



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gronant**

**Nant Y Gro  
Gronant  
Nr. Prestatyn  
Flintshire  
LL19 9YP**

**Date of inspection: July 2024**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About Ysgol Gronant

Name of provider	Ysgol Gronant
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	57
Pupils of statutory school age	47
Number in nursery classes	8
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 23.7%)	27.8%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 13.2%)	10.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/07/2014
Start date of inspection	01/07/2024

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

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: [mylocalschool.gov.wales](https://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

Leaders and governors have brought together the schools of Ysgol Trelogan and Ysgol Gronant to form a successful federation of schools. The Point of Ayr Federation is well-led and both schools are welcoming places to learn. Staff are committed to improving all aspects of school life. They work hard to maintain positive and supportive relationships between staff and pupils and between school and home.

At Ysgol Gronant, most pupils enjoy school. They are safe and listened to and feel their ideas make a difference in the school and local community. Throughout the school, most pupils behave well. Many engage positively with the wide range of learning experiences provided and make good progress in their learning. The school's approach to planning learning experiences is highly effective and pupils enjoy exciting opportunities to learn from a wide range of people from varied backgrounds who share their skills, talents and cultures. As a result, many pupils develop the confidence and skills to express themselves articulately, share their ideas and develop empathy and aspiration.

Across the school, many pupils develop positive attitudes to oracy, reading and writing and enjoy the many opportunities to be expressive and creative. They use digital devices effectively to support their learning and to produce presentations, designs and short films. They develop good mathematical skills and knowledge.

Many teachers use a range of strategies, such as effective questioning and immediate feedback to enhance learning. They plan sequences of lessons that support pupils to build their skills progressively in many aspects of their learning. They often work with their pupils to plan meaningful learning experiences that engage them and capture their interests. Many of these experiences enable pupils to discover the history and culture of their local area and Wales and to explore issues that affect them and others such as equity and sustainability. Younger pupils benefit greatly from thoughtful outdoor learning opportunities.

From a young age, pupils are keen to do well and to take on new challenges. However, older pupils do not generally have enough influence over their own learning and do not always understand how to improve their work successfully over time.

## Recommendations

- R1 Develop older pupils as effective independent learners
- R2 Improve the quality of feedback for older pupils

## 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 a case study on its work in relation to planning authentic learning to build relationships across a federation of schools for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Many pupils begin school with skills below those expected for their age. Most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress from their individual starting points.

Most pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well. The youngest pupils demonstrate their skills enthusiastically, such as when sharing their ideas about who broke into the three bears house as part of their topic work. They give clear statements of evidence to the police and expand on their opinions. Pupils in the younger classes adapt their talk appropriately for different audiences. For example, when recording a news report, they use a formal tone and project their voices. Generally, older pupils continue to develop their talk appropriately. Many ask useful questions and respond to others' ideas respectfully. However, they do not have enough opportunities to articulate their ideas and opinions in challenging enough contexts and this limits the progress they make.

Many pupils develop their reading skills appropriately. Younger pupils develop a secure range of early reading strategies and by Year 2 often read with fluency and expression, recalling in detail the plot and characters of a story they share. As pupils move through the school, many read with increasing fluency and intonation. Older pupils are beginning to develop their skills suitably to explain and discuss their reading and use books and online information appropriately to support their learning across the curriculum.

Overall, pupils develop effective writing skills by the end of their time in school. Younger pupils develop secure early writing skills. They form letters accurately, write purposefully in simple sentences and make plausible attempts to spell unfamiliar words. By Year 2, pupils write for a wide range of audiences, for example to create enjoyable stories about a lost dog. They draft and revise their work and present the final piece neatly, using a range of suitable punctuation, and choosing words for effect. They apply their literacy skills effectively in their work across the curriculum, for example when writing postcards and invitations linked to their work on carnivals. Many older pupils write effectively for a range of purposes such as through news articles and biographies. They use a range of interesting vocabulary to engage the reader, for example when writing poetry to convey a serious message. Older pupils use their knowledge of instructional writing to develop recipes for suitable foods which they prepare for the school's carnival celebrations. They share their research on climate change through fact sheets and leaflets.

Pupils across the school develop their Welsh language skills effectively. By Year 1 many pupils ask and answer a range of basic questions. They discuss and describe the weather using simple words and phrases. Older pupils ask and answer questions

with developing confidence. As they move through the school, pupils begin to develop sound writing skills, using the past and future tense to describe events.

