



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

A report on

Bwlchgwyn C.P. School

**Brymbo Road
Bwlchgwyn
Wrexham
Wrexham
LL11 5UA**

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

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

About Bwlchgwyn C.P. School

Name of provider	Bwlchgwyn C.P. School
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Not applicable
Number of pupils on roll	106
Pupils of statutory school age	78
Number in nursery classes	16
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 21.3%)	6.8%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 22.2%)	16.7%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	10/12/2013
Start date of inspection	14/11/2022

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to 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

Bwlchgwyn CP School is a welcoming and inclusive school, which creates a positive atmosphere and ethos for pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy activities and tasks, and they are eager to learn during lessons. This is due to the effective working relationships that they develop with their teachers and other staff.

All staff promote a high level of support and care for pupils in all aspects of school life, which encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own well-being. As a result, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They demonstrate determination, perseverance and other positive attitudes to learning, which enables them to complete tasks successfully. The school helps pupils to develop confidence in themselves as individuals, to remain resilient when they struggle to succeed and to respect the feelings of others. The school environment promotes beneficial learning and well-being opportunities, which includes expansive garden and growing areas and an outdoor classroom.

Teaching helps most pupils to make strong progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. However, the quality of feedback from teachers varies in terms of its impact on the next steps in pupils' learning.

Where learning is successful, teachers interact with pupils effectively through the use of a wide range of strategies and resources to improve pupils' outcomes. However, teachers' skills in engaging pupils in their learning vary in their effectiveness across the school.

The headteacher provides effective and thoughtful leadership. He is determined to succeed for the benefit of pupils and the community. The senior leadership team, the staff and the governors share his clear vision. They work together well to ensure that the school is an inclusive learning community that promotes positive opportunities for pupils.

The headteacher shares responsibilities effectively among staff and this contributes to a positive whole-school ethos, where staff and pupils feel valued for their contributions to school life. Leaders evaluate the school's work to plan for improvements thoroughly, using established self-evaluation processes. However, these evaluation and monitoring practices do not always lead to purposeful professional learning opportunities for staff.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that the school's monitoring processes lead to purposeful professional learning opportunities for teachers and support staff
- R2 Ensure that teachers are consistent in engaging pupils promptly in their learning across the school
- R3 Ensure that the quality of teachers' feedback targets the next steps in pupils' learning consistently

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils enter the school with skills that are either at or above the expected level for their age. Most pupils make strong progress in their literacy, numeracy and digital skills and, due to their effectiveness in applying these skills, achieve well across all areas of the curriculum.

Most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) progress positively in their learning. In all classes, pupils needing additional support access all curriculum areas successfully and they make purposeful gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding from their starting points.

The speaking and listening skills of most pupils develop effectively and they communicate eloquently with each other and adults. As they move from nursery to Year 2, they ask and answer questions confidently while discussing tasks with their peers. For example, Year 1 pupils pursue a sensible debate outdoors whilst attempting to float leaves in puddles. From Year 3 onwards, pupils make strong progress and use a wide range of vocabulary and phrases in appropriate contexts. They engage well with each other and contribute willingly to discussions, such as reflecting on differences between old and new maps of the locality.

The reading skills of most pupils develop quickly. Many of the youngest pupils learn the sounds of letters rapidly and blend them carefully. By Year 2, most pupils' reading skills are secure and they attempt unfamiliar words using a variety of phonic strategies sensibly. By Year 6, most pupils are accomplished readers, and they are very well equipped to evaluate and use a variety of different texts to support their learning. For example, they evaluate maturely the dangers that sharks pose to humans, in comparison to poisonous spiders.

Most pupils develop effectively as writers, considering their starting points. By Year 2, most pupils use punctuation and grammar accurately, such as when they create a recipe for leek and potato soup. As pupils progress from Year 3 to Year 6, most write fluently in a wide range of genres. For example, Year 5 pupils create a detailed description of a wanted criminal. Many pupils edit their work sensibly and use more advanced vocabulary successfully to improve their final drafts. As a result, most pupils develop their independent and extended writing skills proficiently.

When speaking Welsh, most of the youngest pupils develop suitable vocabulary and respond to commands and greetings successfully. By Year 2, many pupils use basic phrases confidently, such as when they express their feelings and discuss the weather. By Year 6, many pupils demonstrate a satisfactory recall of sentence structures and relevant vocabulary. As a result, most pupils' Welsh oracy skills develop appropriately.

Most pupils apply their mathematical skills effectively across the curriculum effectively. For example, by Year 2, most pupils partition two-digit numbers well using pinecones and leaves as stimuli. Older pupils develop their numeracy skills successfully and plot co-ordinates in four quadrants to draw Prospero's magical

island. Most of them use a wide range of skills, such as percentages and square roots purposefully, when creating number facts about themselves. They also use line graphs intelligently to demonstrate the impact of emissions on climate change over time.

