



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gymraeg Sant Curig
College Road
Barry
CF62 8HQ**

Date of inspection: November 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Sant Curig

Ysgol Gynradd Sant Curig is situated in the centre of the town of Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 425 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 55 nursery age pupils. The school has 16 single age classes, including two classes for nursery children.

Over the last three years, around 11% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national percentage (18%). Around a quarter of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified around 14% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is lower than the national percentage of 21%.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2006. The school was last inspected in March 2014.

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

Ysgol Sant Curig is an extremely caring community in which most pupils make sound progress and achieve well. Standards of wellbeing, behaviour and nearly all pupils' attitudes towards learning are excellent. They show high levels of motivation, interest and pride in their work.

The strength of the working relationships between pupils and staff is an exceptional feature of the school's work and contributes extensively to the effective learning environment. Pupils are given a prominent voice in the school's work. Teachers provide a wide range of rich learning and stimulating learning experiences which ensure that pupils develop as confident, independent learners.

The school has a strong Welsh ethos. Excellent provision to develop pupils' creative and expressive skills, to use their imagination and take part in performances, contributes extremely effectively to improving pupils' outcomes and wellbeing.

The headteacher provides highly effective leadership and a clear strategic direction for the school's work. A culture of improvement permeates the school, and continuous review and planning for improvement are at the heart of the school's ethos. An exceptional feature is the strong emphasis on developing staff at all levels to be strategic leaders. This leads to a strong learning community in which staff face changes and current developments in education enthusiastically and confidently, and learn from each other very effectively.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' information and communication technology skills
- R2 Ensure more opportunities for foundation phase pupils to make choices in relation to their learning
- R3 Ensure that all teachers challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability consistently

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to how strategic planning improves pupils' wellbeing and attitudes, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, many pupils' basic skills correspond to what is expected for their age, except in Welsh, where the language is new to many of them. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress in their learning and achieve well.

Most pupils listen well to adults and other pupils. Pupils' oral skills develop quickly in the foundation phase, for example when discussing their investigation into different materials. By Year 2, many communicate confidently and use the Welsh language in their activities and at other times during the day. Most pupils in key stage 2 communicate clearly in Welsh and English, and contribute purposefully to class discussions in both languages. They use extended vocabulary to create effect, for example when discussing the effect of bullying on a child's self-image. They show pride in the Welsh language and choose to use the language to socialise at playtime, as well as in their lessons.

In the foundation phase, most pupils' reading skills are developing well. They use an appropriate range of phonic strategies confidently to identify unfamiliar words. By Year 2, many read with a good level of accuracy, fluency and meaning. Most pupils in key stage 2 make sound progress in their reading in Welsh and English. They discuss the content of text meaningfully and refer sensibly to specific features, for example when discussing the style of the poems of T. Llew Jones. By Year 6, most practice their higher order reading skills regularly and maturely to gather information from different sources, for example when gathering information about different famous campaigners, such as Emmeline Pankhurst.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing well. By the end of the foundation phase, many write independently for different purposes, for example when creating a booklet on the theme 'When I grow up'. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils give clear explanations and use mature vocabulary in their writing, for example when creating newspaper articles or showing empathy towards the life of a miner after visiting the Big Pit. They draft and re-draft their work effectively and show a sound grasp of spelling patterns, paragraphing and punctuation in both languages. The standard of many pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is neat.

Most pupils use their numeracy skills flexibly in a variety of meaningful activities in other areas and subjects. Many pupils in the foundation phase use their skills confidently to solve problems, for example when sorting materials according to texture or creating a pictogram of their favourite dinosaur. In key stage 2, most pupils build well on previous learning. By Year 6, they recall number facts quickly and apply what they have learned in mathematics lessons confidently to everyday situations, for example by using the scale on a map to discover the distance between Barry and the Hay on Wye Festival. They make effective use of their data-handling skills when investigating the effect of physical activity on the heart rate.

