



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

A report on

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith

**Llansilin
Oswestry
Salop
Salop
SY10 7QD**

Date of inspection: December 2023

by

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

About Ysgol Bro Cynllaith

Name of provider	Ysgol Bro Cynllaith
Local authority	Powys County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	27
Pupils of statutory school age	22
Number in nursery classes	
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 23.7%)	10.8%
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 13.2%)	*
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/06/2015
Start date of inspection	04/12/2023

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

Leaders at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith work well with all partners and the local community to share their vision to provide a happy, caring, and inclusive school. The headteacher leads with compassion and knows the pupils, staff, and families well. There is a strong team ethos within the school, ensuring that pupils have interesting learning experiences.

Most pupils make strong progress in their development of oracy and reading skills in English and Welsh. Staff promote the Welsh language and culture consistently across the school. Pupils' numeracy and digital skills progress effectively. However, a minority of pupils do not develop their writing skills progressively enough as they move through the school.

Teachers create an effective learning environment and provide interesting lessons that capture pupils' imagination well. In general, teachers do not always ensure that all pupils are challenged fully and given opportunities to develop their independent learning skills in and outside of the classroom.

All staff have effective working relationship with pupils which nurtures their well-being successfully. This fosters a supportive and inclusive environment, which contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Staff have a sound understanding of the needs of nearly all pupils and adapt provision effectively to support pupils to make progress in skills. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is effective and responds well to their needs. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are positive, and they feel proud of their school and its community.

On the whole, leaders are secure about the strengths and areas for improvement of the school. However, they do not have a clear focus on pupil progress as part of the monitoring and evaluating process.

Recommendations

- R1 Address the safeguarding issue that was raised during the inspection
- R2 Strengthen procedures to monitor and track pupil progress to evaluate more effectively the standards they achieve
- R3 Improve the standards of pupils' writing across the school
- R4 Provide appropriate challenge and regular opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress.

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils start the school with skills and understanding that are expected for their stage of development. As they move through the school, most pupils, including those with ALN, make sound progress in their literacy and numeracy skills. However, a minority of pupils do not develop their writing skills progressively enough by the end of their time at the school.

Many younger pupils make good progress and communicate with each other and adults purposefully when playing and learning. They respond well to their peers, ask appropriate questions, and express their opinions showing respect for others. As pupils move through the school, they continue to develop their listening and speaking skills effectively. Nearly all older pupils develop their oracy skills appropriately in both Welsh and English. They respond well to questions and contribute purposefully to class discussion, expressing their views clearly.

Younger pupils develop their reading skills soundly. Many use an appropriate range of phonic strategies to read familiar and unfamiliar words, and most read with a good understanding of punctuation within the text. They explore books that are appropriate to their reading development with enthusiasm. By Year 2, most pupils read with increasing accuracy using phonological skills to read unfamiliar words. Many older pupils read intelligently in various contexts. They vary their tone of voice and use punctuation appropriately to show their understanding of the text. They develop their higher-order reading skills purposefully to gather information from different sources.

The younger pupils develop their writing skills suitably. Most pupils make marks purposefully and begin to form letters and write simple words with increasing confidence. By Year 2, most develop their early spelling and punctuation appropriately and write about their own experiences well. However, across the school, a minority of pupils do not write extended pieces of writing across the curriculum to a high enough standard. In addition, a minority of pupils' skills to refine and improve their work are underdeveloped.

Nearly all pupils make strong progress in developing their use of spoken Welsh and show great enjoyment in learning and using the language. The younger pupils often use Welsh in their daily routines, including singing songs and rhymes, and quickly become familiar with a good range of words and phrases. Most older pupils use a sound range of words and sentence patterns in Welsh to discuss various topics.

Many younger pupils are beginning to develop their mathematical skills soundly. They have a sound knowledge of numbers to 20 and count accurately in twos. By Year 2, most pupils use a range of resources to double and halve numbers successfully. They have good recall of simple multiplication tables, such as 2, 5 and 10, and use standard and non-standard units of measurement confidently to measure objects around the class, for example. As pupils move through the school, most develop their number skills and understanding of mathematical concepts such as geometry appropriately. Many pupils build well on previous learning by using a variety of problem-solving methods to apply their number skills in real life situations. For example, older pupils apply their numeracy skills effectively when working collaboratively to weigh fruit and vegetables, and organise orders for customers, when helping in the local community shop. However, a few pupils are less confident in solving mathematical problems independently across the curriculum.

Most pupils develop their digital skills purposefully. From a young age, pupils begin to develop their skills confidently in a range of learning experiences, for example when using simple programs to collect data on their favourite toys. As pupils progress through the school, they develop their skills to use a range of digital devices appropriately, for example to create a digital presentation following a visit to the pantomime. Most older pupils have sound levels of digital competence, for example through developing their use of data bases and spreadsheets, and using coding programs effectively.