Younger pupils make good progress in developing their mathematical knowledge. They develop their understanding of capacity when investigating the volume of sand and water needed to fill a variety of receptacles and discuss their findings with each other. They transfer their numeracy skills readily and confidently to other aspects of their learning and play. In their classroom cafe they identify the correct coins needed to make £5 or £10, order coins in numerical value and add up the cost of items on the menu. Generally, older pupils build on their mathematical understanding to make appropriate progress. For example, they use set squares and protractors to measure and create angles. They use their knowledge of parallel, horizontal and perpendicular lines when designing, and represent data when calculating totals and creating graphs. However, they do not always apply their knowledge suitably to their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Younger pupils make exceptional progress in developing their digital skills. They send and receive emails and create presentations using images and transitions effectively. They create short films selecting backgrounds and music to accompany the movie. Year 3 pupils build on these skills to create music to add to their media presentations. Older pupils publish their research on websites and create effective digital games using apps and electronics.

Pupils across the school develop their creative and expressive skills well. Younger pupils benefit greatly from opportunities to work with wood and tools to create items such as bird and butterfly boxes. They plan their designs, including the measurements before gathering the resources and equipment they need. They work deftly with nails, hammers and saws and evaluate their finished designs, making decisions about what they could improve further. Through the recent 'Carnival' topic, older pupils use their imagination to develop their ideas. For example, they make elaborate constructions from willow and decorate these as carnival lanterns. They are developing their appreciation of music and compose and perform their own musical compositions.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

During their time at school, most pupils develop strong working relationships with staff and with each other. As a result, they feel safe, cared for and listened to. They are proud of the charters they have created that help them form respectful friendships. Staff set clear boundaries that help to ensure that most pupils behave well during lessons and around the school and this supports them to make the most of their learning.

Throughout the school, most pupils enjoy learning and engage, listen and participate well in lessons. When working independently on chosen activities they settle straight to work and display perseverance. Younger pupils work happily in small groups and on independent tasks and choose useful resources to help them in their learning. They enjoy making suggestions about how to improve their work. For example, when recording a short film, they suggest that next time a device with a built-in microphone would provide better quality sound. Given the opportunity, older pupils are beginning to form opinions, generate ideas and make choices about their work. When engaged

in their learning they participate enthusiastically and begin to think about how what they learn now will help them in future. However, they do not have enough opportunities to build effectively on their independent learning skills. Overall, there are limited opportunities for pupils to take increasing responsibility for their learning and make suggestions about how they learn and how to improve their work.

As they move through the year groups, pupils demonstrate growing resilience, for example when problem-solving. Younger pupils think about the different ways they can group coins to help them work out the profit made from their carnival games. Older pupils collaborate well when solving the problem of how to fill a gap in the carnival schedule. They decide to create, compose and perform suitably traditional music to entertain the community.

From a young age pupils begin to explain and discuss their learning. They consider carefully their successes and identify ways to improve their work, for example by choosing the best tools, measuring accurately and following safety rules during woodwork challenges. Older pupils challenge themselves appropriately in their creative work. For example, when designing and making costumes, they refine and adapt their ideas considering practicality and effect. However, they do not always have sufficient opportunities to reflect appropriately on important aspects of their learning. As a result, older pupils do not have a secure enough understanding of the purpose of their learning or how to improve their work over time.

Pupils learn how to be ethical citizens through their work on climate change and its effect on the locality and globally. They develop a sound understanding and appreciation of diversity through rich cultural learning experiences. For example, when celebrating Diwali they involve members of the community who share their faith, traditions and cuisine throughout the festival. Pupils begin to develop a sense of equity and rights when considering the impact of extreme weather on people across the world.

Nearly all pupils feel that their views about improving the school are valued. Across the school, pupils develop leadership roles and contribute their ideas for school improvement. Pupil governors improved well-being through their work on enhancing break-time provision. The Eco Council works with staff to lead changes to the school environment by taking responsibility for recycling, litter picking and encouraging biodiversity in woodland areas.

Nearly all pupils enjoy opportunities to be active at playtime and during physical activities. Many make healthy choices and understand the importance of eating a balanced diet. They develop a sound understanding of how to stay safe online, keeping their personal details safe and talking to a trusted adult if issues arise. The school's focus on emotional well-being supports pupils to understand their emotions and relationships.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

Leaders and teachers have a clear vision for the school's curriculum rooted in Welsh culture and aiming to raise pupils' aspirations. Staff work effectively together to create rich and meaningful learning experiences and to develop a shared understanding of progression in response to curriculum reform.

The federation's creative approach to planning learning, centred on 'people, place and problem', allows teachers to plan topics that reflect and build on pupils' own experiences. For example, having discovered a box of old photographs, the school revived the local community carnival, not seen since 1982. This recent focus on 'Carnifal' includes opportunities for pupils across the federation to develop their creativity, imagination and expression through poetry, design, music and art. These integrated experiences enable many pupils to develop their critical thinking and make good progress in developing a range of skills.

