



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

A report on

**Ysgol Rhostyllen
School Street
Rhostyllen
LL14 4AN**

Date of inspection: January 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Rhostyllen

Ysgol Rostyllen is in a village on the southern outskirts of Wrexham. The majority of pupils come from the village and its surrounding area.

There are 214 pupils on roll, including 30 children who attend the nursery part-time. There are eight single-year classes. The rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is approximately 13%, which is below the national average (19%). The school has identified about 20% of pupils as having additional learning needs.

Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity and a very few pupils have English as an additional language. No pupils come from homes where Welsh is the first language very few are in the care of the local authority.

The headteacher was appointed in January 2009. The school was last inspected in April 2013.

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

In Ysgol Rhostyllen, nearly all pupils are polite and happy, and they enjoy coming to school. The school provides interesting topics and stimulating teaching to motivate and enthuse pupils. Pupils respond well and make good progress from their starting points on entry to the school.

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make good progress in their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. All staff care for the pupils well and develop positive working relationships with them. This helps many pupils to flourish, improve their self-esteem and gain confidence.

The quality of teaching across the school is good. Staff provide a broad, balanced and rich curriculum that meets the needs of most pupils. The school has purposeful arrangements that support pupils' emotional and social needs very well. The partnership between school and parents is very good.

The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision for school improvement and share this effectively with all staff. There is a strong sense of teamwork. All staff and the governing body work well together to ensure a good quality of education for pupils.

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 Improve standards of oracy in Welsh across key stage 2
- R2 Improve attendance
- R3 Provide more opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to contribute to what and how they learn
- R4 Ensure that learning activities provide a greater level of challenge for more able learners

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils begin school with skills and understanding that are at the level expected for their age. Nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well by the end of key stage 2.

In all year groups, most pupils participate enthusiastically in their learning and listen attentively to staff and each other. They express their ideas clearly and discuss their work confidently with visitors. In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in reading. Many older phase pupils read with fluency and expression. They apply their skills successfully across the curriculum, for example when researching information about characters from a storybook. In key stage 2, most pupils read at the level expected for their age. They discuss appropriate texts by different authors and predict sensibly what might happen next. Many extract relevant information successfully from texts to support their learning, for example when researching information about different countries in Africa and about the Second World War.

Most foundation phase pupils write stories and accounts effectively, for example when producing work on the Romans in their own words. They use their imagination well, for instance to create questions and stories about dragons linked to their topic on fire. Many write confidently for a range of purposes in indoor and outdoor activities. In key stage 2, pupils' writing skills develop well across a wide range of genres and their writing engages the reader effectively. For example, when studying the Tudors, pupils in Year 4 write persuasive letters to the executioner pleading for their lives. Most pupils use basic punctuation well to organise their writing and many older pupils draft and refine their work successfully to improve its quality. Across the school, pupils use the writing skills they acquire in English to good effect across the curriculum.

Most pupils' numeracy skills are developing effectively across the school. In the foundation phase, many pupils make good progress in their mathematical development across areas of learning. Many pupils handle money correctly and are confident when using number squares. Many apply their skills successfully when solving problems, for example about the heights of Year 2 pupils in the class. They enjoy the problem-solving activities that they work through in different areas inside and outside the classroom. though more able pupils do not always achieve as much as they could. In key stage 2, many pupils use various number strategies successfully in order to calculate problems. Most apply their measure and data-handling skills effectively. In general, most older pupils in key stage 2 transfer their numeracy skills well to other curriculum areas, particularly in their science lessons, for example when investigating whether a person's height affects their lung capacity. A few older, more able pupils tackle complex problems and investigations independently and successfully, for example when analysing parts and wholes of large numbers.

Throughout the school, pupils' Welsh skills are satisfactory. In the foundation phase, most pupils understand and can use a few simple phrases and Welsh words. For example, they respond appropriately when asked their names, can name colours and count to 10. However, many pupils make limited progress as they move through key stage 2. They understand a range of questions, for example about the weather or about themselves, but their vocabulary is not rich enough to extend their answers appropriately.

Most pupils' ICT skills are developing well across the school and nearly all pupils key stage 2 understand the importance of e-safety. In the foundation phase, most pupils use a tablet computer to take digital photographs and to access stories in the reading corner. Pupils in key stage 2 use their skills effectively for research and understand how to locate relevant websites that are safe for them to use. Older pupils use technology successfully. For example, they use Hwb comfortably and understand how to access the different applications that will aid their learning. They record interesting facts about different countries in Africa using QR codes that take visitors to purpose-presentations and video clips. However, pupils' understanding and use of spreadsheets are underdeveloped.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school and they know whom to go to if they have a problem. They enjoy physical activity and are aware of the need to keep physically fit through exercise and healthy eating. Nearly all pupils enjoy eating fruit every day from the 'Snack Station' run by Year 5 pupils during playtimes. Many pupils participate enthusiastically in a range of extra-curricular activities, such as choir, code club, mathematics, football, homework and e-cadets. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to healthy living and eating.

