



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

A report on

**Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P.
Dolau
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5TW**

Date of inspection: March 2019

by

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

About Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon Primary School is in Dolau, near Llandrindod Wells in the Powys local authority. There are around 29 pupils on roll, aged between 4 and 11 years. There are two mixed-age classes in the school.

The rolling average for the past three years shows that about 4% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is well below the national average of 19%. All pupils are of white British ethnicity. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

The school identifies around 7% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is much lower than the national average of 21%.

The school's last inspection was in May 2012 and the part-time executive headteacher took up his post in September 2015.

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

Summary

The school is a happy, caring community in which pupils thrive as confident, capable learners. Their behaviour in and around the school is exemplary. Most pupils make good progress in developing their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils enjoy belonging to the school and rates of attendance are consistently high. Teachers provide pupils with valuable activities that engage them and excite their curiosity. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, and they are curious and eager to gain new knowledge and skills. Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the future of the school. They set high standards and ensure that they deploy the school's resources efficiently.

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 pupils' spelling and punctuation in key stage 2
- R2 Refine procedures for tracking pupils' progress towards long-term targets, so that they all achieve to the best of which they are capable
- R3 Improve key stage 2 pupils' ability to speak Welsh

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils make good progress and achieve at least as well as expected by the end of key stage 2. However, the most able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could because their tasks are not sufficiently challenging.

Many pupils start school with oracy skills that are well-developed. Nearly all pupils listen attentively in classes. In groups, they listen respectfully to the views of others without interrupting one another. Many develop their oracy skills well, speaking clearly and confidently in lessons and expressing their ideas lucidly in extended sentences. When giving presentations, they speak confidently and with authority.

In the foundation phase, many pupils make good progress in developing their phonics skills. Many decode unfamiliar words confidently by breaking them down into sounds. However, a few pupils do not notice when they have misread a word so that the sentence does not make sense. Many are beginning to read with expression.

Through key stage 2, most pupils develop their reading skills well. They read aloud clearly and expressively, adopting characters' voices to add impact. Younger pupils make good use of picture cues to help them understand their stories and older pupils use context well to aid their understanding and to read between the lines. Most pupils use non-fiction books appropriately when seeking information.

Most pupils in the foundation phase write for a suitably wide range of purposes. For example, when retelling the story of the very hungry caterpillar, or writing instructions for making a pizza, they use basic punctuation well and spell familiar words correctly. They make sensible attempts at spelling more difficult words.

In key stage 2, many pupils make suitable progress in many aspects of writing. They write for a range of reasons and show a growing awareness of how to match their style to suit their purpose and their intended audience. Many use stylistic devices like similes and alliteration well to add interest to their independent writing. For example, they describe a golden ticket winner's eyes as 'shining like shimmering gold'. However, a majority of pupils in key stage 2 do not write as neatly or as carefully as they should, so that mistakes in spelling and punctuation are common. Most apply their literacy skills well across the curriculum. Their science reports are clear, such as when determining which materials are most effective at insulating sound. When comparing historical maps with satellite images, many use correct terminology to make their meaning clear.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop their mathematical skills well. They work carefully, performing basic calculations accurately. They apply their skills well across the curriculum. For example, they solve money problems and draw graphs to show the results of a minibeast survey. Many pupils in key stage 2 make good progress in practising their skills in a suitably broad range of aspects of mathematics and apply their numeracy skills well for various purposes in science and topic work. For example, they calculate how much food and drink was required for a voyage aboard the Golden Hind.

In the foundation phase, nearly all pupils use tablets and laptop computers confidently to record images of one another at work. They programme miniature robots to negotiate a set course and perform simple word-processing to present their writing neatly. In key stage 2, most pupils develop their ICT skills well. They use a range of devices to communicate their ideas effectively. For example, they create multimedia presentations about the Second World War. They present and search for information in databases efficiently, and when investigating the length of shadows, they use a spreadsheet to record measurements and present them in the form of a graph.

