



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg
St Illtyd's Road
Church Village
Pontypridd
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF38 1RQ**

Date of inspection: February 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Gymraeg Garth Olwg

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg is situated in Church Village, a few miles from the town of Pontypridd in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 351 pupils between three and eleven years old on roll, including 45 full-time nursery age pupils.

A little over 5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national percentage of 19%. Forty-two per cent (42%) of pupils speak Welsh at home and a few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 15% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, but very few have a statement of special educational needs. The percentage with additional learning needs is lower than the national percentage of 21%.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2010 and the school was last inspected in February 2011.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

During their time at the school, most pupils achieve significantly in acquiring excellent Welsh communication skills, considering their starting points. Overall, their English, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop effectively.

Pupils feel safe at school and take pride in the sensible care that is available to them. They are caring towards each other and have a sound awareness of the importance of respecting others and honesty.

The school provides a wide and rich range of learning experiences to develop pupils' skills successfully. However, numeracy across the curriculum is one of the school's targets for improvement.

Teaching and assessment are sound, on the whole, and procedures for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring their outcomes are successful. Efficient teachers and assistants respond purposefully to the needs of vulnerable pupils and provide very useful care and guidance for them and their parents.

The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for developing the school. The strategic objectives that have been implemented by the headteacher focus directly on improving provision, standards, wellbeing and pupils' Welshness.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum, particularly in key stage 2
- R2 Ensure that the school creates effective progression in the planning of the skills, to challenge all pupils, including the most able
- R3 Ensure consistency in the stimulating teaching and assessment for learning strategies across the school
- R4 Improve the accountability and corporate practices of leaders at all levels

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, only a minority of pupils have Welsh communication skills that correspond with the standard that is expected for their age. During their time at the school, most make significant progress and acquire fluent and coherent Welsh communication skills in a short time. Pupils with additional learning needs also achieve soundly against their personal targets.

Nearly all pupils achieve excellently when developing their speaking and listening skills. Early in the nursery class, they understand that listening attentively to adults and each other during learning sessions is an integral part of school life. As a result, as pupils move through the school, most talk confidently about their work. They understand the purpose of learning and the teacher's role as a font of knowledge and the driver for promoting learning. Many explain what they are doing eloquently. For example, foundation phase pupils explain clearly why children from disadvantaged countries rely on finding clean water daily. Most pupils in key stage 2 have mature oral English skills, particularly as they question and debate with each other about the Tudors' crime and punishment.

Most pupils develop confident reading skills. In the foundation phase, they read a wide range of texts in Welsh correctly and clearly. They build unfamiliar words by using purposeful phonic strategies. Most reflect thoughtfully on the content of their books. They identify their favourite characters enthusiastically and offer meaningful reasons for their feelings while responding to stories. Most pupils in key stage 2 read maturely in both languages, take an interest in fictional and factual books and research the lives of famous chefs in detail on the internet. They practice their higher order reading skills independently to find information from different sources, such as arranging a holiday and hotels in Italy.

Most pupils across the school write appropriately for different purposes in a range of interesting contexts. On the whole, many present their work neatly and in a legible form. In the foundation phase, most write interesting pieces with increasing accuracy in Welsh. Good examples include the diary of a boy from the jungle in Africa and the lifecycle of a frog. As they transfer to key stage 2, many pupils develop neat handwriting. Most pupils write at length effectively in both languages for a wide range of purposes. For example, they describe the life of a Roman soldier through their themes, and record which materials fly the furthest from a catapult in science. However, a minority of pupils of higher ability do not write as well as they could.

Many pupils across the school make purposeful progress in numeracy. They solve number problems successfully by using effective strategies and recall facts confidently. On the whole, they apply their previous knowledge actively in new situations across the curriculum. For example, many older pupils in the foundation phase discuss the features of a graph and correct scales, based on a trip to buy goods in the local supermarket.

Many pupils in key stage 2 have a sound understanding of mathematical skills. For example, most younger pupils in key stage 2 sort objects by using a Carroll diagram

against specific criteria correctly. By the end of the key stage, many pupils complete challenges on fractions, percentages and angles to a high standard. However, most pupils in key stage 2 do not apply their numeracy skills to the same standard across the curriculum.

Most pupils in the foundation phase use ICT equipment confidently. For example, they use the electronic weather station to record quantitative information every day. Many at the top of the phase animate successfully when creating electronic presentations about the life of a caterpillar and the Great Fire of London. Most pupils in key stage 2 show purposeful ICT skills and select the most effective computerised method to present their work. They apply their skills with increasing confidence in a variety of contexts and subjects, which reinforces their skills in those areas. For example, they use databases to record their personal performances in athletics activities appropriately. Many also make effective use of secure learning websites to complete their work, both in the classroom and at home.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils convey feelings of loyalty towards their school. They declare with pride that they are safe and know what to do if anything is worrying them by using the supportive 'Hawl i fod yn hapus' (Right to be happy) system. Most are very caring towards each other and sympathise with their peers' concerns. They listen carefully to the views of others and respond to each other maturely and sensibly.