Most pupils enjoy their learning and are enthusiastic and well motivated in lessons. For example, pupils enjoy taking part in whole-school and class assemblies where they benefit from many visitors to school who address topics such as bullying and internet safety. Most pupils demonstrate high levels of resilience. This enables them to do as well as they can in all activities within the school. Many pupils are able to show independence dealing with problems, challenges and minor disputes with other pupils as they progress through the school. Pupils show mutual respect to each other and the behaviour of nearly all pupils is good and occasionally very good.

In classrooms, most pupils focus well on tasks and engage purposefully in learning activities. Most concentrate appropriately on their learning and avoid distractions. They stay on task for appropriate lengths of time, and generally try to finish their work. Most pupils work effectively in pairs and in groups, sharing ideas readily. They support each other when they present work and discuss their feelings. For example, Year 2 pupils respond positively when a group performs a poem, give their peers positive feedback and suggest areas for improvement. Reception pupils show sensitivity when a fellow pupil explains what has been worrying her.

Most pupils reflect well on their learning. They are keen to improve their work and know their individual targets for improvement. Older pupils understand the value of revisiting previous topics in order to refresh their understanding. They are aware of their personal learning strategies and understand the importance of developing relevant knowledge and skills before applying them in real-life situations.

Rates of pupil attendance for the last four years are slightly lower when compared to those of similar schools and have placed the school in the bottom 25% for the last two years. Most pupils have a good awareness of the importance of attending school regularly.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Most teachers provide relevant, interesting activities that capture pupils' imagination and enable them to apply their knowledge and skills successfully in real-life situations. There are particular strengths in this approach towards the end of key stage 2. In Year 6, for example, pupils plan and write a speech for the position of house captain using persuasive techniques. Many produce work of high quality as a result of this opportunity to use their skills for a real purpose.

Throughout the school, working relationships between pupils and staff are strong and there is a positive climate for learning in most classes. Most lessons proceed smoothly and at a pace that supports pupils' learning well. Teachers build well on pupils' previous learning. Most teachers observe pupils' learning perceptively and, as a result, question them and check their understanding purposefully throughout the lesson. They select pupils who are working particularly well to share work in progress, which provides good examples to other pupils of the standard they expect all pupils to achieve.

Generally, teachers provide an effective balance between support and challenge in pupils' activities and give them helpful feedback about their work. Most pupils respond positively to teachers' written and oral feedback and say that it helps them to improve. However, a few younger pupils cannot always understand the comments that teachers write on their work. Most teachers give pupils worthwhile, effective opportunities to evaluate their own and other pupils' work.

Planning formats ensure that literacy, numeracy and ICT are at the centre of the school's provision. Whole-school plans are effective and cover all areas of the curriculum and areas of learning appropriately. The school implements the literacy and numeracy framework effectively and is making good progress in developing its provision to meet the digital competence framework. Most teachers reflect the principles of the foundation phase well in the lower part of the school.

Teachers deliver the curriculum through topic based activities, which engage pupils well. Topics, such as those on pirates in the reception class and on 'Mighty Mountains' in Year 4, stimulate the pupils particularly effectively. The school adapts the curriculum well to meet the needs of pupils with additional learning needs. The provision supports identified pupils and ensures their inclusion in the curriculum.

Teachers' planning meets the needs and abilities of most pupils, but there is insufficient challenge for the more able and too few opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners. Visits to the locality and visitors to the school extend pupils' experiences. For example, the local police officer works regularly with pupils to raise their awareness of safety issues. Most teachers use the Welsh language during registration and when giving basic commands. However, opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh language skills outside of Welsh lessons are limited. Staff provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and culture of Wales, for example through visits to the International Musical Eisteddfod in Llangollen.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has highly effective arrangements to support pupils' wellbeing. It is a caring community that nurtures pupils' personal and social skills effectively. Teachers and support staff know their pupils and their individual needs well. Leaders have reviewed and implemented a wide range of strategies for promoting attendance, but improvement is not evident.

