



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

A report on

**Ysgol Cedewain
Maesyrhandir
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1LH**

Date of inspection: January 2020

by

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

About Ysgol Cedewain

Ysgol Cedewain is a school for pupils with a wide range of complex educational, sensory, and physical needs and is situated in Newtown in the county of Powys. Many pupils attending the school have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). All pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN). The school has 120 pupils on roll aged from three to nineteen years.

English is the predominant language of nearly all pupils. A very few pupils are eligible for support for English as an additional language. There are a very few pupils with looked-after child status. Approximately 36% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

There is considerable variation in pupils' learning abilities and needs across the school. It is therefore not appropriate to compare standards of achievement in the school with national averages or to analyse performance trends over time due to the wide range of SEN of pupils attending the school.

The school is a curriculum pioneer school.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2017. The school was last inspected in January 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

Across the school, nearly all pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points. A majority of pupils make suitable progress in line with their targets identified in their individual education plans (IEPs).

Most pupils behave well across the school and are positive about their learning. Nearly all pupils develop constructive working relationships with staff and peers, which support pupils' wellbeing strongly.

The school has a suitably broad curriculum for most pupils. For older pupils, the curriculum on offer provides effective opportunities to achieve both recognised academic and vocational qualifications. However, for pupils with more complex physical needs there are limited planned learning experiences outside of the classroom environment. All pupils gain valuable work experience activities, which support them well in their post-school destinations.

The recently established senior leadership team has a clear vision for the school, which is shared with all staff well. Leaders are beginning to establish systems and processes to support staff to improve standards across the school. However, these are at the very early stages of development and it is too early to comment on the impact of many of these systems and processes.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Adequate and needs improvement
Leadership and management	Adequate and needs improvement

Recommendations

- R1 Address the shortcomings in the management of safeguarding identified during the inspection
- R2 Improve learning areas to meet the individual needs of all pupils
- R3 Improve pupils' standards across the school, particularly for those pupils with more complex physical needs
- R4 Improve the consistency in teaching and assessment of pupils' skills
- R5 Develop the strategic roles and responsibilities of curriculum and subject leaders across the school
- R6 Strengthen self-evaluation processes to provide consistency in school improvement planning

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

Across the school, nearly all pupils make appropriate progress and a minority of older, more able pupils make effective progress across the areas of learning. A majority of pupils make suitable progress in line with targets identified in their individual education plans (IEPs).

Most pupils learn to focus and listen effectively to staff and to follow simple verbal instructions. They improve these skills suitably as they progress through the school. Older and more able pupils understand and respond well to instructions that are more complex.

Overall, pupils develop and apply their oracy skills well. This ranges from imitating sounds and using single words to engaging in meaningful conversations with other pupils, staff, and visitors. Nearly all pupils develop their communication skills appropriately through their preferred method. Around half of pupils use a range of methods including signing, symbols, photographs and in a very few cases use communication technology to support their progress in their communication skills.

Across the school, pupils make effective progress in their reading skills. Many pupils read enthusiastically at levels appropriate to their abilities. They are keen to share their enjoyment of reading with peers, staff, and visitors to the school. This ranges from pupils enjoying picture books to reading simple words and phrases with increasing confidence and accuracy. More able pupils show suitable understanding of more complex passages and books for example, *The Knife Angel*, which they use as a stimulus to discuss issues around knife crime and the role of the police.

Overall, pupils' writing skills are less well developed than their oracy, listening and reading skills. Across the school, pupils use sensory approaches to begin to develop and refine their writing skills, for example, using different materials to explore mark making. Pupils that are more able develop their handwriting skills well. These pupils use this skill to make independent notes to support learning as part of their qualification course work.

Many pupils develop their numeracy skills appropriately. Pupils with complex needs develop their early numeracy skills through exploring varying tempos of music. Older pupils enjoy counting and measuring while making Valentine confectionary jars for sale as part of their enterprise project. As pupils progress through the school, they develop valuable numeracy skills through practical experiences. For example, reading bus timetables for independent travel, setting up a film club, and running an on-site school café, where they buy ingredients, work out quantities, and calculate profit and loss.

