



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 Pen-y-Groes

**Bryn Celyn
Pentwyn
Cardiff
CF23 7EH**

Date of inspection: May 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pen-y-Groes

Name of provider	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pen-y-Groes
Local authority	Cardiff
Language of the provider	Welsh-medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	112
Pupils of statutory school age	78
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	16
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 21.3%)</i>	24.2%
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 20.6%)</i>	33.3%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.282
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	September 2014
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	20/02/2014
Start date of inspection	16/05/2022
Additional information	

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.

Overview

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pen-y-Groes is a successful learning community that celebrates pupils' Welshness, diversity and achievement particularly well. The headteacher provides clear and wise leadership and respects the efforts of everyone who contributes to the pupils' complete education. All staff are committed to ensuring high quality care and well-being for pupils across the school in a homely and supportive environment. This has a strong influence on pupils' attitudes towards each other and other people both within and outside the school. Strong practices in terms of caring for pupils' well-being also have a very positive effect on their self-confidence and attitude to life in general.

The school's ethos is based firmly on a shared vision of well-being, high aspirations and good relationships. As a result, most pupils show very positive attitudes towards their learning and take pride in their Welshness and their school. Pupils' use of the Welsh language is a strong feature and they use the language completely naturally both inside and outside of the classroom. Teachers co-operate successfully with nearby schools to plan a range of inspiring and varied learning and play experiences for pupils. As a result, the developing rich curriculum sparks pupils' imagination and encourages them to research their community, their city and the wider world.

Provision to support the learning skills of pupils with additional learning needs is appropriate, although the school does not always provide support and interventions effectively enough to meet all pupils' needs.

Most pupils develop knowledge, understanding and skills that are appropriate for their age and starting points successfully. For example, most pupils develop their oral skills effectively, contribute purposefully to class discussions and express their views clearly and maturely. However, the writing skills of a minority of older pupils have not developed in full, particularly their extended writing skills.

Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' writing skills

R2 Strengthen additional learning needs provision to meet all pupils' needs in full

What happens next

The school will draw up 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 fostering pupils' awareness of their community and its history to celebrate diversity and develop their skills and attitude to learning, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, a majority of pupils' basic skills correspond to what is expected for their age, except in Welsh where many are newcomers to the language. During their time at the school, most pupils successfully develop knowledge, understanding and skills that are appropriate for their ages and starting points. As a result, many show strong progress from one stage to the next and during the school year. Many pupils succeed in recalling previous learning, acquiring information and applying understanding to new situations effectively. Overall, many pupils with additional learning needs make appropriate progress against their targets.

Pupils' use of the Welsh language is a strong feature. Most pupils listen exceptionally well to adults and each other and respect the contributions of others. The youngest pupils' oral skills develop successfully soon after they start at the school. By Year 1 and 2, many talk confidently and enthusiastically about their work and experiences, for example when talking to each other about a pirate character.

Most of the school's older pupils develop their oral skills skilfully, contribute purposefully to class discussions and express their views clearly and maturely. Most pupils take pride in the Welsh language and use it naturally when talking to each other both inside and outside the classrooms. Despite the challenges they have faced during the pandemic, most pupils' spoken language skills are continuing to develop consistently well and reach high standards.

Many pupils' reading skills are developing well. The youngest pupils use an appropriate range of strategies to read familiar and unfamiliar words, which include stimulating digital programs. By Year 2, they use their reading skills confidently, for example when reading information to discover facts about the city of Cardiff. Many of the older pupils read intelligently in various contexts. More able pupils vary their tone of voice and use punctuation correctly to create a sense of atmosphere for the audience.

Many pupils' early writing skills are developing well. Pupils in the nursery class practise patterns and shapes successfully by using different implements and tools. By Year 2, they write in an appropriate range of contexts for different audiences, which includes composing acrostic poems and writing instructions. Many of the school's older pupils build firmly on their writing skills. By Year 4, many pupils develop an understanding of grammar, which includes the correct use of verbs and mutations. A majority of pupils develop their extended writing skills, which includes creating a portrayal and writing the diary of a castle servant. A majority of the school's older pupils build on these experiences by writing the diary of a person from abroad arriving at Tiger Bay and writing a monologue. However, the writing skills of a minority of older pupils have not been developed in full, particularly their ability to write in extended form correctly.

