



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

A report on

**Ysgol Rhydypennau
Bow Street
Ceredigion
SY24 5AD**

Date of inspection: October 2017

by

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

About Ysgol Rhydypennau

Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau is situated in the village of Bow Street, which is a few miles north of the town of Aberystwyth in Ceredigion. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 175 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 16 part-time nursery age children.

A little over 7% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is significantly lower than the national average of 19%. Forty-six per cent (46%) of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes, and very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. A very few pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school has identified 25% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, but very few have a statement of special educational needs. The percentage of pupils with additional learning needs is slightly higher than the national average of 21%.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2016 and the school was last inspected in June 2011.

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

Summary

The headteacher's vision for developing the school is clear and has a positive effect on the quality of provision and on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

During their time at the school, most pupils make good progress in their communication, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. As a result of the effective method used by the foundation phase teachers to feed language to them, pupils acquire good Welsh communication skills at an early stage. Pupils feel safe at school. They treat each other with care and have a sound awareness of fairness.

The school provides a wide and rich range of learning experiences to develop pupils' skills effectively. Teaching and assessment are robustly good, particularly in the foundation phase classes. Procedures for tracking progress and monitoring pupils' wellbeing are successful. Staff respond well to individuals' needs and provide them and their parents with effective care and guidance.

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 Develop the leadership skills of managers at all levels to enable them to ensure standards and provision of a high standard
- R2 Ensure that all pupils achieve to the best of their ability
- R3 Ensure consistency in the best features of teaching and assessment across key stage 2

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, a minority of pupils possess the Welsh communication skills that correspond to the standard that is expected for their age. During their time there, most make good progress and soon acquire good Welsh communication skills. Vulnerable pupils make good progress, overall, and those with additional learning needs make sound progress against their personal targets.

Nearly all pupils make good progress in their oral and listening skills. From an early age, they listen attentively to adults and each other in learning sessions, and speak confidently about their work. Many explain what they are doing eloquently; for example, pupils in the reception class explain clearly the role of the vet in the class's veterinary surgery. Most pupils' oral English skills in key stage 2 are sound and mature.

Most pupils develop good reading skills. In the foundation phase, they read an appropriate range of different texts in Welsh with increasing accuracy. They build unfamiliar words by using an effective range of phonic strategies. They discuss the content of their books enthusiastically, identify their favourite characters and provide sensible reasons for what they like. Most pupils in key stage 2 read maturely in both languages and enjoy both fictional and factual books. They practice their higher order reading skills regularly and independently to find information from different sources.

Many pupils across the school write to a high standard and for different purposes in a wide range of contexts, and present their work neatly. In the foundation phase, most write interesting pieces with increasing accuracy in Welsh. Good examples include a portrayal of a person, or a banana's journey to Wales. When transferring to key stage 2, nearly all pupils develop neat handwriting and many write at length and maturely in both languages for a wide range of purposes. For example, they finish the second half of a story of their choice in a language lesson, or provide an explanation of how a plant makes its own food in science. However, a minority of higher ability pupils do not write as well as they could.

Most pupils across the school make good progress in numeracy. They solve number problems with increasing confidence and recall facts quickly. They apply their previous knowledge fairly confidently in new situations across the curriculum. A good example of this includes the way in which pupils at the top of the foundation phase discuss the features of a graph and scale correctly to convey information about animals in Botswana. A majority in key stage 2 have a sound understanding of place value, and they are able to use data with increasing accuracy and present it in various forms. A majority of older pupils understand the need to use different graphs to convey information in various subjects across the curriculum, such as a line graph in science to show how the mass of a candle reduces as it burns. However, a minority of pupils in key stage 2 do not complete sufficiently challenging mathematical tasks confidently enough.

Most pupils in the foundation phase use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment confidently. Many at the top of the phase use 'QR' codes successfully and create a database to record their work on an electronic tablet, such as the rate of rainfall in Botswana. Most pupils in key stage 2 show good ICT skills and select the most effective computerised method to present their work. They apply their skills with increasing confidence in a variety of contexts and subjects, which reinforces their skills in those areas. For example, they use databases extensively to gather information and create presentations to display their understanding of the Tudors. Many make effective use of safe learning websites to complete their work in the classroom and at home.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and know what to do if something is worrying them. They are very caring towards each other and contribute fully when trying to ensure that their peers are happy and that their views and ideas are valued. Nearly all pupils are well-behaved. Most are extremely polite and confident, and they respond positively when meeting adults. They speak maturely and express their opinions clearly and proficiently.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and take part in physical exercise activities regularly. They understand the dangers that can arise in their day-to-day lives and know what steps to take, should the need arise. Nearly all pupils, in line with their age, understand the importance of being safe online and outline the dangers that can arise as a result of unsuitable use of the internet. The digital wizards play a key role in enriching this.