Through the school, most pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh. In the foundation phase, many pupils use Welsh phrases informally, without being prompted. They enjoy clambering around the wooden 'pirate ship' when practising Welsh prepositions. In key stage 2, pupils write in Welsh to practise dialogues between friends, and diaries about their holidays. However, the bulk of pupils' writing in Welsh is based on worksheets and they rarely write independently. Most older pupils' Welsh oracy skills are developing slowly. They answer questions about their likes and dislikes, or about the weather, but most pupils' answers are unimaginative because they lack the confidence and fluency to deviate from well-rehearsed answers.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Almost all pupils are happy, feel safe and enjoy belonging to the school. They show care and respect for one another and to adults, and contribute strongly to the friendly and family-like ethos that characterises the school. Nearly all pupils enjoy learning, are eager to contribute during lessons and concentrate well. They are curious and eager to acquire new knowledge and skills. They co-operate successfully with others in pairs and in groups and show resilience and persevere when they find tasks challenging. The standard of pupils' behaviour is consistently high during lessons and at other times during the school day.

Nearly all pupils play a full role in the life of the school. For example, members of the school council have helped to formulate an anti-bullying protocol. The eco committee has taken a leading role in developing the outdoor provision. Consequently, pupils take pride in the outdoor areas and ensure they remain well cared for, clearing up voluntarily any stray items of litter they come across. Most pupils are actively involved in deciding what they would like to learn through posing interesting questions and ideas related to their current topic. The Criw Cymraeg is active in promoting a Welsh ethos within the school, leading acts of collective worship and promoting 'Welsh Wednesday'.

Pupils play an important role in the local community. They sing at the church at Christmas and Easter and hold a tea party at Dolau railway station and stage a concert after a local wedding, raising money for charity. Key stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of issues related to the wider world as the result of their work on the impact of plastic pollution. Following a teacher exchange visit, pupils have supported a school in Kenya, which has raised their awareness of important issues related to children's lives in other parts of the world.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. Most are very active during break times, taking full advantage of the

extensive supply of play equipment. Many participate in after school sports clubs, such as tag rugby and football. They show a sound understanding of how to stay safe, including when they use the internet. Rates of attendance are consistently high and nearly all pupils arrive punctually at the start of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

All teachers and teaching assistants build positive working relationships with pupils, so that they feel safe, secure and eager to learn. They know their pupils well and meet the needs of nearly all of them sensitively. Teachers generally have high expectations, although they do not always challenge the most able pupils sufficiently. They plan and deliver interesting lessons that engage pupils and excite their curiosity. They often set clear lesson objectives and, in the most effective cases, encourage pupils to consider their own criteria for success. Most tasks enable pupils to apply and extend their skills in literacy and numeracy, and many also promote pupils' ICT skills well.

Teachers give pupils helpful oral feedback on the quality of their work. This helps them to understand new ideas clearly and enables staff to judge pupils' understanding. However, in key stage 2, the effectiveness of teachers' written comments is inconsistent. For example, they do not always indicate clearly how pupils might improve in the quality of their work in future tasks.

High quality foundation phase experiences provide good opportunities for younger pupils to develop their own learning through play-based activities. This ensures that they develop their social skills and become confident, independent learners. Across the school, teachers provide an imaginative curriculum that builds on pupils' prior learning well and meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. It is broad and balanced, and teachers ensure that most activities are purposeful and appropriate to pupils' age and ability. They often enable pupils to make choices about what and how they learn.

A broad range of educational visits enriches pupils' learning experiences successfully. For example, staff arrange for pupils to experience a Victorian Christmas at the Judge's Lodgings in Presteigne and to re-enact wartime evacuation at the Severn Valley Railway. The school promotes pupils' creative development well. Staff display pupils' art work prominently around the school and encourage them to sing Welsh songs enthusiastically. Visits to orchestral performances promote their cultural development effectively.

Teachers often promote the Welsh language during registration and when giving basic commands and the curriculum provides pupils with a good range of opportunities to learn about the history and culture of Wales, including St David's Day celebrations.

Teachers use the outdoor areas effectively with pupils of all ages, including the conservation area and garden, to promote their understanding and appreciation of the natural world and the locality. For example, pupils enjoy gardening and supply produce for the church's Harvest Festival.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school's care, support and guidance for pupils promote their wellbeing very well. As a result, nearly all pupils make good progress in their academic, social, moral and

emotional development. Staff have detailed knowledge of pupils' needs and provide a safe, nurturing and supporting environment that develops their confidence and self-esteem very well.