Many pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop beneficially as they move through the school. By Year 2, many pupils use a tablet

confidently to record and share their work with adults, and use an animation program to create a simple film. This reinforces their oral skills effectively. Most pupils in key stage 2 use the internet effectively to search for information and create multimedia presentations successfully, for example when presenting their work for the 'Libraries' project. By Year 6, many use spreadsheets appropriately to record data, for example when creating a graph about deaths during the Second World War. However, overall, pupils do not apply their ICT skills frequently enough across the curriculum. This limits their progress.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils' standard of wellbeing and attitudes to learning are excellent. Standards of behaviour and self-discipline in lessons and around the school are particularly good. Nearly all pupils are enthusiastic, are extremely affectionate and very polite towards each other, staff and visitors. They have obvious pride in the school, their community and their language. Nearly all pupils are caring towards each other and give careful consideration to the needs of others. An example of this is the mature way in which the older pupils and 'mêts maes' (playground mates) take exceptional care of their younger peers on the playground and when moving around the school. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school, attend regularly and show willingness and obvious enthusiasm towards learning. They are aware of whom to approach if they have any concerns and are confident that staff listen to them. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe on the internet.

The strength of the working relationships between pupils and staff is an exceptional feature of the school's work and contributes extensively to the effective learning environment. As a result, pupils show an increasing ability to plan jointly and express an opinion about what they learn. By contributing to planning practical themes in areas across the curriculum, most pupils are committed and motivated successfully to learn. For example, through the 'Taith y Tymor' strategy, they have a direct influence on the activities they will undertake. They choose imaginative learning pathways in order to complete extended tasks. As a result, they apply themselves fully to their tasks and work together very successfully. Most listen to the opinions of others maturely and show energetic enthusiasm. An excellent example of the effect of this is the literacy and numeracy work of a high standard within the 'Libraries' project.

Staff's commitment to introducing strategies that raise pupils' confidence and develop their resilience contribute highly effectively towards ensuring that pupils show high levels of motivation, interest and pride in their work. As a result, most are ambitious, capable, confident and independent learners who work together in harmony and stay diligently on task over extended periods. An excellent example of this is the way in which nearly all pupils in the foundation phase respond positively to a mindfulness strategy straight after lunch. As a result, nearly all pupils are ready to start the afternoon's activities enthusiastically, concentrate well and show resilience when facing challenges in their work.

Pupils take full advantage of wide-ranging opportunities to voice an opinion and influence the school's life and work, and take pride in what they have achieved to improve the school. They do this through various committees, including the school council. A particular example of this is the school council's work to simplify the

wording of the four learning purposes of the new curriculum, in order for younger pupils to contribute more effectively to a discussion on which learning strategies are most relevant to them. Pupils contribute regularly to various charities, for example the homeless, Tŷ Hafan hospice and supporting local food banks. This has a positive effect on their understanding of other people's needs.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and of keeping fit regularly. The youngest pupils differentiate confidently between healthy foods and things that are not as healthy for them, and how different foods affect the body. Older pupils understand that regular exercise has a positive effect on their fitness, health and physical wellbeing. A good example of this is pupils' willingness to participate enthusiastically in the lunchtime running club and the rugby club.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe on the internet.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

All staff forge an effective working relationship with pupils, which fosters a supportive and diligent learning environment. This leads to effective co-operation and developing pupils' enthusiasm towards learning. All staff take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' language, which contributes successfully to their oral skills. There is a very strong Welsh ethos, and provision encourages pupils to make full use of the Welsh language in all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils develop as competent and confident bilingual learners. Teachers plan effectively to develop a curriculum that is based on Wales and Welsh heritage. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to work with various artists, including musicians, drama companies and artists. This contributes successfully to pupils' understanding of their local area, history and culture.

The school ensures numerous opportunities for pupils to visit nearby theatres and cinemas, which enriches their learning experiences and development as well-rounded individuals. Staff also organise rich and varied experiences for pupils to visit residential centres and represent the school in sports activities. This contributes successfully towards raising many pupils' self-confidence and preparing them to become confident, independent and mature citizens of the future.

Through effective co-operation and clear guidance, teachers ensure that there are opportunities for all pupils to receive a range of practical, stimulating and rich learning experiences. Cross-curricular themes and interesting and imaginative work programmes extend most pupils' knowledge and understanding and strengthen their engagement in their work very effectively. The principles of the foundation phase have become embedded in full, and purposeful co-operation between teachers and assistants provides good support in order for pupils to complete their tasks and benefit from them successfully. Overall, there is a good balance between experiences that are led by adults and opportunities for pupils to make decisions about their learning. However, at times, adults have a tendency to over-direct activities, and this limits opportunities for pupils to make choices about their learning.