Most pupils have a sound awareness of fairness and the importance of equal opportunities. They are tolerant and sensitive to the needs and aspirations of other pupils who are similar to or different from themselves. Most are knowledgeable about the characteristics of countries that are developing economically. They have a sound understanding of the importance of sustainability, and they are able to explain the significance of the fair trade scheme confidently.

Most pupils work maturely individually, in pairs and in groups. They discuss their work confidently and contribute to the next step in their work when they are given an opportunity to do so. Nearly all pupils are ready to learn at the beginning of lessons. They listen attentively to presentations and switch from one activity to the next easily; for example, pupils in the reception class move from an activity on an interactive screen to the role-play area spontaneously. Many develop as ambitious, confident and independent learners. However, in a few classes in key stage 2, a lack of challenge means that they do not always achieve to the best of their ability.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of their leadership roles within the school; for example, they are conscientious and take their responsibilities seriously as members of the school council, eco committee, playground buddies and digital wizards. They value opportunities to shoulder additional responsibilities by taking part in an annual election. They discuss their leadership roles confidently and give sensible reasons for making decisions that affect others within the school community; for example, members of the eco committee designed the adventure area, and they have continuous responsibility for developing the garden. They also monitor traffic

outside the school in response to the concerns of their peers. However, their role in monitoring aspects of learning and teaching is limited.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching is good. The best features of teaching, which are evident in all classes in the foundation phase and a majority of classes in key stage 2, are based on teachers' high expectations. In these classes, teachers use a variety of teaching methods to engage pupils' interest and to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts. Nearly all adults model polished language successfully and take advantage of valuable opportunities to feed vocabulary and improve pupils' oral skills regularly. Many use various questioning techniques to extend and develop pupils' responses further and to discover what they understand. This is particularly effective at the end of the foundation phase, where the teacher's high level questioning ensures that pupils evaluate their own work effectively and confirm that they understand the work. There is an effective working relationship between teachers, support staff and pupils in all classes. This encourages respect, courtesy and trust.

All teachers plan effectively to deliver the statutory requirements of the curriculum and the principles of the foundation phase, and to develop pupils' communication, numeracy and ICT skills through interesting themes. These themes reflect the school's nature and local context successfully. They promote the Welsh language and Welshness effectively in all aspects of their work; for example, they organise visits to the National Library and a local beach, and encourage pupils to study the work of local authors or artists. These plans incorporate the requirements of the literacy and numeracy framework skilfully. Most teachers plan creatively and provide broad and rich learning experiences and activities. As a result, nearly all pupils apply themselves actively to their tasks and enjoy learning. Teachers and assistants plan effectively for pupils with additional learning needs. As a result, nearly all make good progress against their targets.

Staff encourage pupils to use the rich range of outdoor resources to enrich their learning and develop their physical skills. This includes playing on adventure equipment and working productively in the flower or vegetable garden. Staff extend pupils' creativity successfully. Pupils in the foundation phase, for example, make colourful pictures on silver foil and role-play imaginatively in the Wendy house and the gossip cave. A good example at the top of the school includes writing scripts based on the story of the Iron Man to perform for their peers.

Teachers' assessments are valid, accurate and reliable. They are usually a useful support in informing the next steps for pupils, although they do not always lead to tasks that are challenging enough for higher ability pupils. Teachers' oral feedback helps pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve. However, the effect of teachers' written feedback in key stage 2 is inconsistent.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes the importance of good behaviour, courtesy, respect and commitment very successfully. As a result, pupils behave consistently well, treat

each other and visitors with courtesy and respect, and apply themselves conscientiously to their activities. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe at school and take pride in their community and the various opportunities that they are given.

The school has successful procedures for tracking progress and monitoring pupils' wellbeing, and leaders refine these frequently in order to make them more efficient and accessible. Most teachers use the information that derives from this effectively to plan the next steps for pupils and to provide appropriate interventions for those who need additional support. Pupils have specific and individual targets. They produce them in discussion with teachers in order to ensure that they are ambitious enough and achievable. All pupils with additional learning needs have a comprehensive individual education plan, which is produced in consultation with parents. Class teachers give careful consideration to these plans when planning lessons. Staff monitor the progress of pupils who receive interventions conscientiously and adapt or remove support, where appropriate. This provision is one of the school's strengths.