The digital skills of most pupils are effective and they use these across the curriculum successfully. For example, many younger pupils programme robots to rotate and travel in different directions and in Year 4 pupils create effective presentations on the persecution of Black people in history. Most older pupils manipulate text effectively, such as designing fact files on the rights of the child. Many pupils populate databases and spreadsheets confidently and identify issues of financial profit and loss in market research tasks purposefully.

Most pupils develop their artistic and creative skills well. This is particularly true of the youngest pupils, who create art and role-play in a wide variety of contexts. For example, reception pupils co-operate to build vehicles for superheroes using three-dimensional shapes. Across the school, most pupils embrace the opportunities to experiment freely to develop their creativity, such as Year 6 pupils using green screen technology to depict the life of a highwayman.

In all classes, most pupils develop their thinking skills well. They use purposeful strategies to accomplish tasks successfully, such as when collaborating to create a pitch for business funding in an enterprise task. As a result, they persevere diligently when problem-solving and declare that finding challenges difficult helps them to learn effectively.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

The relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. This enables nearly all pupils to learn and develop as well-rounded individuals. Nearly all pupils show pride in their school and feel safe within its inclusive and caring ethos. They feel that adults in the school listen to their views very effectively and take them into account when considering decisions that affect them.

Pupils are courteous and welcoming to adults and visitors and their behaviour is exemplary. Nearly all pupils show care and consideration for each other, collaborate exceptionally well and show respect for the contributions of other pupils. For example, older pupils create games to develop younger pupils' physical and social skills as play leaders.

Nearly all pupils develop well as capable and aspirational learners. They have positive attitudes to learning, show strong interest in their work and talk confidently and enthusiastically about school life. Nearly all pupils listen attentively to teachers' instructions and concentrate well on their work during lessons. They collaborate very successfully in groups and in pairs, and most make positive contributions to class discussions. As a result, nearly all demonstrate a high level of respect for the contributions of others.

Nearly all pupils draw on strategies to support their emotional well-being effectively. For example, older pupils discuss and explain sensibly in pairs how to approach and resolve difficult individual tasks. In the nursery and reception class, nearly all pupils

develop effective independent skills when using the 'Calm Corner', where they relax on cushions while observing birds feeding and insects crawling around the bug hotel.

The strength of pupils as ethical, informed citizens is developing well. They are fair and caring in their dealings with others and demonstrate a good knowledge of children's rights. For example, older pupils discuss maturely the inequalities in American society in the 1960s. As a result, nearly all pupils show a strong awareness of the importance of their contributions towards creating a caring society.

Nearly all pupils participate willingly and express imaginative opinions when offering ideas about the school's curriculum. They have a strong voice in their learning. For example, pupils write persuasive letters to Liverpool City Council expressing concerns about building a reservoir in rural Wales to provide water for the city. As a result, nearly all pupils learn to research facts accurately and express opinions eloquently about social and political issues.

The school's pupil voice groups are inclusive and allow pupils take an active part in its life. Their representatives demonstrate a range of leadership skills, such as decision making on saving energy around the school. They fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and representatives are proud of their valuable contributions and achievements. This includes leading whole school assemblies on matters that are important to them, such as recycling.

Nearly all pupils develop effective entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills. For example, pupils across the school collaborate well with the Eco Council in planning diligently the school's enterprise fair. Nearly all pupils show high levels of imagination while planning to create eco-friendly goods from recycled items for re-sale, such as jewellery. As a result, they underline their strong beliefs and values in maintaining the school's pledge of developing better 'green' credentials.

Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and they can discuss the benefits of staying hydrated well. They understand the benefit of physical exercise on their health, such as taking part in swimming lessons and participating in daily physical tasks. Most pupils have a secure knowledge of the importance of good physical and mental well-being. For example, pupils who participate in yoga, mindfulness sessions and African dance explain the need to either relax or invigorate their bodies during times of stress.

Nearly all pupils have a comprehensive understanding of the need to be careful when using the internet. They remind each other sensibly that they should not share passwords. Additionally, through their work with the local police liaison officer, they know how to react if faced with threats to their mental health, such as cyber bullying. This impacts positively on their well-being and general life skills.

The school has effective systems to monitor and improve attendance. Following the pandemic, rates of attendance dropped. However, recent measures taken by the school have led to improvements.

Teaching and learning experiences

Across the school, teachers and support staff work well together to create a vibrant learning environment. All classrooms include high-quality displays to help pupils focus on their learning. Teachers use resources and the physical environment purposefully to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, nursery and reception pupils crawl into a glass fronted cabin to quietly observe the natural world in the school's 'secret garden'.