Nearly all pupils across the school develop their information, communication, and technology (ICT) skills appropriately. Older pupils that are more able use ICT to support their learning effectively. For example, pupils research information independently as part of their GCSE course work. Many pupils use an online app to share their learning with parents.

Many pupils make effective progress in their creative skills. They explore different textures in sensory lessons and build catapults out of design materials. Older pupils engage enthusiastically in activities that contribute well to achieving relevant qualifications, for example, a GCSE in art and design.

Many pupils develop their independence skills effectively across a range of activities. Many pupils follow successfully classroom routines that promote their independence skills well. For example, they learn to hang coats on their name pegs and collect the equipment required to visit the local college farm. As they progress through the school, most pupils develop their skills further, which supports positively their transition into adult life. For example, they access relevant work experience in local charity shops and progress successfully to further education colleges.

Many pupils develop their fine motor skills suitably across different activities, such as rolling and cutting dough, and chopping and peeling vegetables to make lasagne. Many pupils make suitable progress in their gross motor skills through a range of on-site and off-site physical activities. For example, they take part in the daily Dal i fynd exercise walk around the school playground. Younger pupils enjoy visits to ball pool activity centres where they can experience and practise physical activities such as running, jumping and climbing.

Most pupils make suitable progress in the development of their Welsh language skills. For example, many pupils develop confidence and self-esteem through the participation in the Urdd Eisteddfod.

Nearly all pupils gain valuable work experience through external opportunities such as farming, forestry and charity shops, and on-site in the school café and polytunnels.

All pupils leaving the school over the last three years have successfully transitioned to appropriate placements. These include further education colleges, employment, and day services.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils across the school respond well to the calm and nurturing environment. They develop trusting and respectful relationships with staff and peers, and this promotes a positive sense of wellbeing.

Nearly all pupils enjoy being at school and most feel safe in and around the school buildings and during lessons. Nearly all pupils show care and respect for each other and respond politely to staff and visitors at the school. For example, older pupils help younger pupils during lunchtimes.

Most pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. During lessons, they engage constructively and enthusiastically in activities. They understand well the importance of turn-taking and listen attentively while others are speaking.

Nearly all pupils work effectively in small groups or whole class sessions. Many pupils with more complex physical needs respond positively in lessons, develop their learning skills and improve their wellbeing through integrated sensory activities. For example, they participate enthusiastically in sensory dance sessions and massage

story-based activities. However, a few pupils who are wheelchair users and have additional mobility equipment have limited opportunities to move around all parts of the school due to the constraints of the building. This impacts on these pupils developing their independence and mobility skills well enough.

The majority of pupils are attentive and ready to start lessons promptly. Many pupils develop their resilience and independence in learning well. For example, younger pupils persevere to place counting discs on pegs, and older pupils involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award build tents independently. Many pupils transfer these skills well into home life and activities with their family.

Most pupils play a full part in the life of the school. Class representatives share ideas during the school and eco-council meetings. Older pupils have suitable opportunities to develop their leadership roles and responsibilities as sports leaders, head boy and head girl, and 'wellbeing warriors'. Pupils in the wellbeing warriors group offer support and help, particularly at playtimes to pupils who may seem unhappy or on their own. They encourage pupils to join in playing games or use the playground equipment. This role has been particularly successful in supporting pupils' wellbeing across the school.

Most pupils develop their social skills particularly well. Across the school, pupils enjoy the company of their peers. They have meaningful conversations and develop friendships. Most pupils demonstrate the confidence to interact with visitors well. Over time, pupils develop valuable skills such as sharing equipment, turn-taking, working together in small groups, and use these skills well across a range of contexts, such as work experience. Most pupils understand the benefits of keeping healthy. For example, they make healthy choices during mealtimes, prepare healthy snacks and meals, and develop personal care routines well. Most pupils develop physical skills well through a range of activities including outdoor play, creative dance, and sport.

