



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Hafodwenog
Trelech
Carmarthen
SA33 6RU**

Date of inspection: February 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Hafodwenog

Ysgol Gynradd Hafodwenog is situated in the village of Trelech in Carmarthenshire local authority. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work, and English is introduced in key stage 2.

There are 42 pupils between 4 and 11 years old on roll, including 5 full-time nursery age pupils. Pupils are organised into two classes, one for the foundation phase and another for key stage 2. Thirty seven per cent (37%) of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. No pupils are eligible for free school meals and very few have additional learning needs.

The headteacher of a nearby school has been in charge of the school since September 2018. He spends two days a week at the school, and the school was last inspected in November 2012.

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 school has a strong community ethos and most pupils show pride towards their local community. They visit their community regularly and welcome visitors to the school to enrich their learning.

Staff place a firm emphasis on creating a safe learning environment for pupils, which has a positive effect on their wellbeing. However, teachers do not always have high enough expectations in terms of standards or pupils' academic aspirations. As a result, a minority of pupils do not make enough progress, particularly in key stage 2.

In a short period of time, the new headteacher has established an ethos of successful co-operation among the staff. She has started to make beneficial improvements to aspects of provision and pupils' standards. Leaders identify the school's strengths and many areas for improvement. However, monitoring procedures are not always rigorous enough to identify or address important issues, such as the lack of challenge in teaching.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the school's monitoring procedures and improvement plans to ensure that they focus firmly on raising standards
- R2 Raise pupils' standards of Welsh communication
- R3 Ensure that teaching provides an appropriate challenge for all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability and develop as independent and ambitious learners
- R4 Ensure that teachers provide a balanced curriculum and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning
- R5 Strengthen the role of governors in monitoring the quality of provision and standards to enable them to challenge the school's performance effectively

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

On entry to the nursery class, a majority of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are appropriate or higher than expected for their age. As they move through the school, a majority make suitable progress from their starting points. However, more able pupils do not always make enough progress and a few pupils underachieve.

Pupils' oral skills develop at an early stage. In the foundation phase, most pupils speak clearly and use simple words, phrases and sentences with an increasing range of vocabulary. They discuss their work enthusiastically with adults and show enthusiasm when describing their visit to a nearby farm. On the whole, most pupils listen effectively. In key stage 2, many pupils develop purposeful speaking and listening skills. They express themselves with increasing accuracy and confidence in Welsh and English. However, a minority use vocabulary that is relevant to a particular subject, and there is a tendency for many pupils to use English words when communicating in Welsh.

Most pupils' reading skills are developing suitably for their age and ability. The youngest pupils recognise letters and sounds and are beginning to build words confidently. By the end of the foundation phase, most develop to become purposeful readers and read accurately and fluently. Throughout key stage 2, most pupils develop as moderate readers in Welsh and English. Many use their reading skills confidently to organise information from various sources when tracing the life history of Thomas Edison, for example. However, only a few older pupils show enjoyment in reading and elaborate when discussing their favourite books.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing purposefully. By the end of the foundation phase, many develop their writing skills appropriately in a limited range of different genres. They extend their sentences by using basic conjunctions, and use capital letters and full stops correctly. However, over-use of worksheets limits the ability of a majority of pupils to write at length and achieve as well as they could. Many pupils in key stage 2 make appropriate progress in their writing skills in Welsh and English. By Year 6, a majority write successfully in a few genres, for example as they write a script of the story of the wedding of Nant Gwrtheyrn. They punctuate suitably and their spelling in both languages is developing purposefully. However, pupils do not use their independent extended writing skills often enough in other areas of the curriculum. The standard of presentation of pupils' work also varies too much across the school.

Most pupils make good progress in developing specific numeracy skills. In the foundation phase, most recognise, order and use numbers appropriately in their activities across the areas of learning. For example, they estimate the length of a path, measure it by using non-standard measurements with cord, and then measure it again by using standard measurements confidently. Many older pupils collect data on their favourite party foods and display it in the form of a bar graph. In key stage 2, many pupils have a sound understanding of place value. They present mathematics work at a level that is appropriate for their age and ability. By Year 6, they write and handle numbers with up to six digits successfully, and use a number of mental

strategies confidently when multiplying and dividing whole numbers and decimals. Most pupils use their number skills confidently to reason, collect, record and analyse data. However, their use of numeracy skills in various subjects is limited.

Many pupils use a limited range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills suitably across both key stages. They use an electronic tablet independently when taking pictures and recording voices, for example as they act out part of the legend of Branwen. Most pupils in key stage 2 use their word-processing skills confidently to search for information about leaders during the Second World War and create multimedia presentations about them. However, their knowledge and understanding of how to input data into electronic spreadsheets and databases for a range of purposes are limited. Many are aware of the importance of online safety and the need to keep passwords secure.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel happy and safe there and appreciate the caring and friendly environment. When necessary, pupils are confident that teachers respond to their concerns promptly and appropriately. Older pupils are caring towards the foundation pupils as they support them at lunchtime and when choosing books every week from the school library. A majority of pupils are polite towards staff and each other.