Teachers' planning encourages pupils to reflect on global issues effectively. For example, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 talk eloquently about environmental issues affecting Emperor, King and African penguins in Antarctica. Staff also make good use of the extensive school grounds and the locality to enrich learning and to promote sustainability. All classes use the school's gardens and growing areas to teach a range of social and practical skills successfully, such as growing and cooking fruit and vegetables.

The school provides a broad and balanced range of learning experiences that are in keeping with the spirit and purposes of the Curriculum for Wales. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils have opportunities to advance their own enquiries linked to their projects innovatively, such as a visit to Shrewsbury prison following pupils' questions about criminals' feelings during imprisonment.

Planning for the curriculum supports pupils' personal and social development very well. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work together and review their learning. All staff use curriculum resources effectively to provide personalised support for vulnerable pupils, such as those with social and emotional difficulties.

The curriculum includes good opportunities for pupils to learn about the history of Black people such as Ruby Bridges and Rosa Parks. This has a positive effect on pupils' values and attitudes. For example, older pupils think critically about current issues, such as the war in Ukraine and human rights associated with the football World Cup in Qatar.

Teachers and support staff help pupils make strong progress in their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in imaginative ways. For example, pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 compose battle cries in the style of the Celtic warrior Boudicca, while older pupils seek to persuade others to invest in their enterprise ideas. Teachers motivate pupils well to apply their numeracy and digital skills effectively in a range of contexts, such as the use of green screen technologies in Year 5 and Year 6 when learning about events in the past. Such provision ensures that most pupils acquire an increasingly rich and extensive vocabulary as they move from nursery to Year 6.

The curriculum includes effective opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, through the tale of Maccsen Wledig, and the controversy around historic monuments of people in Wales associated with slavery. Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills is appropriate. While staff model a range of greetings, instructions and questions in Welsh, the school has prioritised further training to strengthen pupils' Welsh oracy skills.

Teaching is generally good across the school. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and explain ideas with clarity. However, on occasions, introductions to lessons are too long, which does not engage pupils fully in their learning. This results in a loss of momentum and independent learning opportunities. Teachers make effective use of physical resources to support and challenge pupils. For example, the youngest pupils experiment with the flow and volume of water using jugs, buckets and guttering.

Teachers make good use of various assessment tools to track the progress of pupils through the school. They provide relevant opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and that of their peers. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 respond well to reflection opportunities at the end of projects. However, the quality of everyday teachers' oral and written feedback is inconsistent. Where it is effective, pupils are clear about what they need to do and how to improve their work. While teachers use praise extensively to encourage pupils, occasionally they do not explain why they consider pupils' work to be of a certain standard, which makes it difficult for pupils to improve.

School reports to parents and carers provide detailed information about their child's progress and attitudes to learning. They also include useful targets to highlight the next steps for learning for individual pupils.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a very caring community, and staff encourage pupils to embrace its supportive and friendly ethos intuitively. The positive relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are a compelling feature of the school. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and they respond with sensitivity to the pupils' emotional and social needs. Through purposeful use of the extensive and very well-equipped school grounds, the school provides very good support for pupils' physical and mental health and well-being. This supportive and warm atmosphere helps nearly all pupils to settle effortlessly into school life and it contributes significantly to their happiness in school. These diligent and thoughtful practices encourage pupils to develop resilient attitudes to their learning.

The provision for pupils identified as having ALN is thorough. The school's ALN co-ordinator works effectively in partnership with staff members to ensure that there is good identification, tracking and support for individuals and groups of pupils at an early age. Comprehensive pupil progress reviews result in staff members having a deeper understanding of the needs of pupils. The school interacts beneficially with a range of specialist services to secure additional, timely resources and to offer specialist support to pupils with a range of academic, emotional and social needs. These arrangements ensure that most targeted pupils make good progress in relation to their abilities.

The school encourages pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to take on leadership roles effectively on a variety of worthwhile groups. This provision broadens their understanding of the importance of active citizenship. As a result, the school cultivates opportunities successfully for pupils to participate in making decisions to improve the school. For example, members of the School Council lead assemblies to promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The pupils therefore learn that acts, such as sending shoeboxes of gifts to children that live

through unfortunate and dangerous circumstances, support their rights and make a difference to their lives.

The school has a beneficial range of opportunities that helps pupils to develop a good understanding of their Welsh heritage. For example, as part of a Celtic day, pupils dressed up like Celts and formed their own personalised, intricate and colourful Celtic knots. The school effectively promotes Welsh cultural aspects such as a churning ceremony as part of its Eisteddfod celebrations. St David's Day celebrations also contribute positively towards a positive Welsh ethos. This type of effective provision allows pupils to engage willingly with school life and to feel proud of the school's family ethos.