Across the school, most pupils' numeracy skills are developing well. They respond successfully to daily quick-fire sessions by practising their mental arithmetic skills and understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, most pupils in Year 1 count

backwards and forwards up to a hundred and double and half numbers successfully. The school's youngest pupils use their skills effectively to solve problems in practical and interactive contexts. For example, pupils in the reception class use their knowledge of ordinal numbers, count in 2s, 5s and 10s and add one-digit numbers when responding to the teacher's questions. In Year 4, many pupils build on previous learning and succeed in discovering the perimeter of shapes, reading scales and simplifying fractions. Most pupils across the school apply their numeracy skills successfully across the curriculum, for example as the oldest pupils discover the mean, median, mode and range of the weight of coal for families during the industrial revolution.

Many pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing well. By Year 2, they combine their skills successfully, for example to create an e-book that includes sound and video to promote the importance of keeping healthy. Most of the school's older pupils' skills build firmly on this foundation. Using digital programs is a natural part of pupils' learning. Most pupils use a range of programs regularly to support learning in language and mathematics lessons. For example, when creating a digital presentation about one of the countries that is linked to the theme 'From the docks to the Bay'. Keeping and sharing work electronically has become an essential part of their lives and most pupils collate information on different systems confidently. Nearly all pupils present their work and consider the response from teachers electronically before improving and refining their work further.

Nearly all pupils benefit from valuable opportunities to develop their creative skills across the school. The youngest pupils create artwork in an African style confidently after studying a story from Botswana, and Year 3 and 4 pupils demonstrate strong creative skills when creating abstract pictures by using 2D shapes. Pupils have also taken advantage of beneficial opportunities to improve their understanding and skills by working with a famous artist from the city to create their own art pieces about features of the local area.

Most pupils' physical skills are developing effectively as a result of a variety of experiences and activities. The school's youngest pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to physical activities in the outdoor area and when taking part in physical exercise sessions. Nursery pupils show firm control when jumping over objects on the obstacle courses and as they do yoga poses in the outdoor area. The school's older pupils develop their physical skills successfully by taking part in a range of sports activities or as part of their theme, for example when dancing during a variety of lessons and sessions with students from the nearby college.

Considering the pandemic's effect on learning, specific groups of pupils are making good progress against their targets. Nearly all develop their social skills, including their ability to get along brilliantly with other pupils, staff and visitors to the school.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

The school has established a highly caring, inclusive and homely environment, which ensures that pupils feel that they receive good care and enjoy their time there. This has a strong influence on pupils' attitudes towards each other and other people and show a high level of respect. Nearly all pupils take pride in their school and their community and enjoy learning about the local area, for example when studying and

discovering more about the local area's history. They show high levels of well-being across the school and feel safe within a supportive learning community. Pupils benefit greatly from caring and encouraging working relationships with staff and most are comfortable approaching peers and adults for advice and support, where necessary. By receiving numerous opportunities to discuss their feelings and emotions and by checking on their well-being every day, the pupils gain self-confidence and a positive attitude towards life.

As a result of a wide variety of valuable opportunities that are available, most pupils develop as healthy and confident individuals. They have sound knowledge of the importance of eating healthily to support them to make wise choices. Most respond positively to opportunities to undertake a range of physical activities as part of the curriculum and break time and lunchtime activities. They also understand the importance of using the internet safely, for example by creating video clips to share important messages with their peers.

Nearly all pupils are extremely polite with other and treat staff and visitors with respect consistently. They behave exceptionally well and speak with peers and adults in a friendly manner when talking about their work and their school. Most are comfortable discussing in groups and amongst themselves and respect and value the contribution of others.

Pupils who are part of the school council undertake their leadership roles and responsibilities effectively and play a full part in making decisions about the school. A good example is the day that they organised to raise money for people in Ukraine through a range of fun activities, including wearing blue and yellow, planting sunflower seeds and various activities in the classroom.