'Clust y Cyngor', which is active on the playground benches, is valuable and contributes effectively towards most pupils' sensible behaviour. Nearly all pupils are polite, confident and respond positively when meeting adults. For example, they talk maturely, express opinions clearly and manageably, and wait their turn courteously when opening and closing doors.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. They take part in activities to exercise their bodies regularly, such as following characters on a screen to improve their fitness during 'Chwaraeon Chwefror' (February Sports). Most pupils understand that there are dangers that could affect their daily lives. As a result, most understand which steps to follow to reduce any risk, should the need arise, for example when crossing the road carefully and wearing a seatbelt while travelling by car.

Nearly all pupils, in line with their age, express the importance of online safety. They understand, and explain frankly, the potential risks of using the internet and social media unwisely. Digital leaders play a key role in enriching and outlining this among their peers.

Most pupils are tolerant and sensitive to the needs and aspirations of other pupils who are similar to or different from themselves. They are knowledgeable about the characteristics of developing and disadvantaged countries, due to war, famine or drought. As a result, most have a sound awareness of fairness and the importance of equal opportunities. For example, they have a thorough understanding of the importance of sustainability, and they are able to explain the significance of fair trade schemes and food banks thoughtfully.

Most pupils work productively individually, in pairs and in groups. They are mature and discuss their work confidently. Nearly all are ready to learn at the beginning of lessons and respond enthusiastically to challenges and new experiences. They listen attentively to presentations and change smoothly from one activity to another. For example, older pupils in the foundation phase choose to move independently from drawing a picture with crayons to selling goods with cash in Caffi'r Garth. The effect of these opportunities is that many pupils develop as ambitious and confident learners. They are keen to express purposeful opinions in order to have a positive effect on school life.

Most pupils are conscientious and take their responsibilities seriously. For example, members of the school council, the eco committee and the digital leaders undertake their roles diligently. As a result, they have a sound understanding of their leadership roles within the school. They take great pride in their roles because they have been chosen by their peers through an election. They discuss their leadership roles confidently and give purposeful reasons for making decisions for others within the school community. For example, members of the school council researched the best way to reduce the number of balls that are lost from the sports court. As a result and for the benefit of others, the school council suggested placing the net above the outdoor area.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Across the school, teachers provide a wide variety of stimulating experiences that engage most pupils' interest effectively. Adults model very good language, and encourage and support pupils to use polished Welsh of a high standard successfully. As a result, nearly all pupils have excellent standards of oracy, considering their starting points.

Teachers use a wide variety of teaching methods, which have a positive effect on most pupils' standards. However, in a minority of classes, over-direction and the slow pace of lessons hinder pupils' ability, particularly those who are more able, to achieve to the best of their ability. The supportive working relationship that is evident in all classes nurtures respect and courtesy, and creates an atmosphere in which pupils can learn productively.

Teachers and learning assistants work together successfully and support learning purposefully by providing timely and purposeful intervention. In the best practice, they use various questioning techniques to develop pupils' responses and ideas further skilfully. Many teachers provide very useful feedback, which ensures that pupils understand the steps they need to take to improve their work through assessment for learning practices. However, this practice is not consistent across the school.

Teachers plan and provide a range of valuable experiences that reflect the nature and context of the school very successfully. Wide-ranging opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about Welsh culture, traditions and history, for example the story of the Mari Lwyd and various tales from the Mabinogi. The school encourages pupils to listen to contemporary Welsh music and arranges for visitors to come to the school to enrich their experiences, including the Welsh Children's Poet Laureate. As a result, pupils take pride in their heritage and their Welshness. This is an excellent feature of the school.

The new schemes of work in key stage 2 provide stimulating experiences for pupils through the medium of interesting themes. They provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to contribute towards what they want to learn. However, the schemes do not build systematically enough on pupils' current skills to ensure progression and, in particular, to challenge more able pupils.

The principles of the foundation phase are embedded firmly, and the curriculum meets children's needs successfully. Teachers make sensible use of the indoor and outdoor areas to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively. For example, they plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills by weighing vegetables and handling money in the shop. There are engaging opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT skills; for example, pupils control the electronic rover to travel along a path through the jungle skilfully.

In key stage 2, the school provides wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in a good variety of contexts, for example by discussing the characteristics of the language in Shakespeare's plays. Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to use their ICT skills to support their class work, for example to gather historical information. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum to the same high standard that is seen in mathematics lessons are limited.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The way in which staff promote Welsh culture, heritage and the language is a significant strength across the school. As a result, pupils take excellent pride in their Welshness. The Welsh ethos that exists within the school community spreads very effectively to the local community. An exceptional feature of this is the way in which pupils lead lessons for the lifelong learning centre's catering staff to improve their use of the Welsh language.