Staff use a range of assessments to measure the progress of all pupils. Staff work closely together to set realistic short-term targets for pupils. However, tracking systems are not sufficiently refined to ensure that all pupils make as much progress as possible from their starting points. As a result, the most able pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

There are strong, positive working relationships with parents who provide invaluable support for the school. For example, a working party of parents helped the school develop their conservation area and raised beds. They support pupils to grow produce which gives them a sense of achievement and supports their understanding of the importance of healthy eating. The active friends' group raise money to provide additional play equipment which encourages pupils to be active during playtimes. The school communicates important information effectively to parents about day-to-day activities through a variety of methods, including newsletters, social media and the school website. Parents value the annual reports, which are personalised and provide valuable information about their child's progress.

The school has appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking and promotes pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, effectively. There are worthwhile links through topics that further develop pupils' knowledge in this area. For example, in key stage 2, pupils enjoy making and playing board games about healthy eating. The school provides pupils with a wide range of afterschool clubs that are open to all pupils and are well supported. The school also provides regular opportunities for pupils to take part in local tournaments and swimming galas. These activities promote the importance of taking regular exercise successfully. The school promotes the importance of e-safety well and its arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop as leaders, through the school council and eco-committee. For example, members of the school council chose between purchasing a pirate ship as opposed to a tractor for the playground. However, these groups do not have sufficient opportunity to make meaningful decisions about school improvement because adults direct their activities too much.

The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to express themselves creatively through music, art and drama. For example, in their art lessons, older pupils make totem poles using symbols to represent things that are important to them. In the foundation phase, pupils use pastels to create pictures representing their local area. There are opportunities for pupils to learn to play an instrument and perform at local events such as singing at the local church services. These enhance pupils' spiritual and cultural development well.

Leadership and management: Good

The executive headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership for the school. He works collaboratively with staff, governors and parents to establish a clear vision that is strongly focused on promoting the wellbeing, happiness and achievement of all pupils. He has high expectations of all and promotes a caring and stimulating learning environment. His vision is evident throughout the school and the

core aims of ensuring that pupils enjoy learning is an integral part of the ethos. As a result, nearly all pupils are engaged in their learning and make good progress.

All staff fulfil their roles and responsibilities conscientiously. They work well together as a close and effective team that supports the caring ethos of the school. This strong teamwork ensures continuity and continued development of provision during a period of change at the school. The school is successful in meeting many local and national priorities. For example, the recent investment in resources for ICT is starting to support the development in teaching the requirements of the digital competency framework well. However, efforts to support improvements in Welsh are taking longer to demonstrate sustained pupil progress.

Procedures for performance management are robust. All staff have targets that focus on improving outcomes for pupils. Staff have started to use the professional standards framework to evaluate their own performance and identify their own professional learning needs. As a result, two members of staff have used a six-week sabbatical to develop their Welsh skills so that they are more confident in supporting the teaching it across the school. However, this has not had sufficient time to impact fully on outcomes for pupils. Other worthwhile professional learning opportunities are provided regularly through staff meetings and working with other schools.

Monitoring and evaluation processes are well established. They draw on a wide range of first-hand evidence including, learning walks, lesson observations, listening to learners and overviews of pupils' work. They involve the executive headteacher, all teaching staff and governors. As a result, the school identifies strengths and areas for improvement accurately. There are strong links between self-evaluation and the school improvement plan, which has a suitable number of broad strategic priorities. Each priority has clear actions, costings and timescales for development. Actions taken have resulted in an improved curriculum that is broad and balanced and provides a good range of meaningful topics that engage pupils well in their learning.

Governors see the school as being at the heart of the community, and that this relationship is mutually beneficial. They understand the benefits and limitations of being a small school. The governing body works effectively as a 'critical friend'. However, the balance of their work tends to be more towards support, rather than challenge. Many governors are 'hands on' and visit the school frequently to observe classes and evaluate pupils' work. As a result, they are very knowledgeable about pupils and the learning environment. They use this knowledge effectively when evaluating progress against the school's priorities. Governors monitor the school budget carefully to ensure that spending decisions are appropriate.

The school uses its resources efficiently. Leaders make good use of the experience and expertise of all staff. The school has developed the outdoor learning areas successfully, so that the school meets the requirements of the foundation phase. A wide range of resources of good quality supports the delivery of the curriculum well. Leaders make good use of its pupil development grant to enhance learning support for selected pupils. The executive headteacher and governors work closely together to provide strong financial management and ensure that the school receives good value for money in the purchases it makes.

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

© Crown Copyright 2019: 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: 31/05/2019