



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

A report on

Ysgol Bro Cynfal

**Ffestiniog
Blaenau Ffestiniog
Gwynedd
LL41 4NF**

Date of inspection: April 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Bro Cynfal

Name of provider	Ysgol Bro Cynfal
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	N/A
Number of pupils on roll	31
Pupils of statutory school age	17
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	7
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>	18.9%
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>	29.4%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	82.4%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	16/02/2024 (Headteacher in Charge)
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	N/A
Start date of inspection	22/04/2024

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

Very recently, Ysgol Bro Cynfal has merged formally in a federation with Ysgol Tanygrisiau and Ysgol Edmwnd Prys. Together, they create the Bro Tangelli federation.

Most pupils enjoy school. They are confident that the school responds promptly to any concerns they have. Most pupils are polite and thoughtful, behave well and treat their peers and visitors with respect. Staff have a close and effective working relationship with pupils. They have an appropriate understanding of their needs and, overall, provide purposeful activities for them. However, teachers in the school's upper years do not provide opportunities for pupils to apply their extended writing and numeracy skills purposefully enough across the areas of learning.

Where teaching is at its best, teachers across the federation work together effectively to plan stimulating and interesting areas that meet pupils' needs appropriately. This has a positive effect on the enthusiasm and participation of the youngest pupils and supports them consistently to make good progress in their skills. However, the oldest pupils' teachers do not work together purposefully enough to share effective teaching practices. As a result, the quality of teaching is inconsistent and teachers have a tendency to over-direct learning, which limits the ability of a minority of the oldest pupils to develop their skills, including their independent learning skills.

The headteacher of Ysgol Tanygrisiau is currently the headteacher in charge of the federation. He is supported enthusiastically by staff and governors and, with parents and pupils, they have worked together to create a purposeful vision for the new federation.

Leaders have recently identified the need to evaluate provision and pupils' standards. However, the school's current self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes have not identified important weaknesses in provision. This slows pupils' progress over time. As a result, many recommendations from previous inspections continue to be important areas for improvement.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that the school's self-evaluation processes evaluate pupils' outcomes thoroughly to prioritise specific areas for improvement in provision to raise standards
- R2 Ensure consistency in effective teaching methods to support pupils to make progress in line with their age and stage of development
- R3 Provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy and extended writing skills across the curriculum

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress, usually every four to six months.

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, most pupils have good communication, number and social skills. Their Welsh speaking skills are sound. By the end of their time at the school, a majority of pupils, including those with additional learning needs and pupils from backgrounds that may be affected by poverty, make appropriate progress in many of their skills.

Most pupils listen tolerantly and respect each other's contribution and those of adults. Many of the youngest pupils talk confidently about their work, for example when explaining how to build an obstacle course to reach space in the outdoor area. The oldest pupils communicate effectively in both languages and use a good range of relevant vocabulary and language patterns with increasing accuracy, which includes sharing their ideas in class discussions. For example, pupils discuss confidently when planning an argument for and against the use of modern technology, including the over-use of mobile phones.

Most pupils' reading skills develop appropriately in both languages. The youngest pupils show a clear enthusiasm towards books. By Year 2, they recognise familiar words in the books they read and use phonological methods confidently when building unfamiliar words. At the top of the school, most pupils read a range of non-fiction and fictional texts fluently, for example when reading a recipe to create a healthy menu. They vary their tone of voice effectively to create effect when reading aloud.

Most of the youngest pupils develop their early writing skills effectively. For example, they develop their early mark-making skills effectively by using a range of materials, including paint and chalk. By Year 2, most pupils form their letters correctly while building simple words and sentences with increasing accuracy. They have a good understanding of the importance of punctuation, including the use of capital letters and full stops. As they move through the school, many pupils' writing skills develop appropriately. By Year 6, they write purposefully to record what they have learned within their specific learning tasks. They have an appropriate understanding of different writing techniques, including the use of quotation marks and exclamation marks to guide the reader. However, most pupils in the school's upper years do not develop their extended writing skills effectively enough. Teachers' over-use of ready-made sheets limits pupils' ability to make decisions about the way they would like to complete and present their work.

