is an inclusive, happy and hard-working learning community with a wonderful sense of being part of one big and close-knit family. Staff have established an effective working relationship with pupils and support them to do their best in all aspects of the school's work. Staff know the pupils and their families well and parents value the support they receive.

Provision for supporting pupils with ALN is a strength. Most pupils make sound progress from their starting points, as a result. Leaders have established comprehensive arrangements for monitoring and tracking pupils' well-being and progress. This enables them to identify pupils who need further support at an early stage and provide support programmes that meet pupils' specific needs well. Programmes include support to promote pupils' emotional well-being, along with developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Staff support pupils skilfully through these programmes. They praise and motivate pupils skilfully and contribute successfully to promoting pupils' self-confidence and resilience. The school works purposefully with external agencies, such as the speech and language therapist and the educational psychology service, when necessary. The productive partnership between the school and parents is a notable strength. Parents and pupils are a key part of the arrangements for monitoring progress and setting targets for the next steps in learning. Staff work closely with the pre-school provision that is located on-site. This enables staff to share important information about pupils' preferences and needs before they start school and to plan ahead to meet their needs appropriately.

Staff organise a wide range of experiences and activities that promote pupils' physical health and emotional well-being purposefully. Most pupils enjoy opportunities to be out in the fresh air and identify with nature as they care for the memorial garden and grow vegetables in the dedicated areas.

The school provides an appropriate range of opportunities for pupils to lead on important aspects of the school's work. Pupils respond enthusiastically and fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously. For example, the sports ambassadors lead games and sports for the youngest pupils during lunchtime. They foster important skills such as communication, empathy and promoting respect for rules.

Staff organise a comprehensive range of interesting opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of their heritage, identity and Welsh culture. They compete in the Urdd National Eisteddfod each year and develop valuable skills when organising part of the local eisteddfod through their thematic work. The school promotes Welshness by encouraging by pupils and their families to record videos of them singing a song to encourage families to attend the national eisteddfod which is taking place locally. As a result, pupils develop a love and passion for the Welsh language and traditions.

Regular opportunities are provided to promote pupils' spiritual and moral development, along with their awareness of their responsibilities as principled citizens. They understand the importance of supporting other people and organise successful activities when raising money for local and national charities. They enjoy the opportunities they are given to learn about their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They apply their understanding naturally, for example when discussing the right to protest against the drowning of Cwm Celyn. During periods of collective worship, pupils reflect quietly and consider the importance of having friends. They discuss the characteristics of a good friend maturely and relate this to their personal values and the school's values.

The school has effective arrangements for promoting pupils' attendance and punctuality. Leaders ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding permeates all aspects of the school's work and staff have a thorough understanding of child protection procedures. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is based on respect, trust and the desire for all pupils to be given the opportunity to thrive. She has shared this vision successfully with pupils, staff, parents and the community. There is a strong sense of unity as they realise the school's motto to "colour the world together". The headteacher is a conscientious and inspiring leader and has high expectations of herself and others. She works diligently and wisely to meet pupils' needs and ensure that they make strong progress in their skills, while gaining pure enjoyment from their learning experiences. Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding successfully and keeping children safe is an ongoing priority. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy at school.

The headteacher is supported by a team of diligent and dedicated staff. They work together conscientiously to plan and deliver exciting provision that motivates pupils and engages their interest. Leaders have established purposeful arrangements for managing staff performance and their development targets link closely with their personal development needs and the school's improvement priorities. All members of staff are developed effectively by valuable professional learning opportunities. For example, staff have been working with local schools to plan learning experiences to develop pupils' knowledge of relationships and sexuality. This has a positive effect on staff's confidence to introduce these aspects and contributes successfully to developing pupils' understanding and well-being.

Leaders have established robust arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. They use a range of first-hand evidence skilfully to plan the school's

development steps. They scrutinise the evidence carefully and, as a result, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. They draw up improvement plans that focus intelligently on the areas for development and address national improvement priorities. Leaders monitor progress against the priorities regularly and adjust improvement plans, where necessary. As a result, leaders ensure that areas that are in need of improvement develop quickly. For example, provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills and opportunities to apply their skills across the curriculum has improved significantly over a short period.

Governors are extremely supportive of the school and they understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities well. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenges and hold the headteacher to account on behalf of the local community in their role as a critical friend. They undertake a dedicated range of monitoring activities, for example talking to pupils and scrutinise their work. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors work closely with the headteacher to manage finances and monitor spending plans thoroughly. They ensure that any expenditure is linked clearly to the school's improvement priorities. Leaders use the pupil development grant thoughtfully to support the development of pupils' skills successfully. Governors ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

A clear emphasis is placed on building valuable partnerships with parents and the wider community. The school is very visible in its community and works closely with local residents. For example, pupils visit the local shop to meet some of the area's older residents for a chat. They also entertain them by singing carols at Christmas time in a nearby restaurant.

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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