



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

A report on

**Ysgol Pencae
Ffordd Graiglwyd
Penmaenmawr
Conwy
LL34 6YG**

Date of inspection: April 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Pencae

Ysgol Pencae is situated in Penmaenmawr in Conwy county borough. The school is under the voluntary control of the Church in Wales. The school is in the process of changing from being a dual-stream school to being a designated Welsh-medium school, which will become operational in September 2018. Welsh is the school's everyday language and the medium of teaching and learning up to Year 6, where one class is taught bilingually. There are currently 161 pupils on roll, including 12 nursery pupils who attend each afternoon. Pupils are taught in six mixed-age classes and one single-age class. Very few pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. A part-time resource centre for pupils in key stage 2 with additional learning needs is based at the school.

Over a period of three years, around 20% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is close to the national percentage of 19%. The school has identified 40% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is significantly higher than the national percentage of 21%. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The school was last inspected in November 2010 and the headteacher has been in post since 1998.

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

The headteacher and senior management team provide clear strategic leadership for the school's work. They have a robust vision that is based on leading the school to become a Welsh-medium school and raising standards. By using a range of suitable evaluation procedures, leaders have appropriate knowledge of standards and teaching.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is sound and has a positive effect on these pupils' attitudes towards their learning. Developing pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of all of the school's work, and there are robust strategies in place to ensure this. Intervention for pupils with specific needs is very effective. Teachers provide a range of purposeful experiences that engage pupils' interest well. A comprehensive system for tracking pupils' progress ensures that most pupils make sound progress against their targets.

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 Ensure that teaching provides appropriate challenge for pupils to achieve to the best of their ability and to develop them as independent and ambitious learners
- R2 Strengthen self-evaluation processes in order to identify pupils' standards better
- R3 Improve feedback for pupils in order for them to know what they need to do to improve their work
- R4 Ensure that pupils use their extended writing skills more consistently across the curriculum

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 nursery, many pupils' basic skills are below what is expected for children of this age. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress from their starting points. They build on previous learning effectively and apply their thinking and problem-solving skills appropriately across a range of areas of learning.

In the foundation phase, many pupils have good Welsh communication skills. Most of the school's youngest pupils acquire the Welsh language at an early stage. Across the phase, many listen attentively. They discuss their work enthusiastically and use syntax that is appropriate for their age and ability, for example when describing a snail as part of their theme work on insects. Many pupils make appropriate progress in their reading skills. A very few, who are more able, discuss the content of their books confidently and refer to specific aspects of the text. Many pupils in key stage 2 communicate effectively and develop their ideas clearly in class discussions when discussing and comparing toys today and during the Victorian era. At the top of the school, most pupils' standards of oracy in both languages are sound. Many read appropriately in both languages and show a good awareness of the text. They gather relevant information from different texts successfully, for example reading an airport timetable when planning a trip to the Great Barrier Reef.

By the end of Year 2, many pupils write sensibly and independently. They use adjectives and similes appropriately when writing a short portrayal of a pirate. In key stage 2, many write confidently in a wide range of forms in both languages, and use robust syntax and correct punctuation. For example, they write a biography of a character from the sixties and a letter to express an opinion about tourism in Llanberis. However, in general, pupils do not write to the same standard across a range of subjects consistently. Over-use of ready-made sheets limits pupils' ability to write freely and at length regularly across the curriculum.

On the whole, the attitudes of Year 6 pupils in the learners' stream towards learning the Welsh language are positive. Many pupils respond appropriately to a range of instructions and questions in Welsh. A majority show confidence when discussing in Welsh and reach a good standard of bilingualism, changing freely from one language to the other. Pupils' reading skills are developing appropriately and many show a suitable understanding of the text. Most pupils use verbs, phrases and simple patterns in their written work, for example in a letter from an evacuee as part of their history work.

Most pupils apply their numeracy skills successfully across the curriculum. In the foundation phase, most make good progress in their mathematical development. They handle money correctly and develop a good understanding of measurement, time and handling data. Most pupils gather information from a range of sources effectively and present it in the form of various graphs. In key stage 2, most pupils have a sound understanding of number strategies and, by Year 6, they apply their numeracy skills regularly in a wide variety of activities across the curriculum, for example when calculating the profit and loss that are made when selling cakes on fair trade day.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are sound. They use their ICT skills confidently across the curriculum, and use them to reinforce their understanding of numeracy and use of literacy. In the foundation phase, many pupils develop their skills independently, for example when creating an animation of well-known stories. In key stage 2, nearly all pupils make effective use of various apps and produce a range of digital presentations effectively. By the end of the stage, many pupils produce spreadsheets and databases successfully in aspects of the curriculum, for example a spreadsheet to plan an end-of-year party, and a database on insects and champions.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and most behave well in lessons and around the building. They feel safe at school and know whom to approach if they are worried. They are polite towards each other, staff and visitors.

Most pupils show an interest in their work and concentrate for specific periods. They recall previous knowledge confidently and elaborate well when responding to a variety of questions from teachers. Many pupils work effectively individually, in pairs and groups, and as part of a whole class, in a range of activities. They contribute purposefully to class themes. However, pupils' role in guiding their own learning and developing as independent learners in the classroom is limited.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe on the internet. For example, pupils in key stage 2 create pamphlets and videos to raise their awareness of e-safety. Across the school, most pupils have a suitable understanding of how to keep healthy, the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise.

An appropriate representation of pupils, including those with additional learning needs, undertakes a purposeful range of responsibilities within the school community. The school council, eco committee and Welsh language charter group contribute effectively to the school's decisions. For example, the eco committee has created a garden in a nearby caravan park.