Many pupils' mathematics skills develop effectively. The youngest pupils learn confidently when experimenting with numbers, for example when using blocks and non-standard equipment to measure the length of rockets. By Year 2, most have a sound understanding of the properties of 2D shapes and the value of money up to £5. Many of the oldest pupils have a secure knowledge of number, for example when discovering prime numbers and when using the 4 operations to multiply and divide decimals up to 1000. They have a sound understanding of the properties of 3D shapes and use standard equipment correctly to measure length, capacity and mass. However, most of the oldest pupils do not develop their numeracy skills effectively enough in various contexts across the areas of learning and experience. As a result, pupils do not build and develop their skills effectively enough over time.

Most pupils build on their digital skills successfully. By Year 2, they use passwords to log in to digital platforms and access their work. They use a range of programs confidently to support their learning, for example when using a programmable device to roam around space. The digital skills of most of the oldest pupils develop effectively. They collate information intelligently in databases and enter text in an email to send to the teacher explaining the importance of good hygiene.

Most pupils' creative skills develop well. Most of the youngest pupils experiment confidently with a variety of mark-making equipment to create images that represent the world around them. For example, they use candle wax to create an imaginative picture. They are given valuable opportunities to develop their performance skills with percussion instruments in the outdoor area. Most build appropriately on their art skills by showing accuracy and creativity when emulating the styles of Welsh artists, which includes designing an attractive card for Mother's Day. At the top of the school, they use their skills effectively to perform a song for the local cluster of schools in co-operation with a Welsh pop star.

Nearly all pupils' physical skills develop robustly. The youngest pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to physical activities, for example when climbing and balancing while creating an adventure park. The oldest pupils build successfully on these skills. They contribute enthusiastically to a range of physical activities, including playground games and weekly physical exercise sessions.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Most pupils enjoy the life and work of the school and feel safe within the supportive and inclusive learning community. They feel free from physical, emotional and verbal abuse and are respected and treated fairly. They know whom to approach if something is worrying them.

Through a variety of methods to improve pupils' well-being, most feel that staff take their concerns seriously and are ready to listen to what is important to them. Pupils benefit from purposeful opportunities to discuss their feelings on a daily basis. Where the practice is at its best, they use dedicated areas within the classrooms to calm down and encourage their positive attitudes to learning effectively. Most pupils play well together during break times, making full use of the outdoor areas and the school grounds. This contributes effectively to their social skills and well-being.

Most pupils behave well. The sense of respect and courtesy that they have towards their peers and staff is a strong feature of the school. Most pupils have a good understanding of the school's sound values and reward arrangements. They show a positive attitude to learning and develop as lively and enthusiastic learners. They listen attentively to instructions from adults and concentrate diligently on their work during lessons. Most of the youngest pupils work effectively individually, in pairs and in small groups, for example when planning and creating a rocket using natural materials to travel to space in the outdoor area. When they are given purposeful opportunities to do so, most of the oldest pupils work together purposefully to complete their learning tasks, showing motivation and interest in their learning. They use feedback from adults appropriately to improve some aspects of their work, including punctuation and spelling.

Nearly all pupils respond positively to the opportunities they are given to influence what they learn, for example by contributing suitably to planning activities at the beginning of themes. They take pride in the appropriate opportunities they are given to voice their opinion, which includes how local and national occasions should be celebrated. However, pupils do not play a leading enough role in making decisions about the wider provision offered by the school.

Nearly all pupils' understanding of healthy eating and drinking and the effect of exercise on their health develops effectively. They participate enthusiastically in physical education lessons and make purposeful use of the climbing and balancing equipment that is available to them in the outdoor areas. They have a sound understanding of online safety, including the importance of not sharing passwords or revealing personal information. Most pupils have a good understanding of their rights and the rights of others; for example, they discuss confidently how laws and rules are formed and used within society. As a result, most pupils develop to become principled and informed citizens.

Teaching and learning experiences

Pupils, parents and governors have worked purposefully with staff to create a vision and design a curriculum that incorporates the core principles that are relevant to their local community. The ability of staff to provide learning experiences with a rich breadth across the areas of learning to spark pupils' interest is developing appropriately. Staff are beginning to plan a curriculum that includes learning activities that reflect the cultural nature of the local community and the wider world. For example, they provide valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the human and physical characteristics of the rural area of Ffestiniog. Teachers have purposeful arrangements for sharing their ideas across the areas of learning and experience with teachers from schools in the catchment area.

Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking, reading and creative skills effectively. Purposeful opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their digital skills from an early age, which includes using digital devices in the space area. In the school's upper years, pupils present and analyse information in a database and produce interesting multimedia presentations, including presenting information to encourage people to save water and take care of the environment. However, teachers do not provide enough purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy and extended writing skills across the areas of learning and

experience. As a result, a majority of pupils, particularly the oldest ones, do not make the expected progress in line with their age and stage of development.

Staff have a productive working relationship with pupils. They encourage respect and courtesy, which contributes purposefully to realising the school's vision and ethos. Staff model polished language and encourage pupils to speak Welsh within the formal learning sessions. In most cases, assistants support pupils' learning and play experiences purposefully, for example when supporting individuals and specific groups to develop their skills in the learning areas. Displays in the classrooms celebrate pupils' work effectively and support them with their learning, for example by explaining mathematical methods and introducing new vocabulary about the theme.

Teachers include pupils' ideas purposefully at the beginning of themes. In the best practice, the youngest pupils' teachers include their suggestions appropriately when providing stimulating learning areas for them. However, the oldest pupils' teachers do not provide regular enough opportunities for them to contribute ideas and make decisions about their learning.

Where teaching is at its best, teachers provide purposeful opportunities for the youngest pupils to develop their independent learning skills, particularly when learning in the outdoor area. They ask pupils probing questions that deepen their knowledge and understanding of what they learn. However, the quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent. The oldest pupils' staff have a tendency to over-direct learning. As a result, pupils are not always given purposeful opportunities to make choices independently enough about how they would like to complete and present their work.

Oral feedback from staff is beginning to support pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Purposeful opportunities for them to think, check and celebrate suitable aspects of their work have been embedded by the youngest pupils' staff and are beginning to be developed by the oldest pupils' staff.

Mae staff yn defnyddio deilliannau asesiadau yn addas i adnabod cryfderau a meysydd priodol i'r disgyblion i'w datblygu. Mae hyn yn arwain at gefnogaeth ychwanegol lle'n briodol. In most cases, teachers use their knowledge of pupils' progress to provide purposeful learning tasks. However, activities do not always match the learning requirements of all pupils effectively enough. As a result, this slows the progress of a majority of pupils in achieving to the best of their ability.

Staff use visitors to the school and organise interesting visits that link purposefully with their themes. This contributes effectively to deepening pupils' knowledge and understanding of specific aspects of their learning and their participation in their work. For example, pupils develop their creative skills purposefully by working with local artists to create impressive scenes of the local area.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring and homely community where a safe learning environment is provided for all pupils and staff. Staff support the emotional, social and well-being needs of most pupils successfully through a cross-section of purposeful activities. For example, teachers hold valuable well-being sessions on *Llun Lles* Mondays, which

provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to discuss and express their opinions about important aspects of life, such as developing respect and the importance of being a good friend to others. As a result, pupils learn important values including empathy, friendship and the benefits of working with others both at school and beyond.

Leaders have robust arrangements for identifying pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) from an early age. Staff deliver appropriate reading, spelling and well-being support for pupils with ALN through purposeful support programmes, where a majority of pupils make good progress. Teachers and assistants work purposefully with parents to develop individual plans to support pupils to make progress in their early skills. Staff have relevant links with a wide range of external agencies and receive purposeful guidance to support pupils' progress and additional needs. Staff create dedicated one-page profiles for pupils with ALN which include their interests, how to support their learning and their targets for improvement. However, teachers do not have a comprehensive enough understanding of the progress pupils make in their learning as they move through the school.

Staff provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to voice their opinion about what they would like to learn within their termly themes. Through the school council, pupils are given appropriate opportunities to contribute to whole-school activities, including deciding how to celebrate occasions such as St Dwynwen's Day. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to voice their opinion about the school's wider provision. As a result, pupils are not given purposeful enough opportunities to develop their leadership roles.

Staff ensure purposeful learning experiences for pupils to foster a sound understanding of the importance of sustainability. For example, as part of their themes, the oldest pupils deepen their understanding of pollution and the impact of litter on the local community skilfully. Teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn about the work of local and national charities successfully. As a result, most pupils have a sound awareness of the importance of being caring and conscientious citizens.

Staff promote pupils' spiritual and moral development effectively. During whole-school assemblies, opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their own values and beliefs and learn about the importance of respecting others. However, the school does not provide purposeful enough opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of equality within a diverse society.