Many pupils develop an effective understanding what it means to be part of their community as well as the wider world, for example, through visits to the local community and by celebrating festivals and events such as Chinese New Year. Pupils take part in a range of fund-raising activities with enthusiasm and enjoy making and selling a range of products to support their fund-raising efforts across the school.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Many teachers plan well to provide pupils with a range of interesting and stimulating activities and exercises. Where pupils are reluctant to engage in formal learning, many teachers plan well for outdoor learning to ensure pupils can engage in purposeful learning experiences. In a few classes where teaching is most effective, teachers plan successfully to engage pupils in exciting, interactive activities. For example, they use the stimulus of a visit to see the Knife Angel exhibit to develop pupils' oracy and writing skills.

Many teachers have high expectations of their pupils and develop their independent learning skills well. However, the school does not consistently provide sufficient opportunities for pupils who are wheelchair users to develop and improve their independent wheelchair skills.

All staff across the school develop effective working relationships with pupils. They promote a safe and inclusive learning environment where pupils are confident to engage in lessons. Most teachers and support staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of the pupils' emotional and behavioural needs. They set high standards of expectation for pupils' behaviour and are strong role models.

Most teachers use clear and probing questioning effectively to assess older pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers of younger pupils encourage them suitably with appropriate levels of questioning and support. As a result, many pupils, across the school develop their thinking skills well.

Many teachers plan well to include literacy and numeracy targets within their lessons. They assess and record pupils' achievements and progress at regular intervals. However, the school does not have a whole school strategy for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills that clearly sets out expectations for pupil outcomes. This means that the school is unable to evaluate pupil progress effectively or to set meaningful whole school targets.

Most teachers and support staff provide encouraging verbal feedback to pupils. This motivates many pupils well to continue to strive for high achievements in their learning. However, a few teachers do not provide older, more able pupils with sufficient effective written feedback to allow pupils to reflect on how to improve their work.

The school provides a suitably broad curriculum and a range of stimulating learning experiences for most pupils. For older pupils, the curriculum is planned well to allow access to subjects that will enable them to progress to their chosen destination when leaving the school. The school works effectively in partnership with a small number of other local providers to ensure pupils can study subjects that are not within the school curriculum offer. As a result, they have suitable access to an appropriate range of nationally recognised qualifications including the Welsh Baccalaureate, and GCSEs. However, the curriculum for younger pupils does not consistently allow pupils to apply their classroom learning in the outdoor environment well enough. In addition, a few pupils with the more complex physical needs do not have sufficient access to learning experiences that allow them to explore learning outside of the classroom environment on a regular basis.

Provision for the effective delivery of science and ICT is underdeveloped across the school. In a few classes, there are missed opportunities to use technology to enhance and encourage pupils' extended writing skills.

The school promotes the Welsh language and Welsh culture suitably in all aspects of teaching and across the school site.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

Ysgol Cedewain is a happy and nurturing school. Nearly all staff support pupils skilfully to promote their personal development and wellbeing.

The school ensures most pupils have an appropriate IEP. However, in a few cases, targets are not sufficiently relevant to pupils' individual SEN.

Teachers track pupils' IEP targets well in respect of their skills development. However, the tracking of progress in other areas of learning, for example, the tracking of pupils' ICT skills, is in the early stages of development.

The school's approach to managing pupil behaviour and incidents is extremely effective and this contributes to the high standards of pupils' behaviour in school. The school plans well to support pupils' social and emotional needs. This is a positive and consistent feature. Staff manage and track incidents of pupil behaviour effectively at class level and teachers use this information well to plan appropriate interventions. However, the analysis of incidents and interventions at a whole-school level is at an early stage of development.

The school tracks attendance consistently and is proactive in following up pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. This includes home visits and delivering personalised interventions.

The school works appropriately with a range of relevant external partners, including health care professionals, to support pupils' needs well. However, currently a strategic approach to collaborative working on a whole-school level is under developed. The impact of this work is not monitored well enough and as a result, planning for this additional support is underdeveloped.

