



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

A report on

Ysgol Gymunedol Tal-y-Bont

**Talybont
Ceredigion
SY24 5HE**

Date of inspection: June 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Gymunedol Tal-y-Bont

Name of provider	Ysgol Gymunedol Tal-y-Bont
Local authority	Ceredigion County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	80
Pupils of statutory school age	68
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	*
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>	7.7%
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>	22.1%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	42.6%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	1
Date of headteacher appointment	20/04/2001
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	24/06/2024

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

Ysgol Tal-y-Bont is a caring, happy and familial community. All staff work together effectively to provide an inclusive and friendly ethos where pupils behave respectfully and politely. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and make sound progress from their starting points.

By the end of their time at the school, many pupils develop their literacy and digital skills well. However, teachers do not provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their numeracy skills effectively enough across the curriculum consistently enough. Most pupils develop their creative skills effectively and their work is displayed and celebrated attractively around the school.

Teachers plan a curriculum that provides a range of purposeful experiences for pupils across all areas of learning and experience. The pupil's voice is an important part of the process for planning activities and, as a result, most pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to their learning. There is a positive atmosphere in the classrooms and they are hard-working learning communities. Overall, teachers use a suitable range of effective teaching techniques. However, opportunities for pupils to make independent choices about how to present their work are inconsistent.

The headteacher provides strong and passionate leadership and is supported well by the assistant headteacher. Leaders evaluate the school's work to plan for improvements thoroughly by using robust self-evaluation processes. The governing body is supportive and knows the school well in terms of its strengths and areas for development.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R2 Extend purposeful opportunities for pupils to make decisions about how to present their work increasingly independently

What happens next

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

Main findings

Learning

Most pupils develop well from their starting points and make sound progress in learning and developing their skills. Specific groups of pupils make strong progress in line with their individual targets.

Across the school, most pupils develop their listening and speaking skills effectively. The youngest pupils follow staff's instructions purposefully and use an increasing range of vocabulary in their play and learning. They are polite and confident when they ask and respond to questions, and they work effectively with others. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils predict which materials will sink or float in water and use specific vocabulary successfully. As pupils move through the school, a majority develop their oral skills effectively in both languages. By Year 6, most pupils discuss with maturity, which includes a discussion about the reasons for and against having a new park in the village.

Most pupils' reading skills develop securely as they move through the school. The youngest pupils make effective progress in their understanding of letter sounds and begin to use reading methods well, for example when reading instructions on how to make grass soup in the mud kitchen. By Year 2, many read simple texts clearly and show increasing expression. A majority of the oldest pupils show enjoyment when reading fiction books and a few discuss their favourite authors well. Many recognise obvious features in Welsh and English reading books, such as when the characters are speaking, and a few more confident readers adapt their tone of voice to imitate characters effectively.

Most pupils make sound progress in their writing skills. The youngest pupils develop basic writing skills when forming shapes and marks in sand and flour. Year 2 pupils, for example, use imaginative adjectives to describe a walk around the village. Across the school, many pupils punctuate and organise their work sensibly. Older pupils use a range of effective methods to create an atmosphere of fear and unease when describing the experiences of children during the Blitz in the Second World War.

Most pupils' mathematics skills develop consistently. The youngest pupils develop their understanding of the value of digits between 0 and 20 effectively, for example to count steps when walking the pirate's plank. By Year 2, most solve simple mathematical problems correctly by using a variety of methods sensibly. As pupils move through the school, they have a suitable understanding of mathematical features, including addition, subtraction, multiplication and division procedures. They gather, present and interpret information intelligently in the form of line graphs, tables and spreadsheets. When they are given an opportunity to do so, they use their mathematical understanding in other areas of the curriculum appropriately, particularly in Humanities activities. For example, they calculate the distance that athletes have to travel to Paris to compete in the Olympic Games skilfully. However, on the whole, pupils do not develop their numeracy skills by applying them effectively and consistently enough in other areas of the curriculum.

Many pupils make consistent progress in their digital skills. The youngest pupils develop their skills effectively when inputting instructions into a programmable device to move to different places. Year 1 and 2 pupils make good progress in gathering information and organising data in the form of tables and charts. The oldest pupils use a range of software to present work across the areas of learning, for example when combining their animation and production skills to create a powerful film about the purposeful topic 'No Farmers, No Food'.

Most pupils' creative skills develop well across the school. Most of the youngest pupils enjoy using a range of equipment and materials to create pictures and models, by experimenting with the method of a Japanese artist, while the oldest pupils work with a famous artist from the village to create a magnificent mural on the school wall.