In order to enrich provision, the school has strong and useful partnerships with parents, the community, other schools and external agencies, such as the language therapist and educational psychologist, among others. The relationship between the school and parents is robust. The school operates an open-door policy and communicates with them effectively to ensure that they are aware of events and the like. Staff organise regular activities to raise parents' awareness of different ways in which they can support their children at home, such as conducting training on language programmes. The parents' association raises significant amounts of money each year to help the school to purchase resources, such as technological equipment and resources for the outdoor area.

The school has robust procedures for promoting eating and drinking healthily. A range of opportunities are organised to develop pupils' fitness, such as hockey, cycling and cricket clubs. As a result, most pupils understand the effect of their choices on their health. Visits from individuals, such as the community police officer, teach pupils about the dangers of substance misuse and smoking, in addition to the dangers of using the internet. As a result, nearly all pupils talk confidently about the importance of taking care of their bodies and staying safe online.

Morning assemblies and visits from religious leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development effectively, and frequent opportunities for them to visit the local community enriches this further. This is evident in the way in which pupils speak enthusiastically about opportunities that they are given to compete in local art competitions and to perform in Christmas concerts and the harvest service. The school has effective procedures to foster pupils' cultural skills by teaching them about Welsh culture and comparing it with the culture of people in countries such as Lesotho and Botswana.

Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to contribute towards the school's life and work. This enriches their experiences and prepares them well to take responsibility for their decisions and to consider the views of others when taking action.

Leadership and management: Good

Since being appointed, the headteacher has refined the school's existing management procedures to reflect the current requirements. He has a clear vision for developing the school. The school's strategic objectives are robust and ambitious, and they have a clear and specific focus on improving provision and pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The current self-evaluation procedures are rigorous and based on reliable first-hand evidence that derives from activities on the classroom floor and the school's continuous practices. These consistent procedures contribute to appropriate priorities to improve provision and challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. The headteacher monitors improvements carefully and responds in detail to the priorities in the previous development plan regularly. This ensures that there is a consistent focus on improvements over time. In order for the procedure to become embedded, the headteacher has distributed new responsibilities to staff and senior managers. This enables them to better identify the areas for development and plan support to improve them more effectively. However, the leadership skills of managers at all levels have not yet been developed in full, and the effect of procedures on aspects of teaching, pupils' standards and staff accountability has not yet had time to become evident.

The headteacher has purposeful procedures that are based on the improvement plan's targets to support and challenge staff. Benchmarks and a sensible timeline are identified to monitor and measure the success of these activities. As a result, teachers respond to their specific responsibilities and contribute purposefully towards improving pupils' standards and skills. This can be seen in the prudent use of assessment results to measure the success of interventions and improve provision.

The school's plans for staff development link directly to the current performance management procedures. They enrich the professional development of all staff successfully. This is beginning to have a positive effect on individuals' skills and expertise; for example, individuals have been given an opportunity to work with staff from other schools on specific schemes, such as ICT practices and a network to develop the principles of the foundation phase. By receiving training and becoming familiar with their new responsibilities, staff are beginning to share good practice effectively across the school. This is already beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' ICT skills.

Members of the governing body have a sound knowledge of the school's work and performance. They receive practical input from the headteacher about monitoring, self-evaluation and strategic planning procedures. By working effectively with senior managers, scrutinising books and conducting learning walks around the school, they now have a rigorous understanding of the standards of learning and teaching, and any inconsistencies within specific departments. This enables them to hold leaders to account and set a clear strategic direction to develop the school as an effective learning community. Governors ensure that the school is staffed appropriately, including support staff, who are an integral part of the team and contribute successfully to raising pupils' standards and ensuring their wellbeing and social skills.

Leaders make purposeful use of staff, the school building and grounds, and ensure that the budget and specific grants to develop provision, improve standards and enrich the curriculum are spent efficiently. An effective example of this is the purposeful use of reserves to employ additional staff in order to reduce class sizes and target pupils' additional learning needs. Sensible use is made of the pupil development grant to improve provision and raise the standards of the very few pupils who are eligible to receive it. As a result, all of the school's expenditure links purposefully to the priorities in the school improvement 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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).

© Crown Copyright 2017: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 04/12/2017