In the foundation phase, most pupils have a positive attitude towards their work. They are enthusiastic and persevere diligently with their tasks. An effective example of this is the way in which they use different materials to build a bridge by following instructions carefully. Many pupils develop perseverance and resilience purposefully, and use the 'ask a friend or partner before asking the teacher' strategy to support them confidently. In key stage 2, a majority of pupils stay on task for suitable periods and, on the whole, behave well. A minority of pupils work sensibly with a partner and in small groups, for example when creating a green screen film to share the feelings of the Jews during the Second World War. However, a few pupils find it difficult to behave appropriately consistently, and this disrupts the work of other pupils at times.

Many pupils have begun to contribute effectively by offering interesting ideas about what they would like to learn. For example, many pupils in the foundation phase have organised with the local preacher for them to visit the chapel to conduct a pretend wedding as part of their work on religious practices.

Pupils in the foundation phase are developing suitable strategies to begin to improve their own work. Although key stage 2 pupils do not take responsibility for improving their own work regularly, they have recently begun to contribute suitably towards challenges during the afternoon sessions, which are beginning to develop their independent skills.

All pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 undertake roles of responsibility suitably and are beginning to play an active part in school life. By running an exchange shop, the eco council promotes sustainability appropriately. Alongside the pupils from the gardening club, they also grow vegetables in the school garden and cook them on site. Members of the eco council promote healthy eating effectively and encourage all of the school's pupils to make sensible choices when choosing their food. Many

pupils have a sound understanding of how regular exercise has a positive effect on their fitness, health and physical wellbeing. Members of the school council are beginning to listen to the ideas of their peers. They have recently raised the whole community's awareness of the dangers of heart disease and have played a prominent part in raising money to purchase a community defibrillator. They have also introduced equipment to be used on the school playground to enable all pupils to practice their practical skills during break time.

Many pupils are developing as moral and conscientious citizens by organising and serving a monthly lunch at the school for their neighbours in the community. Sports ambassadors conduct physical games sessions with children from the cylich meithrin (playgroup) in the village, and frequent visits by many pupils to a home for the elderly strengthens their understanding of social issues and other people's needs well.

Recently, the school's average attendance percentage has placed it above similar schools. Nearly all pupils arrive punctually in the morning.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Teachers plan interesting themes that promote learning and, on the whole, add robustly to pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers provide a suitable variety of stimulating experiences for pupils, such as the visit of a teacher from the Welsh school in Patagonia to talk about his life and work in Argentina. This enriches learning effectively. Teachers are beginning to consider pupils' ideas when planning appropriate challenges for them. As a result, teachers have recently adapted elements of their planning purposefully to pursue pupils' lines of enquiry and ideas. However, this has not become embedded.

The principles of the foundation phase have been established successfully. Teachers provide interesting focus tasks and continuous provision for pupils, which include beneficial opportunities for them to role-play, for example as guests at Branwen's wedding. Teachers use the outdoor areas creatively to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. A good example of this is the opportunity that they give pupils, from an early age, to make a cake in the mud kitchen and create patterns with twigs and leaves.

Staff have begun to adapt their planning in order to prepare for the introduction of the new curriculum for Wales. They have recently introduced 'learning detective' sessions in key stage 2, to encourage pupils to work together in small groups to discover and investigate various subjects. A good example of this is the activity to compare the long-term cost of using paper towels rather than purchasing a hand dryer. Teachers are beginning to plan to deliver the digital competence framework. They provide suitable opportunities to enable pupils to use their ICT skills appropriately in various contexts, such as creating a presentation of the school's history and successes. However, long-term plans do not always identify clearly enough how learning experiences in science and religious education build on pupils' existing skills, knowledge and understanding across the school. Opportunities for pupils to write at length and use their numeracy regularly in various subjects are also limited.

Best practice in teaching is based on teachers and support staff working together effectively to provide interesting learning experiences for pupils regularly. Staff in half of lessons remind pupils effectively of their previous learning and present clear learning objectives and instructions. They ask a wide range of questions that help to extend pupils' learning successfully. However, across the school, teachers' expectations in terms of the behaviour that is acceptable from pupils are not high enough. This disrupts many pupils' ability to complete their tasks. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are inconsistent across the school. As a result, activities are not always challenging enough, particularly for more able pupils.

Teachers provide pupils with appropriate oral feedback on the quality of their work. However, written comments are too varied and do not always provide the next steps clearly enough. Success criteria are used consistently to help pupils to assess their own work and that of other pupils regularly.

The school ensures that pupils are given beneficial opportunities to learn about their area, Welsh history and Welsh culture through a suitable range of educational visits and by welcoming visitors to the school. Good examples include visiting the botanical gardens and the Urdd residential centre in Llangrannog. The school's provision to develop the Welsh languages supports many pupils to make suitable progress in acquiring the language by implementing the Welsh Language Charter appropriately. Staff use the 'Cryw Cymraeg' purposefully to promote the Welsh language among their peers by giving regular presentations during assemblies. The school's staff have recently encouraged pupils to use the language more regularly by rewarding them with class points. However, there is no consistency in the way in which staff correct pupils' spoken Welsh language in lessons and at other times.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy, inclusive and homely community. Staff create a caring feeling that is reflected in pupils' wellbeing.