Many teachers plan sequences of lessons that enable pupils to transfer aspects of their knowledge and skills to other areas of the curriculum. A focus on developing writing, for example, supports pupils to use increasingly complex and effective descriptive language in their oracy and written work. Pupils generally engage well with a growing range of opportunities to apply their digital skills to support and enhance their work. Many pupils develop their knowledge of mathematical concepts systematically and work effectively with others to solve problems. Younger pupils often apply their knowledge and skills confidently and competently to other aspects of their work. However, there are fewer opportunities for older pupils to apply their skills purposefully to their work across the curriculum.

The school provides plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the history and culture of Wales. They explore the life of local naturalist and writer Thomas Pennant, considering his life and influence on industrial Wales. Pupils emulate the work of Welsh artists, join in with traditions and celebrate special days and events such as the Urdd Eisteddfod. Most teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. As they progress through the school, many pupils grow in confidence when holding simple conversations and ask and answer a range of questions linked to their learning.

Pupils enjoy learning in the school's well-developed outdoor environment. Younger pupils relish opportunities to consolidate their learning about capacity in the mud kitchen and to hone their craft skills when constructing butterfly and bird boxes with woodwork tools. Older pupils benefit from opportunities to improve their physical skills outdoors during PE lessons and when competing in sports events. They develop their teamwork and resilience during residential visits. Generally, however, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for older pupils to participate meaningfully in outdoor learning.

The school's planning to develop pupils' expressive skills is a strength. For example, the youngest pupils mix colours independently to create their desired shade and combine media imaginatively to produce collage. Pupils skilfully design and carve Little Terns from wood as part of their study of the nearby Gronant Dunes.

Many teachers have high expectations of pupils. They use a range of approaches to engage pupils successfully in their learning. They use questioning purposefully, address misconceptions and adjust their teaching to support pupils to make the progress they should. Many teachers create worthwhile opportunities for pupils to share their ideas about how they learn and are beginning to support pupils to reflect on their learning suitably. However, in a few classes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils and do not engage them suitably in learning. In these

classes, pupils do not always make sufficient progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in their work across the curriculum.

Many teachers have a secure knowledge of the curriculum, plan with clear learning intentions and provide explanations that help pupils understand what to do. They provide feedback to pupils, which enables them to improve their work during lessons and to challenge themselves appropriately. However, in a few classes, teachers do not always provide useful feedback to address pupils' misconceptions or to support them to make improvements to their work in a timely manner. Teachers do not plan opportunities to discuss progress with older pupils in depth often enough. As a result, older pupils are not always clear about the purpose of their learning or how to improve their learning over time.

Across the school, teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils to make progress in their learning. They reflect the school's warm and supportive ethos in their working relationships with pupils, providing strong support for pupils' individual learning needs.

### **Care, support and guidance**

Across the Point of Ayr Federation, staff create a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment for pupils and their families. Staff know pupils well and pupils value the intuitive support they receive. The school's approach to supporting pupils with their social and emotional needs enables most to regulate their emotions and to understand when they may need to seek additional help. This thoughtful support improves attendance and affects positive change for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.

Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants ensure a warm welcome and early support for the families of the youngest pupils. As pupils move through the school, staff continue to involve parents through events, workshops, home-school learning and regular opportunities to discuss their children's learning and progress. As a result, parents feel well-equipped to support their children at home.

The school has developed clear systems to identify the most effective support for pupils with ALN. Leaders of ALN provide strong support for staff through purposeful advice and guidance. Teachers work well in partnership with external agencies to plan support that reflects pupils' individual needs precisely. Skilled teaching assistants engage pupils in their learning effectively, often motivating them to develop their confidence and resilience. As a result, pupils with ALN make at least expected progress towards their individual well-being and learning targets.

Leaders and teachers value the role of visits and visitors in enhancing the federation's curriculum and in raising pupils' aspirations. Throughout their time in school, pupils appreciate opportunities to learn with and from those with lived experience, those in a variety of careers and those with individual talents. These rich and authentic learning experiences provide pupils with opportunities to expand their thinking, use their imagination and develop a wide range of skills. Older pupils benefit from close links with secondary schools. For example, the transition activities they participate in from Year 5 onwards support them to develop early relationships with pupils across the federation and in the locality. The school makes beneficial use of



local artists and creative practitioners to support pupils' artistic and expressive development. Many pupils enjoy sports activities such as cricket and football. They benefit from opportunities to widen their experiences on visits designed to enrich their knowledge, skills and well-being.