Nearly all pupils develop their physical skills well throughout the school. For example, they take part in a variety of activities that promote their health and well-being, such as playing team games and taking part in athletics, dance and gymnastics sessions.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils show pride in being members of the school's close-knit family and enjoy the rich experiences that support them to learn. One of the strengths of provision is the way in which pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with respect and courtesy. Nearly all pupils behave very well. They take responsibility for their own behaviour at all times and are aware of the high expectations of adults.

Pupils feel safe at the school and know whom to approach if they have any concerns. They know how to stay healthy and what steps they need to follow to stay safe online, for example not sharing passwords. They enjoy attending school and their attendance rates are good.

Nearly all pupils discuss their feelings confidently on a daily basis through specific boxes for sharing their concerns. They explain sensibly that they trust staff and show a willingness to discuss any concerns with them. They are also confident that staff will listen to them when considering different aspects of their emotional and physical well-being. For example, following a discussion between the eco council and the headteacher, food bins have been provided to reduce the school's general waste.

Across the school, most pupils propose ideas to be included in their themes and plan purposeful learning activities jointly with their teachers. They appreciate that teachers listen to their suggestions in the classes and include their ideas when planning. Most pupils show interest and enjoyment in following different learning pathways. On the whole, many pupils develop their independent learning skills appropriately, for example when choosing resources to support their learning and deciding how to present their work.

Most pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to take advantage of the rich range of learning experiences provided for them. They show motivation, curiosity and perseverance in their learning activities. By the time they reach the top of the school, most face new experiences and situations with increasing confidence and resilience. Overall, many pupils concentrate for extended periods and participate very well in activities.

Through their awareness of the values promoted by staff, most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of moral issues. They understand the importance of supporting others in society. For example, older pupils hold a mature discussion on the theme of LGBTQ+ and consider what needs to change in our community. By learning about similar themes, they develop empathy and a deep understanding of the experiences of people who are passionate about the principles of our society.

Nearly all pupils are willing to undertake leadership roles and responsibilities and play a full part in the life and work of the school. For example, the school council has written a letter of complaint to builders who cut down an apple tree when they installed a new fence around the school field.

Teaching and learning experiences

All staff have a close and supportive relationship with pupils. They treat all pupils with kindness and respect, which creates an inclusive and caring environment. Staff have high expectations and work together purposefully to foster strong attitudes of perseverance and resilience in all pupils.

Teachers work together effectively to plan a broad and balanced curriculum that develops pupils' sound understanding of their local area, identity and Welsh culture. For example, as part of the theme '*Yr ardal leol*' ('The local area'), staff provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of important local industry by discussing the impact of the mineral works on their locality. Teachers provide activities that support pupils to develop their literacy and digital skills well. However, teachers do not provide enough regular opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their numeracy skills in a rich range of activities across the areas of learning.

Staff plan a curriculum that provides rich opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding in a variety of interesting and stimulating experiences. This includes developing their understanding of global current affairs, for example when researching the challenges some children face in contrasting areas around the world. Provision also places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures, beliefs and religions. As a result, nearly all pupils develop to become informed and intelligent citizens who treat others with empathy and respect.

Staff promote pupils' use of the Welsh language strongly and this reinforces well their learning and their enjoyment of using the language. All adults model polished language and encourage and support pupils to use Welsh of a high and consistent standard, which is natural to their local area. As a result, many pupils make strong progress in acquiring and develop their Welsh language skills.

Where teaching is at its best, many teachers' presentations are lively and stimulating, which engages pupils' interest effectively. Most teachers use a range of questioning methods which build purposefully on pupils' previous learning. They give pupils timely oral feedback which helps them to know what the next steps are in their learning. Leaders have recently identified the need to improve teachers' written feedback to support pupils to know what the next steps are to improve their work. Most teachers provide activities that challenge pupils appropriately. However, in a

minority of lessons, teachers do not provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to make choices about how they would like to present their work and the resources they need to use. This slows pupils' ability to develop their independent learning skills.

All of the school's staff know the pupils well and take care of them skilfully. Teachers have a sound awareness of pupils' needs, including appreciating their interests to motivate and support them to focus on learning activities. In most cases, activities are tailored subtly to respond to their needs. Staff promote pupils' good behaviour carefully and thoughtfully, which supports them to persevere sensibly.