Most pupils show an exceptionally positive attitude towards their learning. They are hard-working and enthusiastic learners who work very well together in the classroom and show a keen interest in their work. They are very dedicated to learning and play activities and concentrate for extended periods to complete them. Pupils across the school also show strong independent skills when developing and practising their skills successfully. A good example of this is Year 3 and 4 pupils working together effectively in small groups to write and prepare a script for a digital news bulletin about the history of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. Most pupils follow teachers' guidance successfully to challenge themselves. They are keen to undertake new challenges and show resilience when doing so by using a range of techniques to persevere when things are difficult. For example, they try to solve problems on their own by using their skills or what they already know before asking a friend, a teacher or another adult.

Most pupils respond well to effective questioning and oral feedback from teachers during lessons. As a result, they know how to improve their work and this helps them to make good progress consistently.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not be reporting on pupil attendance rates during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years. However, inspectors will consider the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of inspection area 4 (care, support and guidance).

Teaching and learning experiences

The school's curriculum is based firmly on teaching basic skills, which enables pupils to apply them in themes that broaden and celebrate their knowledge of their local area, their heritage and the wider world. The curriculum aligns with the vision of 'Well-being, high expectations and relationships' and supports pupils to make progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding in a healthy and ambitious manner.

Leaders and teachers co-operate effectively with nearby schools to plan an exciting curriculum that is relevant to all of the school's pupils. This work includes researching aspects of curriculum design by considering the best steps for the future for the whole school community. The curriculum reflects the local nature and context, which includes planning learning activities that reflect the cultural, linguistic and diverse nature of Wales and the wider world. A good example of this is the school project about the local area, "My people, my Pentwyn", which celebrates diversity through artwork by a famous artist from Cardiff and interviewing characters who live there.

The school provides learning experiences with breadth and depth to develop pupils' wider interests and skills. For example, the theme 'From the docks to the Bay' provides valuable opportunities for older pupils to become detectives to discover the history of people who moved to Tiger Bay over a period of fifty years. Teachers and assistants create an inclusive learning environment that enables pupils to try, to persevere and to overcome challenges. The school's staff work together enthusiastically and passionately to immerse pupils in the Welsh language from their very first time at the school. They model language accurately, show enthusiasm towards the Welsh language and set high expectations. As a result, pupils show pride in their ability to speak Welsh.

In the school's youngest classes, staff provide rich opportunities for pupils to develop their skills successfully. They have a sound understanding of pupils' needs and provide a very good range of learning and play experiences that stimulate them to do their best. They plan purposefully for the outdoor area to develop pupils' skills and support them to move to the next step of their development. Across the school, teachers set clear and purposeful learning objectives for lessons and learning experiences that build successfully on previous learning. Teachers explain tasks clearly and support the develop of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding skilfully. Teachers and assistants manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. They use praise and oral feedback purposefully to celebrate successes and guide them to the next steps in their learning and development.

Teachers assess the progress and development of individuals and specific groups thoroughly. There are good opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and give comments on the work of their peers. For example, Year 1 pupils evaluate the work of their peers on the large interactive screen at the end of the session to share ideas on how to improve their descriptions of pirates. Teachers' use of written feedback to identify pupils' strengths and areas for improvement is developing. For example, pupils are not always given purposeful opportunities to improve the quality of their work following written feedback from teachers.

Care, support and guidance

All staff are committed to ensuring high quality care and well-being for pupils across the school. They work together successfully to create a happy and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and Welshness very effectively. The school supports pupils' emotional, health and social needs exceptionally well so that they are able to engage positively with the school and benefit from the variety of opportunities it provides. There is a strong emphasis on inclusivity and developing pupils' understanding of their human rights. The school curriculum also supports pupils' health and well-being successfully through a range of activities and events that promote values such as respect, empathy and compassion effectively.