Teachers invite visitors and guest speakers to the school to enrich learning; for example, a local police officer has held sessions on staying safe online with pupils. Pupils also benefit from an appropriate range of educational visits and experiences. For example, teachers organise beneficial opportunities for pupils to visit a safety village where rich opportunities are provided to learn about the importance of safety in the home.

Provision to develop pupils' creative and expressive skills is effective. The recent music workshop, where pupils were given opportunities to work with a musician to create a song about their local area, is a good example of this. Staff encourage pupils to keep fit by taking part in stimulating sports activities. They provide beneficial

opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills as they play games and make good use of the playground resources during break times.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Staff have a sound awareness of safeguarding processes and leaders respond appropriately to any individual cases by working effectively with other agencies where appropriate. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' regular attendance are sound. Staff keep a record of any absence and contact parents and the authority's attendance officer in a timely manner to discuss any concerns regarding their children's attendance.

Leadership and management

Very recently, Ysgol Bro Cynfal has merged formally in a federation with Ysgol Tanygrisiau and Ysgol Edmwnd Prys. Together, they create the Bro Tangelli federation.

The headteacher of Ysgol Tanygrisiau now acts as the acting head of the federation. He is supported enthusiastically by assistant headteachers at the Ysgol Bro Cynfal and Ysgol Edmwnd Prys sites. Together, leaders have created a purposeful vision for the federation. This includes providing beneficial opportunities for pupils to work together and play together to share valuable experiences with each other. For example, leaders are keen to enrich provision for pupils' well-being by providing opportunities for them to compete together in local sports tournaments and the Urdd's national competitions.

Leaders provide appropriate opportunities for staff to work together within the federation's schools and schools in the catchment area. Where this is at its best, staff share expertise regularly, for example in enriching provision for foundation learning pupils. This includes developing the outdoor areas and providing stimulating and interesting experiences that meet learners' needs effectively. To date, leaders have not organised regular enough opportunities for the oldest pupils' teachers to work together purposefully across the federation to share effective teaching and learning practices with each other. As a result, the quality of teaching is inconsistent and teachers tend to over-direct learning. This limits the ability of most of the oldest pupils to develop their skills, including their independent learning skills.

Leaders provide appropriate opportunities for staff to attend training that links purposefully with the school's improvement priorities and their individual professional needs. For example, teachers have attended training with schools in the catchment area to improve digital provision for pupils. This has a positive effect on pupils' skills as they apply their digital skills in a variety of contexts within the areas of learning and experience.

Leaders have begun to restructure teachers' responsibilities within the federation so that they lead on particular aspects of teaching and curriculum. This has not been embedded fully and staff have not had time to act effectively enough in their new roles. As a result, it is too soon to evaluate the effect of their work on improving provision to raise pupils' standards.

The governing body which has been established very recently for the three schools is very supportive of the acting headteacher and the federation's staff. All members of the governing body have an appropriate understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the sub-committees. For example, members of the finance sub-panel meet each term to scrutinise the budget of the schools. This includes making decisions about the use of the pupil development grant when employing staff to support pupils in their learning activities. Members of the body hold discussions with staff and pupils and seek their opinions about the strengths and areas for improvement. Members are beginning to use this information purposefully by contributing their ideas to the new federation's improvement priorities. As a result, members have an appropriate understanding of the next steps to develop the work of the federation's school for the future.

Leaders recognise the need to self-evaluate standards of teaching and learning within the new federation at an early stage. However, leaders have not implemented self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes shrewdly enough to improve important elements of provision on pupils' outcomes over time. For example, the outcomes of the self-evaluation process have not identified important weaknesses in the quality of teaching and standards of learning, particularly in the schools' upper years. As a result, a minority of pupils, including those with additional learning needs, do not achieve as well as expected for their age and stage of development.

Many of the recommendations from the previous inspection continue to be important issues for the school, including improving pupils' extended writing skills and that leaders act more strategically to monitor effectively and address weaknesses in standards and provision. As a result, leaders have not ensured improvements in provision over time, which has limited pupils' ability to make progress in their skills.

Leaders ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding exists across the federation. Governors take advantage of opportunities to promote healthy eating and drinking, for example by encouraging them to drink water and eat fruit during the day.

Leaders forge close and constructive relationships with parents and the local community. For example, they seek parents' views about important aspects of provision, which including contributing their ideas to the federation's new vision.

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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