Most pupils develop as ethical and knowledgeable citizens through visits by different charities that raise pupils' awareness of others who are less fortunate than themselves.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers and assistants work well together and forge a productive working relationship with pupils. They are sound language models and encourage pupils to use the Welsh language during class activities. They know their pupils well, which enables them to provide purposeful support for individuals and specific groups. However, over-direction by adults limits pupils' ability to develop as independent learners. At times, lack of challenge in activities prevents pupils from achieving to the best of their ability. As a result, the quality of teaching is adequate.

Teachers provide valuable oral feedback in order to support pupils to achieve during lessons. However, this is inconsistent. In written comments, teachers praise pupils'

work achievements regularly, but comments that enable pupils to understand what they need to do in order to improve are inconsistent. As a result, pupils do not use written feedback systematically to improve their work effectively enough. In the additional learning needs resource centre, teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to discuss what they have learned. This information is used effectively to plan the next step in their learning. This ensures that pupils make good progress against their previous attainment.

Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities and learning experiences that ignite pupils' enthusiasm. The principles of the foundation phase have been implemented and, on the whole, they develop pupils' skills appropriately. The foundation phase's outdoor areas are used purposefully to enrich pupils' learning experiences. Schemes of work for key stage 2 give due attention to all aspects of the curriculum, and provision is enriched effectively through interesting educational visits.

Provision to develop the Welsh dimension has been embedded firmly in the school's plans. This is developed successfully through numerous visits within their local area and further afield, for example visits to Penmaenmawr museum when studying the Victorian era. This reinforces pupils' awareness of the culture of Wales and their local area well.

The literacy, numeracy and digital competence frameworks have been incorporated clearly in the school's schemes of work. Teachers produce purposeful plans that identify opportunities to develop skills across the curriculum. Provision for ICT is sound across the school. Teachers have incorporated the expectations of the digital competence framework appropriately. This has a positive effect on most pupils' standards of ICT.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Provision for pupils with emotional and social needs is comprehensive. Very effective use is made of the authority's social inclusion service to support the school's robust procedures. As a result, pupils receive purposeful assistance to support their specific needs. The school works effectively with a wide range of external agencies, which has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing, for example speech and language therapists and occupational therapists.

The school has thorough systems to track pupils' progress. Teachers collect assessment information regularly and use assessment findings successfully to provide purposeful support that respond to pupils' needs. Leaders analyse information rigorously to monitor the progress of groups of pupils. This has a positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is very effective. Individual education plans include clear and quantitative targets, and teachers and assistants implement them purposefully. This ensures that most pupils make sound progress against their targets. Pupils and parents are included fully in the process.

Provision for pupils who attend the additional learning needs resource centre is sound. Teachers create a happy, caring and inclusive community that places a clear

emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills and wellbeing. Support helps pupils to engage well with their learning and contributes effectively towards improving pupils' skills. The unit has a clear system for assessing pupils' attainment and measuring their progress over time. Targets and pupils' improvement against these targets are evaluated regularly each term.

The school ensures that pupils from different groups shoulder responsibilities, play a suitable part in the school community and influence elements of the school's work. The school has appropriate arrangements for eating and drinking healthily. The curriculum for the play areas and physical education lessons ensure that most pupils understand the importance of physical activity.

Through personal and social education lessons and the school's schemes of work, the school develops most pupils' understanding of moral, social and cultural aspects and tolerance well.

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

Leadership and management: Good

Together, the headteacher, senior management team and governors provide robust leadership for developing the school, and manage the additional learning needs resource appropriately. They have a vision that is based on the school's motto, 'Together we will succeed'. Leaders are successful in setting a clear strategic direction for the school, for example by leading the school in becoming a Welsh-medium school, and responding to annual priorities in the school development plan. Staff work together very effectively as a team and meet regularly to discuss provision, outcomes and pupils' wellbeing. As a result, staff have a good awareness of pupils' achievement.

On the whole, the school's self-evaluation processes enable leaders to identify many of the main strengths and areas for improvement. They include considering the views of stakeholders and gathering broad and sensible evidence. Leaders place a strong emphasis on lesson observations and scrutinising pupils' books in order to gather useful first-hand evidence. Monitoring reports identify strengths and areas for improvement in provision appropriately, and identify actions to be taken in order to improve. However, a majority do not identify pupils' standards incisively enough. As a result, a few issues, such as the quality of pupils' extended writing, and their ability to use marking feedback to improve their work, are not identified prominently enough.

In general, leaders use information from the self-evaluation process suitably to produce priorities in the school development plan. The plan includes a manageable number of sensible priorities, which focus well on improving pupils' standards further.

Effective performance management arrangements set purposeful objectives to develop pupils' skills further, which are based on the priorities in the school development plan. Staff at the unit meet with the staff of other units to compare effective strategies and good practice, for example by identifying the effectiveness of specific resources for pupils at the units.

Leaders manage the budget carefully and ensure that expenditure links well with plans for improvement. The school makes good use of the pupil development grant to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. As a result, these pupils usually achieve as well as their peers.

Governors have a sound understanding of the school's performance in comparison with similar schools, in addition to progress against the priorities for improvement. They receive beneficial information from the headteacher about the school's life and work, which reinforces this well. Members of sub-committees contribute appropriately towards the school's strategic direction through regular monitoring activities. For example, they undertake purposeful visits to scrutinise books, conduct learning walks and to talk to pupils and staff. They fulfil their role as a critical friend effectively.

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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Publication date: 27/06/2018