Elected pupils develop suitably as leaders, representing the views of their peers and making worthwhile contributions to the work of the school and the community. For example, Pupil Governors work on behalf of pupils to initiate improvements to the outdoor learning environment and organise special days aimed at raising money for charity. Most pupils across the school contribute purposeful ideas to teachers' planning. Younger pupils often influence how, as well as what, they learn. However, older pupils do not generally take responsibility for their own learning.

Pupils have regular opportunities for reflecting on their own and others' values and beliefs through lessons and as part of their collective worship. The school has valuable links with members of faith communities that deepens pupils' understanding of a range of cultures through learning experiences, visits and events. Their work on 'Carnifal' for example helps them develop an understanding of how and why communities hold carnivals across the world. Their exploration of Indian culture during Diwali supports them to learn about the food and dress of traditional and modern Hindu families. These experiences are beginning to support pupils' understanding of equality, diversity and human rights, as they begin to discover the impact of world events on others' lives. They consider, for example, the effects of displacement on people because of extreme weather conditions and historical events such as Windrush.

Processes to promote positive rates of pupils' attendance are effective. The school's arrangements to safeguard pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management**

Leaders across the Point of Ayr Federation have been effective in bringing the schools of Ysgol Trelogan and Ysgol Gronant together to form a community where pupils and staff feel a strong sense of belonging. Leaders successfully promote a shared vision to create a welcoming and nurturing environment, to provide engaging and challenging learning experiences to motivate pupils and to successfully prepare them for the future. Families enjoy the opportunities both schools provide for them to get together as one community, to celebrate events or to share pupils' learning experiences. Parents appreciate the regular information they receive about their child's learning and progress, and the guidance the school provides that helps them to support their child's learning at home.

Leaders establish an ethos of continuous and honest evaluation of the school's work and its impact on pupils' outcomes. In many classes, pupils benefit greatly from teachers' high expectations and challenging learning experiences, enabling younger pupils to develop their imagination and language, and older pupils to develop their thinking and problem-solving in meaningful contexts across the curriculum. These experiences allow pupils to consider the skills, knowledge, and attitudes they will need to realise their hopes for the future. The federation's response to ALN reform has been highly effective in securing positive outcomes for pupils with ALN. Its

approach to developing pupils' Welsh language skills has a positive impact on pupils' progress and enthusiasm for the language.

The robust monitoring and self-evaluation processes in place are effective. Leaders carry out a range of purposeful activities that help to provide a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning. Most staff appreciate the collaborative nature of school improvement and readily adapt approaches to meet the needs of their pupils. The recent focus on improving writing for example, has had a significant impact on the quality of many pupils' creative writing and the progress they make in developing their literacy skills.

The federation's shared priorities for improvement focus accurately on improving the quality of teaching and securing appropriate outcomes for pupils in their learning across the curriculum. Leaders at all levels work as an effective team to bring about change. They purposefully monitor the impact of their improvement strategies on pupils, reviewing and refining approaches in light of their evaluations. For example, leaders identify inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and create robust plans to address poor performance.

Leaders have high expectations of all staff. They use performance management systems and partnership working well to identify professional development needs and to support whole-school improvement. Many teachers and teaching assistants feel supported to trial approaches and adapt teaching methods and interventions to meet pupils' needs. For example, the effective work to develop a curriculum for pupils that reflects the communities the federation serves successfully engages many pupils in their learning. The recent focus on broadening younger pupils' learning experiences has a significant impact on pupils' curiosity and the pace of progress in these classes.

The federation's work to reduce any barriers to learning or well-being for pupils from low-income households is implemented successfully. Leaders make good use of the pupil development grant to ensure that all pupils access the full range of opportunities and experiences on offer.

Leaders, teachers, and teaching assistants form a strong, supportive and reflective team. Leaders provide worthwhile opportunities for staff to learn from each other and to visit other schools. They encourage staff to reflect on how the practice observed could be used to improve their own, and to share new approaches across the federation. Leaders and teachers provide valuable support to colleagues, for example through modelling and team teaching. This approach secures consistently high-quality teaching and learning for many pupils.

Leaders recognise opportunities to develop senior staff and to support teachers to develop as effective middle leaders, strengthening the effectiveness of the school's evaluation processes. The inclusive approach to staff development ensures that teaching assistants and support staff often develop as skilled practitioners.

Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to their role and use a breadth of expertise to support the work of the federation. They focus appropriately on evaluating the quality of teaching and learning across both schools and develop a clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. Governors support

senior leaders well to promote a positive culture of safeguarding and ensure that effective policies are in place to promote the importance of healthy eating and drinking among pupils.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer 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/carers 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' 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 ([www.estyn.gov.wales](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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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