Key stage 2 teachers have responded enthusiastically in adapting the curriculum to meet the purposes of the new curriculum for Wales. They consider individuals' needs and interests through skilful cross-curricular themes, which include the pupils' voice and input successfully. This ensures a range of learning experiences that stimulate pupils to apply themselves fully to their learning.

Most teachers use a variety of effective teaching methods. They link their lessons skilfully with previous learning and explain new concepts clearly. Where teaching is at its best, in a minority of lessons, teachers plan very creatively to stimulate and motivate pupils very effectively. Imaginative presentations and the pace of lessons are a strong feature of teaching. Teachers use open-ended questions very successfully to develop pupils' skills, including those with additional learning needs and more able pupils. As a result, pupils have the confidence to try and to undertake tasks enthusiastically and independently. In the few examples where teaching is less effective, teachers do not always challenge pupils effectively enough in order for them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. There are comprehensive opportunities to develop these skills in other areas across the curriculum. An excellent example of this is the work of Year 6 pupils in arranging a Library Festival. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills in formal lessons. However, overall, teachers do not provide opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT skills regularly across the curriculum.

Teachers provide pupils with effective feedback. They do so in a constructive way that raises pupils' self-confidence successfully and encourages them to persevere and reflect further on how to improve their work. Staff intervene sensitively to support pupils at appropriate times during the lesson, for example to encourage them to check their progress against lesson objectives and success criteria. This helps pupils to concentrate on what is important for them to achieve in tasks in order to succeed.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is an extremely caring and friendly community that promotes the importance of good behaviour very effectively. All members of staff have very high expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour, effort and wellbeing and there is a clear focus on ensuring the best conditions so that all pupils achieve successfully. As a result, pupils have the confidence to try and to develop as confident and independent learners.

The school is innovative in terms of promoting pupils' emotional and social wellbeing, and has established a number of very effective strategies. Excellent examples of this are the session at the start of the day for vulnerable pupils, the nurture provision through the 'Clwb Cwtsh' and the 'Cŵl Wedi Cinio' programme, which focuses on promoting mindfulness across the foundation phase classes. These activities enable pupils to talk about their feelings in small, supportive groups. As a result, they develop confidence in themselves, understand the importance of sharing concerns and engage well with their learning.

Provision to develop pupils' creative and expressive skills, particularly their musical skills, is excellent. The school provides valuable opportunities to develop pupils' imaginative experiences through art and music workshops and inviting authors and composers to promote pupils' understanding of contemporary Welsh art. Staff provide numerous opportunities for pupils to perform at the school, in the local community, take part in concerts, and compete in eisteddfodau, which develops their self-confidence and their pride in themselves. An excellent feature is the opportunity that they are given to work with professional musicians, for example when preparing for the Christmas show, which also develops their ability to work with others.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development very successfully. An exceptional element is the prominent emphasis on promoting the school's shared values, such as honesty, kindness, friendliness and personal perseverance through the school's wellbeing strategy. The caring attention that staff give to considering the pupil's voice and children's rights contributes effectively to opportunities for pupils to shoulder responsibilities and make sensible decisions. This is highlighted in the way in which pupils treat each other. Staff organise rich opportunities for pupils to reflect in collective worship sessions, for example about respecting all individuals. When studying the effect of different religions and cultures around the world, pupils are given a valuable opportunity to develop their understanding of the wider world and gain respect towards people from different cultures and backgrounds.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to shoulder responsibility and become active citizens by taking part in influential groups, such as the school council. This develops pupils' leadership skills effectively and has an influence on decisions about the school's work, such as establishing the 'Ffatri Inc' (Ink Factory) to promote independent writing, and making changes to the school's policy in relation to bullying.

The school has highly effective and thorough procedures to track and monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing. This helps staff to identify any pupils who need additional support or challenge quickly. Staff organise a wide range of varied and rich intervention programmes that engage pupils' interest and aim to meet all pupils' needs. This ensures caring support for individuals and groups of pupils, and enables them to make sound and consistent progress. Individual education plans for pupils with additional learning needs are concise and clear. These plans are reviewed regularly with pupils and their parents, and are adapted purposefully where necessary. The school works closely with various agencies in order to provide valuable support for pupils and their parents.