The school has purposeful procedures for tracking pupils' progress. Teachers have recently used the information that derives from these procedures more consistently to set purposeful targets for all pupils. Staff share targets with parents in regular link meetings. Teachers and support staff contribute effectively towards supporting individual pupils and implement intervention programmes successfully. This contributes well towards raising standards and developing pupils' confidence. The school has identified the need to target other groups of pupils, namely those who are more able. However, on the whole, targets for these pupils are not always specific or ambitious enough to enable them make as much progress as they could.

The very few pupils with additional learning needs have suitable individual education plans, and their targets are specific and measurable. The school works closely with other agencies to seek advice to enable it to provide effective support for pupils in specialist areas. Comprehensive care and support help pupils to engage very well with their learning.

Staff place a strong emphasis on developing values and addressing pupils' emotional and social needs. Since establishing the principle of the 'ogof synhwyrau' (cave of

senses), members of staff provide drop-in sessions, which have a successful effect on increasing pupils' confidence and helping them to deal with the challenges of daily life. Regular opportunities are provided for most pupils to reflect on moral aspects through circle time sessions and in relevant lessons. For example, pupils in key stage 2 discuss the Tryweryn tragedy and its effect on the wellbeing of local people. Some older pupils use their personal experiences as a tool to support other pupils well during these times.

There is a robust partnership between the school and parents, and all members of staff promote an open and co-operative culture, which succeeds in ensuring beneficial commitment and support. Successful arrangements include sharing sheets with them to explain the termly theme and class work, being available to talk to parents on the school grounds every day and sharing general information with them regularly through social media.

Through a number of extra-curricular and curricular activities, the school has effective arrangements for promoting eating and drinking healthily. Pupils' spiritual attitudes are promoted effectively through regular periods of collective worship and frequent visits to the school by religious leaders, and pupils' contribution to services in the local chapel. The school develops pupils' empathy towards others suitably by supporting charities such as Children in Need and contributing to a harvest food bank. However, opportunities for pupils to learn about the practices, religions and cultures of people in other countries are limited.

The school's provision to develop pupils' creative skills is successful. The school is developing a tradition that ensures opportunities for pupils to take part in concerts, sing in the school choir and compete in the local and Urdd Eisteddfod. This contributes successfully towards increasing pupils' confidence. Staff plan a purposeful range of interesting activities that develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of Welsh culture. For example, pupils learn about contemporary Welsh artists and songs, and educational visits to Efailwen, the area of Rebecca's Daughters (Merched Beca), develops pupils' awareness of Welsh history effectively.

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

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The acting headteacher works conscientiously to develop effective leadership and management during his time at the school every week. In the short period since being appointed, he has begun to establish a clear vision for the school, which is based on a commitment to ensure the wellbeing and good academic progress of all pupils. However, this has not had enough time to become embedded and have a significant effect.

There is clear and successful communication between the school's staff, and they are informed about developments regularly. Staff are beginning to work together closely as a team and meet regularly to discuss progress and to plan jointly. The school is beginning to develop as an appropriate learning community. Performance management procedures are beginning to contribute effectively to the professional development of all of the school's staff. This ensures valuable opportunities for them

to improve their skills and share good practice among themselves and with other schools. Recently, the school has established a link with a similar school within the local authority to work on curricular plans and outdoor provision in the foundation phase. This new focus on professional learning is beginning to improve the quality of teaching, but it is not yet consistent across the school.

Leaders have established suitable self-evaluation arrangements, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and data analysis. These procedures have strengthened staff's understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development appropriately. There is a beneficial link between the outcomes of self-evaluation procedures and the priorities in the development plan. Staff have recently begun to monitor the plan's main priorities in order to measure the success of activities. For example, the school has addressed improving pupils' attendance effectively. However, these procedures do not focus enough on evaluating pupils' standards. As a result, leaders have not identified a few important areas for improvement, such as the lack of challenge in teaching.

The school responds appropriately to local and national priorities. Staff have begun to plan for the curriculum for Wales and have established the Welsh Language Charter to try to improve the standard of pupils' spoken Welsh. However, the school has not planned for introducing the literacy and numeracy framework in enough detail over time.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They meet regularly and fulfil their duties appropriately. They visit the school and have begun to get to know pupils' attainment and the school's procedures, but they do not hold the school to account for pupils' standards and attainment consistently enough. Their role in setting a strategic direction for the school is currently limited.

The school is staffed purposefully and individuals' expertise is used effectively to enrich pupils' experiences. For example, they use a specialist to provide effective opportunities for pupils to develop their art and performance skills. The outdoor learning area is suitable and promotes learning appropriately. The headteacher, with the support of the governing body, manages the school budget effectively. Leaders target funding well to meet pupils' needs and support the priorities in the school development plan.

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.

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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