



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

A report on
Ysgol Gymraeg Henllan

Denbigh Street
Henllan
Denbigh
Denbighshire
LL16 5AW

Date of inspection: April 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

This inspection was undertaken as part of trying out our new inspection arrangements. As a result, this report may be slightly different in format to other published reports for providers in the sector.

About Ysgol Gymraeg Henllan

Name of provider	Ysgol Gymraeg Henllan
Local authority	Denbighshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	70
Pupils of statutory school age	62
Number in nursery classes	8
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>	19.5%
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>	15.5%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	39.1%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language (categories A-C)	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	September 2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	February 2015
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

Summary

The headteacher provides strong and wise leadership which provides a clear direction for the school. She is supported skilfully by a conscientious and dedicated team of staff within a caring and supportive learning community. The governors are hardworking and support and challenge the school purposefully. Leaders have a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Staff have a productive working relationship with pupils and foster their well-being successfully. They demonstrate a good knowledge of pupils' various starting points and this fosters a stimulating learning environment that contributes effectively to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are friendly towards each other and polite to adults. Nearly all pupils behave exceptionally well and feel safe from verbal, emotional and physical abuse.

An excellent feature of the school's life and work is the way in which it serves the local community and, as a result, nearly all pupils show an innate pride in their '*cynefin*' or local area. The school's commitment to the 'Warm Hub' to develop pupils' linguistic and social skills is a notable element of its provision.

As pupils move through the school, most demonstrate good progress in developing their skills, particularly their digital skills. Staff provide rich learning experiences that engage and hold most pupils' interest successfully. However, teachers do not always provide tasks that challenge a very few more able pupils.

Pupils are proud to communicate in Welsh and the Criw Cymraeg encourage their peers to speak and use the language spontaneously in their learning and play. At times, teachers provide pupils with beneficial feedback on their work. However, teachers do not provide regular enough opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback to make improvements to their work.

The relationship between the school and parents is strong and they appreciate the regular communication between the school and home, for example by receiving regular information about the school's events by e-mail or on their digital platforms.

Recommendations

We have made 2 recommendations to help the school continue to improve

- R1 Expand opportunities for more able pupils to develop their skills to the best of their ability
- R2 Ensure that teachers' feedback supports pupils to improve their work consistently

What happens next

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

Main findings

Ysgol Gymraeg Henllan is an extremely caring learning community that supports pupils' well-being and provides them with robust support and guidance successfully. The headteacher's effective and passionate leadership sets a clear strategic direction for the development of the school and fosters a culture that promotes continuous improvement. With the careful support of the governors, the headteacher communicates and conveys her vision skilfully with all of the school's partners to nurture pupils who are '*Cymry Balch*' ('proud Welsh people'), where they are given a range of interesting learning experiences that 'Nurture tomorrow, today' skilfully.

A strong sense of family has been established at the school and the supportive and friendly working relationship between staff and pupils is a strong feature of the school's life and work. Leaders and staff promote a robust culture of safeguarding and, almost without exception, pupils are happy and feel safe at school. They explain sensibly that they trust the staff and are happy to discuss any concerns with them as they are confident that staff will listen and act promptly.

Provision to support pupils' well-being is sound. Staff use the '*Ystafell Dawel*' ('Quiet Room') competently to provide effective support sessions to support pupils' emotional well-being. Almost without exception, pupils behave exceptionally well during their learning activities both inside and outside the classrooms. Staff have recently embedded the '*Cynllun Chwarae Cyfeillgar*' ('Friendly Play Scheme') in the school's provision, which contributes robustly to creating an ethos of happy play between pupils during break and lunchtimes.

Across the school, the energetic and enthusiastic team of staff contribute successfully to the good progress made by most pupils, including pupils in specific groups, in their skills over time. They work together diligently to provide a rich curriculum for pupils in a local and Welsh context. Staff foster a positive and stimulating learning environment by using a range of teaching methods that promote learning appropriately. Learning has clear objectives and staff ensure that activities are paced appropriately. They use an appropriate range of questioning methods that recall previous learning, confirm understanding and inform the direction of learning well. From an early age, most pupils respond positively to the opportunities they are given to influence what they would like to learn within their termly themes. This supports them to take ownership of their own learning successfully.

On entry to the school, the social, emotional and linguistic skills of a majority of pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals, are appropriate for their age and stage of development. A clear strength of provision is the way in which the headteacher and staff have established a 'Warm Hub' in the community to develop the oldest pupils' social and Welsh language skills.

Valuable links in the community by visiting the 'Warm Hub'

As part of the school's monitoring processes, leaders have identified the need to strengthen pupils' skills. During their weekly visits to the 'Warm Hub' in the community, they undertake a range of diverse and valuable activities which contribute soundly to nurturing and developing their confidence successfully. For example, they develop the Welsh-speaking skills of the village's older residents by holding a conversation about physical education sessions a long time ago as part of their theme work. An excellent feature of the link is the valuable opportunities for pupils to use and play well-being board games they have developed with the residents. As a result, these experiences contribute extremely skilfully to developing pupils who are respectful and principled citizens who foster empathy for older members of their community.