Pupils have a good understanding of the school's values and they have a positive influence on their attitudes and behaviours. The school fosters shared values that help pupils to understand the needs and rights of others locally and as members of a diverse world. Acts of collective worship are purposeful and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. A good example of this is sharing the Urdd's Peace and Goodwill Message by discussing and explaining the importance of taking care of our world. There are purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about the religions of the world, which includes studying a mosque and the Five Pillars of Islam, in addition to visiting other places of worship across the city. They also take advantage of opportunities to invite visitors, including parents and carers, to talk to pupils about their life, their religion and their heritage.

There are regular and effective opportunities for all pupils to develop physical skills during purposeful sessions in the areas outside the classroom. As a result, provision helps pupils to understand the effect of lifestyle choices and behaviour on their mental and physical health and well-being now and in the future. All of the school's staff support the development of all the social and emotional skills of all pupils very effectively.

The school has robust procedures to identify pupils' needs successfully. Staff co-operate effectively with a number of specialist agencies, such as the local authority's well-being centre, which is based on the school grounds. This ensures that the school's staff receive purposeful training and advice to meet pupils' well-being and emotional needs. This has a very positive effect on their personal and social development and their attitudes to school life. The school has also continued to work with external agencies throughout the pandemic to maintain and support pupils' well-being and safety successfully. The school is beginning to prepare suitably for the Additional Learning Needs Act by writing individual education plans and individual development plans. Staff plan purposeful provision to support pupils in the classrooms. However, there is very little use of purposeful interventions and support to meet the specific learning needs of a few pupils.

Leaders and teachers communicate effectively with parents and carers by using a good range of social media, in addition to their willingness to discuss directly with parents, where necessary. This ensures that they respond promptly to any concerns. The school has also continued to support and communicate effectively with parents and carers throughout the pandemic.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding and all staff undertake purposeful training and regular staff discussions. Leaders work successfully with the nearby school that shares the site to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, leaders and all staff work together highly effectively to create a Welsh, caring and inspirational ethos and environment for pupils. The headteacher's strong and wise leadership ensures a clear and purposeful strategic direction that ignites the enthusiasm of all staff to do their best for the school and its community. The school's shared vision is based firmly on developing well-being, high aspirations and maintaining good working relationships. As a result, most pupils show very strong attitudes to learning and take pride in their Welshness and their school.

All members of staff understand their responsibilities well and take part in valuable opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge successfully. Staff's performance management arrangements are sound and make a very valuable contribution to their development. There is a good range of valuable experiences for individuals to develop professionally and lead on specific aspects of work within the school and further afield. A good example of this is the co-operation within the family of local schools to plan and prepare for the Curriculum for Wales. This enables teachers and leaders to improve their understanding of the principles and content of the curriculum, in addition to developing their own leadership skills.

The school's self-evaluation and quality assurance arrangements are effective. Although the pandemic has reduced the range of monitoring activities, leaders and teachers have continued to scrutinise pupils' books and seek parents' views this year. This has enabled leaders to identify strengths and aspects for improvement accurately. This has ensured that they have planned purposefully to improve elements of provision, such as developing pupils' spelling skills. Information from monitoring arrangements is used successfully to set clear priorities for improvement. They focus firmly on raising standards of well-being and progress in pupils' skills and are preparing excellently for the arrival of the Curriculum for Wales.

Members of the governing body support leaders and staff well. They have a sound awareness of the school's strengths and its priorities for improvement. Although their monitoring visits have been limited due to the pandemic, members of the governing body have continued to meet virtually regularly to fulfil their statutory duties and discuss the school's work. They also receive useful information and presentations from the headteacher and other leaders about the school's work. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily.

Leaders ensure that there is a very good supply of resources that support learning effectively. They work successfully with leaders of another school on the same site to make the best use of the building and the resources that are available. For example, they make purposeful use of the halls for activities such as sports, whole-school assemblies and before and after-school clubs. Leaders manage funding effectively and make purposeful use of a range of additional grants, for example by employing a teaching assistant to support specific groups of pupils following the lockdowns during

the pandemic. This makes a valuable contribution to developing pupils' skills and well-being.

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

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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