Through topic work, visits to local heritage sites and daily collective worship, regularly taken by the local vicar, the school provides purposeful opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. Pupils prepare and deliver class-based collective worship sessions attended by parents and use the opportunities to reflect purposefully on spiritual and moral issues. Whole-school collective worship sessions provide opportunities to appreciate and celebrate the differences between themselves and their peers. The highly successful school choir performs regularly in the community visiting local care homes and churches.

The school community manages pupils' behaviour effectively. The use of incentive systems and social media works well and keeps parents well informed of their child's progress. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school has thorough arrangements to support pupils' healthy eating and drinking. It provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of fitness-related activities. The school runs a number of well-attended after school clubs ranging from sports to computer clubs. All pupils take part in the 'Bus Brush Challenge' to raise their awareness of the importance of dental hygiene. The pupils also run a successful tuck shop that sells fruit and healthy snacks to all age groups across the school.

Provision for pupils who require additional support is strong. After being identified, the school provides effective support to individuals and groups of pupils in line with their needs. Individual learning plans for pupils with additional needs are purposeful and useful. Teachers make consistent use of them when planning a range of specific interventions that ensure support and challenge for these pupils. In addition, the school has a robust working relationship with a range of other agencies in order to support pupils and extend support and guidance for staff.

The school uses a wide range of assessment strategies to identify pupils' individual needs at an early stage. Staff use this information well to create individual development plans of good quality and to provide effective interventions. Staff plan, deliver and monitor a purposeful range of support programmes that meet the needs of different groups of pupils successfully. This enables all pupils to make at least good progress towards their individual targets. The work of assistants to support individuals and groups is highly effective. In addition, the school has a robust working relationship with a range of other agencies in order to support pupils and extend support and guidance for staff. There are also very positive relationships with parents, helped by features such as the parent forum and family learning sessions.

The school uses resources specifically chosen by the children to promote the ongoing development of pupils' social and emotional skills. Staff give pupils useful

opportunities to express their opinions and to influence elements of the school's life. Pupils in key stage 2 run a business school that supports their understanding of financial matters effectively. The school has a range of productive pupil leadership groups, such as the school council, eco council, e-cadets and Criw Cymraeg. These groups keep all pupils well informed of their work and act as an important element of the pupil voice. Fairness, equality and respect for other cultures and races come through strongly in aspects of pupils' topic work and in the day-to-day life of the school.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear sense of strategic direction to the work of the school. She receives effective support from the deputy headteacher and key stage 2 team leader. They have a shared understanding of the school's values and its priorities for development and communicate these consistently to all staff, parents and pupils.

The governing body makes a key contribution to the school's development. It knows the school well and has a firm grasp of its strengths and areas for development. Governors focus successfully on specific priorities, for example, developing the use of ICT as a tool to enhance pupils' learning. Regular meetings between link governors and subject leaders encourage a strong working relationship within an atmosphere of support and challenge. As a result, the governing body challenges and supports the school robustly and effectively and discharges its role as a critical friend well.

School leadership team meetings support the effective leadership of the school well. There is a clear focus on developing standards and pupil outcomes. The self-evaluation report derives from the school's detailed monitoring and assessment information. It highlights the strengths and areas for improvement accurately. Over time, teachers have had an increasing input into this process. All staff evaluate and identify aspects for improvement for their areas of responsibility.

The school development plan is detailed and contains an appropriate set of relevant targets for improvement taken directly from analysis of a range of information on pupils' performance. There are clear timescales and staff carry appropriate responsibilities to meet agreed actions. Targets relate well to improving standards of teaching, learning and pupil performance. The school places suitable focus on national priorities, including the development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT and the introduction of the digital competency framework.

Leaders provide valuable professional learning opportunities for all staff that support the school's improvement planning effectively. Staff suggest ideas and collaborate on school improvement actions well. Increasingly, teachers share good practice within the school by visiting each other's lessons. For example, teachers have the opportunity to work in groups of three to observe each other teach and to share feedback informally with each other.

As a lead school for digital citizenship, staff have had many opportunities for teachers to meet and work on a regular basis with other staff in cluster schools, for example to work together on planning for the new digital competency framework. Performance management is robust, develops staff knowledge and skills and aligns well with priorities in the school development plan.

School leaders have a sound understanding of the school's financial position. The headteacher and governors manage the budget well and monitor the expenditure effectively. They link spending appropriately to priorities in the school development plan and ensure value for money. For example, the purchase of additional tablet computers has contributed strongly to improvements in opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills.

The school deploys its resources effectively. There are enough teachers and teaching assistants to deliver the curriculum and to meet the needs of pupils who have additional needs. The school makes good use of the pupil development grant to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals, for example employing a teaching assistant to provide emotional support for vulnerable pupils. This enables them to make improved progress against their starting points.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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