There is a supportive relationship between parents and the school. Parents are informed regularly about the school's activities and events, in addition to the term's themes and current developments, such as numeracy strategies. They are also given regular opportunities to contribute to a range of school activities, for example when helping with the 'Wild Garden' and leading cookery and craft sessions and coffee mornings as part of the 'Clwb Cwtsh' activities. This ensures parents' valuable involvement in their children's education.

The school has robust procedures to promote healthy eating and drinking. As a result, most pupils have good knowledge of what they need to do to stay healthy. Beneficial opportunities, in addition to a range of purposeful outdoor resources for

physical activity sessions and sports clubs, contribute successfully to pupils' wellbeing.

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

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher provides innovative and robust leadership and sets a clear strategic direction for developing the school. She has very high expectations and is passionate about the community that she serves. She is highly effective in setting a promoting a vision of an inclusive and friendly learning community that focuses on Welshness, nurturing respect and encouraging pupils and staff to do their best. There is an excellent strategic emphasis on developing pupils' wellbeing, for example through supportive activities such as 'Dechrau Da', the 'Clwb Cwtsh' and 'Cŵl Wedi Cinio'. This contributes very effectively towards helping pupils to concentrate of their activities continuously in a supportive and caring environment. As a result, nearly all pupils show eagerness and enthusiasm when undertaking a wide variety of school activities, do their best and achieve well.

The school's management structure is of a very high standard and has been established firmly. The headteacher is particularly effective at identifying staff expertise and strengths and, as a result, allocates responsibilities very successfully and establishes a strong team of leaders at all levels across the school. Members of staff appreciate her trust in them to develop areas of learning, and use their individual qualifications to ensure the greatest effect. This is part of the school's strategy to develop staff and promote co-operation and sharing good practice. There is clear communication between all staff and procedures to ensure that everyone shares responsibility for the school's strategic direction. As a result, the school is a strong learning community in which staff face changes and current developments in education enthusiastically and confidently, and learn from each other very effectively. An excellent example of this is the provision of interesting and pioneering experiences that derive from the school's literary festival.

There are very effective and specific arrangements in place to guide the continuous development of staff and share good practice. A successful example of this is the work of leading and working with nearby schools on specific projects, such as promoting pupils' wellbeing and developing high quality resources to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This contributes effectively towards improving pupils' outcomes, particularly their reading skills.

A culture of improvement permeates the school, and continuous review and planning for improvement are at the heart of the school's ethos. Self-evaluation arrangements are successful and focus clearly on standards and the effect of provision on pupils' outcomes. There are clear, coherent and specific arrangements for reviewing progress and identifying areas for improvement. As a result, leaders and staff know the school very well and are aware of what needs to be done to develop further. Leaders are clear about the priorities that they need to address, and there is a strong focus in the school improvement plan on raising standards and strengthening provision. Actions and the use of resources are effective in ensuring improvement in key areas. An example of this is the effective work that has been achieved in

developing a purposeful, daily programme of language drilling activities that has been introduced from the nursery class to Year 6. Pupils have responded enthusiastically to the programme, and a clear effect can be seen in the progress in standards in Welsh, particularly in terms of pupils' oracy.

The governing body have highly rigorous knowledge of the school's performance and plays a prominent part in evaluating the effect of different activities on pupils' standards and wellbeing. Members visit the school to observe lessons, scrutinise plans, talk to pupils and identify the contribution of specific initiatives to pupils' standards and wellbeing. This is a strength and enables them to hold the school to account and implement clear guidance and strategies to develop the school further. Their detailed observations and willingness to challenge the school in order to ensure improvement are a very strong feature.

Leaders use resources efficiently to broaden and enrich teaching and learning experiences, and this contributes well towards raising pupils' standards and wellbeing. Expenditure is linked appropriately to priorities for improvement and also ensures that there is a good balance of supportive activities for all pupils. The pupil development grant is used effectively to support emotional and social wellbeing activities, in addition to delivering a variety of intervention strategies to support linguistic and mathematical development.

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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