The school engages well with parents through a range of approaches including social media, home schoolbooks, consistent use of an online app and face-to-face meetings. The school has recently introduced the role of family liaison officer. This is having a significant impact on supporting families to work more closely with the school to support their child's needs. The school provides useful reports to parents annually including information on the provision in place for their child, their progress, and the next steps for learning.

The school has appropriate arrangements for its pupils' social, moral, and cultural development. Teachers plan well across the areas of learning to enable pupils to learn about their own culture, their community, and the wider world. For example, participating in the Urdd programme, and the celebration of festivals such as Santes Dwynwen. The school promotes interesting opportunities for pupils to explore their own beliefs and the beliefs of others.

The school's 14-19 vocational programme introduces older pupils to new learning experiences that broaden their life experiences very effectively and prepares them well to be successful and responsible citizens in adult life. All older pupils access work experience. The school works well with their careers adviser to provide all pupils with an opportunity to make informed choices about their futures.

The school provides all pupils with relevant appropriate information on how to keep themselves safe in all situations, including online safety.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are not robust enough. The traffic management arrangements do not ensure the safe arrival and departure of pupils, staff and visitors to the school.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

Leaders have a clear vision for developing the school as an inclusive and caring community in which all pupils are valued. This vision is reflected suitably in the

school motto, “Braver, bolder, brighter.” Senior leaders have created a supportive and caring ethos where staff are committed to the school and its pupils. The recently appointed headteacher has set about establishing systems and processes to build the capacity of staff and to improve standards and wellbeing. The school has recently established a new leadership team. However, it is too early to see the impact of their work on standards and wellbeing. Staff meetings address issues relating to standards and monitoring of pupils’ progress appropriately and staff are beginning to understand their accountability for pupil standards and wellbeing. However, staff responsibilities for important areas of the curriculum are unclear.

Leaders have introduced a relevant timetable to monitor activities, evaluate the school’s performance and to plan for improvements. The school has suitable processes to gather evidence for self-evaluation that include an appropriate range of stakeholders. Self-evaluation includes lesson observations, learning walks, scrutiny of pupils’ work and gaining pupil and parental views. As a result, the school is beginning to take appropriate actions to target priority areas for improvement such as improving the quality of pupils’ targets within their individual education plans. However, leaders do not focus sufficiently on pupils’ standards, progress and skills when observing lessons and scrutinising work.

The school has appropriate systems for managing the performance of staff. There are suitable opportunities for staff to discuss their performance and progress with leaders which lead to relevant professional development opportunities. Nearly all staff engage keenly in the emerging culture of professional learning at the school. There are beneficial opportunities for staff to share teaching ideas and practice through the peer observation programme. Staff are beginning to make useful links with other schools to learn about good practice and bring new ideas into their teaching. However, this work has not had time to impact sufficiently on the quality of teaching and pupils’ progress. Although senior leaders have secure processes to hold staff to account and deal appropriately with aspects of underperformance, processes to evaluate the impact of this are underdeveloped.

The school is staffed and resourced appropriately. However, the arrangements for the deployment of teaching assistants on a day-to-day basis do not consistently support teachers well enough. Overall, teachers make the most of the learning environments to display pupil work and learning aids. However, many indoor and outdoor areas of the school do not provide pupils with a stimulating learning environment. The school layout and buildings are not suitable for pupils with more complex physical needs.

The school has suitable procedures to monitor and plan expenditure in line with the financial plan approved by the local authority. This has started to reduce the school’s budget deficit. Despite these actions, there remains a sizeable deficit. The school ensures that spending decisions link closely to the school’s priorities. The school directs its grant funding appropriately towards beneficial strategies including supporting the wellbeing of pupils and their families.

Governors are appropriately supportive of the school. They have a broad understanding of the school’s strengths and areas for improvement and provide leaders with a suitable level of challenge.

Copies of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teaching, support staff and the governing body 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 and middle leaders (where appropriate) 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, where appropriate
- visit lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings
- 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' wellbeing, 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:

- reviewed 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 (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 2020: 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: 30/03/2020