Pupils are given excellent opportunities to sing in concerts, perform in shows and compete in local and national eisteddfodau. This promotes their use of the language and their understanding of their culture successfully. These experiences develop pupils' expressive ability, self-confidence and their ability to work effectively as a team.

There is a sound relationship between parents and the school. The open-door policy ensures that communication between parents and the school is very effective. An electronic online system is used as a means of communicating successfully with parents and informing them about activities and key events. Most parents appreciate the regular communication and feel that the school is willing to listen to their views. This encourages them to play an active and full part in school life. The school uses parents' expertise successfully to support learning and enrich pupils' experiences. A good example of this is the way in which parents and the friends of the school support pupils to improve their reading skills.

Staff use thorough tracking and monitoring systems in order to measure pupils' progress on their journey through the school. They recognise the importance of early intervention and provide comprehensive support to individuals and groups of pupils from a young age. Teachers and learning assistants work together closely to ensure

that pupils receive purposeful guidance. The school works closely with a variety of external agencies in order to provide valuable support for pupils. As a result, there are effective plans in place to ensure that individuals make very sound progress. Staff support pupils with emotional and social needs skilfully and provide purposeful support programmes. They hold specialist workshops for the parents of pupils with additional learning needs. This enables them to support their children effectively.

The school has sound procedures to promote eating and drinking healthily. As a result, most pupils talk confidently about healthy eating habits and understand the importance of a balanced diet. There are beneficial opportunities to undertake physical exercise sessions in lessons and extra-curricular clubs, such as rugby and netball. Specialist fitness sessions, such as taekwondo, yoga and Zumba enrich pupils' experiences successfully. These effective arrangements motivate pupils to keep fit. The school promotes pupils' wellbeing purposefully and encourages them to take responsibility for their mental health, as well as their physical health. A good example of this is the daily mindfulness sessions that are held in the classes.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development successfully. Staff encourage pupils to be responsible citizens who are willing to help others. There are a number of active committees within the school. They promote the pupil's voice and encourage pupils to take responsibility and make wise decisions. A notable example of this is the work of the 'Hawl i fod yn Hapus' committee. The committee acts independently to support pupils and encourage them to care for each other. Members support individuals if something is worrying them. As a result, most pupils feel safe and happy at the school. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has established a clear and robust vision for the school, which is based on providing valuable experiences for pupils in a Welsh environment. The headteacher is supported effectively by a deputy and a robust senior management team. The headteacher has developed a system that distributes responsibility appropriately to specific departments within the school. However, the current arrangements do not ensure corporate accountability and practices at all leadership levels across the school.

School leaders address local and national priorities purposefully. For example, they are beginning to prepare for the new curriculum for pupils in key stage 2 by using challenges within stimulating themes. The strong focus on developing the Welsh language charter is also having a very positive effect on pupils' use of the Welsh language in formal and informal situations.

Leaders have established thorough and up-to-date self-evaluation procedures. All members of staff have a beneficial role in these activities, and leaders scrutinise work and observe lessons to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation document provides an honest picture of the school's current situation, although it is too descriptive at times.

The headteacher has distributed responsibilities to target the priorities in the development plan purposefully. As a result, staff and senior managers have a sound

understanding of the areas that need to be developed. They plan effectively to support future improvements. The priorities in the development plan are based directly on the outcomes of the self-evaluation procedures and focus firmly on maintaining and improving pupils' standards. These arrangements lead to improvements successfully. An active example of this is the 'Hawl i fod yn Hapus' strategy, in which pupils promote mutual respect.

Governors have comprehensive knowledge of the school's performance and work. They are very supportive of the school's aims and objectives and undertake their statutory responsibilities effectively. A good example of this is the way in which the governors have established a strategic health and safety committee with the secondary school, as they share the same site. They operate purposefully as critical friends, and challenge the school and hold it to account for its performance skilfully. This is done through regular visits to their link classes, in addition to meeting with the leaders who are responsible for the school's main priorities. Governors ensure that the school is staffed appropriately. This includes support staff, who support teachers very positively to raise standards. For example, they contribute towards improving pupils' reading skills, and their emotional and social skills, through stimulating interventions.

Effective procedures for developing staff link directly with the current performance management systems. This has a positive effect on the staff's skills and expertise. For example, links with the school's link nurseries have improved the leadership skills of a number of the foundation phase staff. Following useful training, staff share good practice and expertise with their colleagues regularly. As a result, this has a positive effect on pupils' outcomes as they move through the school.

The school makes efficient use of resources and manages the budget and monitors the effect of expenditure effectively. For example, the recent investment in new ICT resources has enabled pupils to develop their technology skills successfully. Leaders make effective use of the pupil development grant. A sound example of this is the nurture club that improves the confidence, wellbeing and attendance of specific groups of pupils.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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