From an early age, most pupils listen attentively to teachers' instructions and concentrate diligently for relevant periods during learning sessions. As they move through the school, most pupils' speaking skills develop well in both languages, using relevant vocabulary for specific areas skilfully and naturally. The Criw Cymraeg is extremely active in promoting the use of the Welsh language by playing playground games and singing with the youngest pupils during break and lunchtimes. Their role contributes successfully to raising the profile of the Welsh language at the school and celebrating its use.

Staff promote a culture of reading successfully and, as a result, most pupils' reading skills develop well in both languages. Year 2 pupils read confidently and enthusiastically when discussing the content of their stories. At the top of the school, the oldest pupils read fluently and skilfully and express an opinion about their favourite authors maturely. One of the school's notable qualities is the robust and interactive relationship between the school and parents to promote reading at home.

Strengthening pupils' reading skills in partnership with parents through the 'Her Ddarllen Henllan' reading challenge

Following the pandemic, the school has identified a decline in pupils' skills and enjoyment of reading from an early age. As a result, the headteacher has developed fun reading packs that are accessible to all pupils called 'Her Ddarllen Henllan' to rekindle their enthusiasm and love for reading. With the valuable support of parents, pupils complete a variety of interesting challenges and tasks which include purposeful opportunities for them to refine and apply a good range of reading skills. Pupils are rewarded every week for completing the challenges and more able pupils have now developed into competent authors when writing their own books for their peers. As a result, many pupils become engrossed in a variety of reading texts which, in turn, supports them valuably to make consistent progress in their skills.

As they move through the school, many pupils' writing skills develop appropriately. The youngest pupils develop their awareness of multi-use words purposefully as they take part in a word hunt in the outdoor learning area. The oldest pupils make useful choices of interesting vocabulary and purposeful sentences, for example as they write text to share their concerns about the harmful effects of deforestation.

Over time, most pupils make good progress in their numeracy skills. The youngest pupils acquire an understanding of numbers at an early stage. They apply this understanding extremely successfully, such as when handling a range of coins when paying to hire wellingtons to wear in the forest area. Most of the oldest pupils build on their number skills well, for example when calculating the perimeter and area of compound shapes.

Leaders invest purposefully in resources to enrich the educational use of the extensive outdoor area. This includes stimulating open spaces, such as the 'adventure park' and the forest area for the youngest pupils to develop their physical skills successfully, for example as they use the equipment energetically to take on the challenge of 'climbing Snowdon'. Staff provide valuable opportunities that support pupils' creative and artistic development successfully. At the top of the school, the oldest pupils work together effectively, using a range of instruments to compose a catchy tune to present a podcast.

Provision by staff for pupils with additional learning needs is sound. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) and the teaching assistants are enthusiastic about their responsibilities in supporting pupils' educational, social and emotional needs. Under the skilled guidance of the ALNCo, staff provide a range of support programmes that meet pupils' specific needs successfully. Staff work particularly well with parents with a variety of partnerships to support pupils with specific needs, for example by working with the speech and language therapy team and the health team to provide specialist support.

Across the school, staff provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to work on tasks independently, in pairs and in small groups. This has a positive effect on pupils' skills as they work together and develop their ideas jointly, for example as Year 3 and 4 pupils discuss and weigh the amount of sugar in various foods and drinks. These experiences also deepen their understanding of the importance of making healthy choices. However, at times, teachers do not provide tasks that challenge a very few more able pupils. As a result, they do not always achieve to the best of their ability across a range of skills.

In the best practice, staff and pupils themselves provide useful feedback, which supports pupils to understand their own strengths and areas for improvement in their learning. When they are given an opportunity to do so, many pupils respond purposefully to feedback and use it appropriately to make beneficial improvements to their work. Overall, across the school, teachers do not provide regular opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback.

Leaders monitor the budget prudently. They ensure that decisions on expenditure focus sensibly on the school's priorities for improvement, such as investing in digital resources and devices for programming to consolidate pupils' coding skills from an early age, for example. As a result, as they mature, most pupils make strong progress in their coding skills by using algorithms skilfully.

One of the school's greatest qualities is the way in which staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to undertake leadership responsibilities within its wider community. The school council works very effectively with Henllan Community Council, for example to develop and place signs in the village to advise the public to

pick up after their dogs. As a result, these experiences contribute positively to their development as principled and responsible citizens who treat their community with care and respect.

Periods of collective worship provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their moral and spiritual skills successfully. The youngest pupils attend 'Bears and Prayers' sessions at St Sadwrn's Church, which promotes their understanding of the world's religions and provides purposeful opportunities for them to reflect on their personal feelings and beliefs.

Governors develop a sound understanding of the school's activities by conducting learning walks and discussing pupils' work alongside staff. Leaders use self-evaluation findings successfully to set purposeful priorities to improve provision and raise pupils' standards. For example, they have identified the need to refine pupils' mathematical reasoning skills. As a result, they have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development.

The headteacher has created a beneficial culture to provide rich professional learning opportunities for all staff and encourages them to develop continuously by undertaking valuable additional responsibilities. For example, a member of staff has taken on the role of registered person for Cylch Meithrin Henllan, which is on the school grounds. This deepens the strong community engagement and ensures that effective transition arrangements are in place when prospective pupils transfer to the school.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are not a cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's funding appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

The school's arrangements for the safety of the site are not a cause for concern.

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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report refers to different quantities and proportions, e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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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