Many teachers plan stimulating educational visits to enrich and reinforce learning. For example, the youngest pupils go on walks in the community, which develop their understanding of their '*cynefin*', or local area, effectively. The oldest pupils deepen their understanding of Wales by visiting the National Library of Wales. Teachers provide exciting opportunities for pupils to work with local artists and performers, for example as the oldest pupils create a traditional dance after taking part in a clog dancing workshop.

Care, support and guidance

Staff promote healthy relationships with a particular emphasis on ensuring equal opportunities and fairness for all individuals within the school's community. Emphasis is placed on valuing diversity based on the principle that everyone is equally important and this is a central element of the school's work. Staff provide a number of strategies to ensure that the school is a friendly, caring and inclusive place based on respect and empathy. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Staff provide effective support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), which includes close and close-knit contact with parents. The school works productively with external agencies to use resources to support pupils and their families and to provide specific specialisms, where necessary. The ALN co-ordinator uses useful assessments to create a profile of pupils' specific needs, along with a sensible support plan to support them to improve their well-being and make progress in their skills. Staff know and work well with each other to share information and support pupils' specific needs. Overall, these arrangements are appropriate in assessing and supporting pupils to improve in line with their individual personal targets. Staff also support pupils to make progress by providing specific support programmes, for example to improve their reading skills.

Teachers use suitable methods to ensure that pupils are ready to learn at the beginning of each day. Through this, pupils are given cohesive opportunities to plan various activities during the morning '*Doniau'n denu*' sessions. As a result, this has had a positive effect on the school's attendance and punctuality rates. The headteacher monitors attendance thoroughly and works effectively with parents and external agencies.

In promoting pupils' cultural development, teachers provide a variety of valuable experiences and purposeful opportunities for them to celebrate their Welsh heritage and culture. For example, pupils take part in the Tal-y-bont village fun festival each

year and compete in the Urdd Eisteddfod. As a result, pupils develop to become enterprising and confident citizens who take pride in their Welshness. Pupils' understanding of morals and different religions develops effectively.

The school has a co-operative relationship with parents and they value the care and guidance their children receive from the staff. This contributes positively to the homely sense that exists within the school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's passionate and inspiring leadership sets a clear strategic direction for the development of the school. He has a robust vision based on 'self-respect, self-confidence and self-discipline', which ensures that all pupils receive the best education in a homely, inclusive and Welsh environment. The headteacher has high expectations of himself and, with the strong support of the assistant headteacher, shares the vision successfully with the whole school community.

Leaders ensure that the sense of teamwork is strong across the school. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff are responsible for specific aspects of the school's work and contribute purposefully to ensuring that most pupils make effective progress in their skills over time.

Leaders ensure that the school has robust arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. They ensure that stakeholders, such as staff and pupils, gather a comprehensive range of first-hand evidence. They analyse this evidence carefully and, as a result, have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders produce detailed improvement plans that give purposeful attention to these areas and address national improvement priorities, for example to reduce the impact of poverty on pupils' standards, progress and well-being. Leaders set regular milestones to evaluate progress against these priorities and adapt their methods of operation appropriately, as necessary.

The governing body is knowledgeable and holds the headteacher and staff to account skilfully. Members know the school and its community well and support the school passionately. The governing body has a sound understanding of the school's improvement priorities and makes a valuable contribution to evaluating the school's work through a range of monitoring activities. It also ensures that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Leaders, including governors and staff, establish a robust culture of safeguarding within the school and ensure that the learning experiences they provide help pupils to develop a clear understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

There are suitable performance management procedures in place for staff. They have purposeful improvement objectives which are based on the school's priorities and are personal to their individual development needs. Staff are given regular opportunities to attend training that meets their professional development requirements. They work closely with staff from local schools to share expertise and ideas. For example, they have worked together effectively to share successful teaching practices to improve pupils' reading skills. Assistants are also given purposeful opportunities to develop professionally, for example by attending training to support pupils' emotional well-being needs.

Leaders have a sensible expenditure plan which ensures that they have enough resources to meet pupils' needs purposefully. Leaders monitor the budget carefully and ensure beneficial expenditure to align with important needs. They make good use of different grants that have been allocated to the school, for example by using the pupil development grant to provide support programmes for pupils who need further support with their learning.

The school has a strong relationship with parents and the wider community. Parents feel that they can talk to any members of staff to discuss their children's well-being and education. Relevant information about the school's activities is shared effectively with parents in a valuable '*Tameidiau Tal-y-bont*' weekly newsletter.

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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