The school places a strong emphasis on providing a rich and varied range of trips and visits that support the curriculum and engage pupils in their learning. For example, these include visits to the local park by the younger pupils and visits to the Llangollen International Eisteddfod for the older pupils. These experiences provide varied experiences in different aspects of the arts, and opportunities to enjoy and participate in performances by groups from diverse cultures from across the World.

Staff enable pupils to make strong contributions to the life of their community. They use the experiences positively so that pupils develop respect and that they understand that caring for others is important. For example, following walks around the village, the younger pupils worked with a local artist, using branches and recycled fabric, to create a colourful 'Tree of Life' inspired by their topic of 'Cynefin'. Additionally, pupils support a local food bank by taking part in a harvest festival at the local church. Staff encourage pupils to present produce at the altar and give thanks through song and prayer, as part of the school's focus on the value and importance of 'Thankfulness'.

All staff understand their roles and responsibilities in contributing robustly to pupils' safety and well-being. They ensure that pupils' well-being and safety are prominent elements of school life. Leaders embed a culture of purposeful safeguarding processes among all staff and these practices are an integral part of their daily responsibilities. As a result, the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher works diligently with other leaders, staff, pupils and parents to develop a shared vision and high aspirations for the school. His work and criteria for success reflect the school's motto, 'Aim high', effectively.

The headteacher leads the school successfully and ensures that all staff focus on creating a caring and inclusive community, where all pupils and adults feel valued. He models consistently the behaviours and values that the school community encourages, such as respect, kindness and responsibility, which are reflected well in the school's curriculum statement. As a result, relationships throughout the school are very positive and there is a shared commitment to improve all aspects of the school.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They understand their roles and take their responsibilities seriously, for example in areas such as safeguarding and financial accountability. They are proactive in updating their own knowledge of national priorities, such as the Curriculum for Wales. Link governors are assigned to each curriculum area of learning and experience and hold the school to account sensibly. For example, they recognise the school's significant progress over recent years and support the targets to develop greater consistency in pupils' application of their skills across the curriculum.

Governors have an accurate and detailed picture of the school gained through first-hand visits, listening to pupils, regular discussions and informative reports from the headteacher. They liaise closely with staff to ensure that there are suitable policies and procedures to promote the importance of healthy eating and drinking among pupils. As a result, governors contribute a constructive and well-placed voice in moving the school forward.

Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and feel that they are an important part of the school improvement process. For example, they work in small teams to develop a shared understanding when designing the curriculum. They also tailor strategies well to evaluate pupils' progress in line with the needs of the school.

Leaders have established a range of appropriate monitoring activities to keep track of the school's strengths and areas for development. They gather effectively a range of first-hand evidence to inform their views of the school. For example, they consider the views of pupils and parents, and analyse data on how well the pupils are progressing. Findings from such self-evaluation processes, as well as unforeseen factors such as the pandemic, are used well to inform the development of the school's improvement plan. However, leaders do not identify, share and apply the most effective practices in teaching, noted in their monitoring processes, across the school. For example, the opportunities for staff to observe and share each other's teaching skills are limited. As a result, the findings of leaders' monitoring do not lead to purposeful professional learning opportunities for staff to improve aspects of their teaching.

Leaders and staff make good progress in their priority to develop pupils' use of the school grounds, particularly among the youngest pupils. They have increased storage facilities and improved accessibility, which has allowed pupils more opportunities to choose where and how they learn. As a result, nursery and reception pupils learn to dress appropriately for learning first-hand about puddles in the rain. Additionally, older pupils use technologies effectively to film the school grounds, as part of their research to create posters inviting visitors to the school.

The headteacher and staff collaborate well with other schools and external partners, such as to plan for and implement the curriculum. Apart from improving aspects of teaching, arrangements to promote professional development for all staff link well with the school's priorities for improvement, for example by leaders raising teaching assistants' awareness of the Curriculum for Wales' areas of learning, and through implementing the new Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice.

Parents are kept well informed of school developments, for example through the use of a weekly newsletter, school app and the presence of staff at drop-off and pick-up

times. Parents feel that the school is a safe and caring family environment. They appreciate how quickly leaders and staff respond to any concerns that they raise, and this is a strength of the school.

Leaders manage the budget prudently and allocate resources to meet the school's needs well. This includes the pupil development grant, which the school uses effectively to support pupils eligible for free school meals.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers 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, to listen to them read 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 classes, including learning support groups 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 and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- 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 (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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publications 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 2023: 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: 20/01/2023