Many pupils' creative skills develop suitably in a range of activities across the curriculum. The younger pupils make musical instruments for the local toddler group to play, and older pupils recreate their own paintings in the style of different Welsh artists such as Rhiannon Roberts and Ruth Jen Evans effectively.

Most pupils' physical skills develop well through a variety of beneficial experiences, such as activities with the specialist instructor and the weekly swimming lessons.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils happily attend school. They show pride in their school, have positive relationships with staff and feel safe within the inclusive and caring ethos. Nearly all pupils state that their views are valued, and they know what to do and who to talk to if they have a problem. They feel well supported by staff at the school.

Most pupils understand the importance of keeping healthy and enjoy participating in the physical activities in school. They know the importance of eating a balanced diet and nearly all pupils choose to eat a healthy snack during break. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of digital safety and know how to keep safe online. They understand how to keep their personal information safe by not sharing passwords and not speaking to strangers on-line.

Most pupils use a range of strategies effectively to support their well-being. For example, they speak purposefully about using classroom 'worry boxes' and a 'worry bunny' to help manage their emotions. Across the school, pupils' behaviour is good. Nearly all pupils readily support and care for one another. All pupils play happily together and engage with visitors in a welcoming manner. The older pupils develop a caring and nurturing approach when supporting younger pupils in the school.

Most pupils influence a range of aspects of school life positively. They show enthusiasm for taking on additional responsibilities in pupil voice groups. Younger members of these groups are particularly articulate in their responses to questions on their experiences in school, displaying a positive attitude towards their learning. Pupils in the school council work purposefully when exploring eco issues and realise the importance of looking after their environment and respecting their school. For example, they devise eco codes for their peers and staff, and plan whole-school events such as a litter pick in the local community.

As they move through the school, most pupils display a strong understanding of inclusion and diversity. For example, older pupils explain that it is acceptable to be different and appreciate the impact of kindness and equity. Most pupils understand their rights as children. For example, they understand the implications of these rights on their lives and for other children around the world. As a result, they begin to understand the importance of helping others in need, for example by raising money to support various charities.

Most pupils are beginning to develop their aspirations for the future and gain an understanding of the world of work. They value the educational visits to local landmarks and develop their skills successfully when inviting visitors to school. As a result of these rich experiences, most pupils build confidence in learning and ambition for the future as they move through the school.

Nearly all pupils collaborate well, listen carefully, and respect the contributions of others when discussing ideas for learning activities. However, in general, pupils are not always confident in contributing to what and how they learn. Most pupils play co-operatively, take turns and support each other well, for instance when playing yard games in Welsh.

Many pupils show positive attitudes to learning, they are quick to settle in lessons, listen attentively to teachers' instructions and concentrate well on their work. They show confidence when interacting with adults. However, a minority of pupils do not always demonstrate their independence in all learning activities. A majority of pupils improve their work appropriately and benefit from the 'Feedback Friday' sessions to discuss, refine and improve their work with teachers.

Teaching and learning experiences

Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and develop strong, supportive relationships, creating a nurturing learning environment. The school's curriculum supports the development of pupils' social and emotional skills purposefully.

In response to curriculum reform, the school is working suitably towards a purposeful curriculum that matches the principles of the Curriculum for Wales. Teachers work collaboratively and effectively with local schools to ensure a consistent approach. Staff provide pupils with a variety of learning experiences and whole-school topics are mapped appropriately to provide suitable breadth across all areas of learning and experience. They effectively engage pupils in their learning through 'launch days' at the start of a new topic. Staff are also beginning to trial interesting ways of approaching the curriculum through authentic experiences, for example through weekly work experience in the local community shop. Staff plan appropriate

educational trips and visits to enhance and enrich pupils' knowledge and understanding of different areas of the curriculum, for example the visit to Chester Zoo and the residential trip at Glan Llyn.

Staff have high aspirations for the development of pupils' Welsh language communication skills and plan and deliver activities to support pupils to develop their oracy skills systematically. Staff are very effective language role models and use a variety of greetings and instructions in Welsh, and provide encouraging praise for pupils to support their skills.

Overall, teachers plan suitably to develop pupils' English oracy, mathematics and digital skills. For example, teachers plan opportunities for the younger pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills effectively whilst undertaking activities independently. However, teachers do not always plan effectively enough to ensure regular and cohesive opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills progressively. The consistent use of worksheets and the over-direction of teaching at times hinder pupils to develop their independent learning skills. As a result, a minority of pupils do not make the progress they are capable of, especially in their writing skills.

Teachers organise their classrooms well to create an effective environment and a positive ethos for learning. Most use resources effectively to support pupils' learning. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills consistently, especially in the extensive outside areas throughout the year.

In general, teachers ensure that lessons are delivered at a suitable pace and encourage pupils to work individually and collaboratively to complete tasks. They explain tasks clearly to pupils and help them understand how best to achieve. Most teachers share clear objectives for tasks, and success criteria are used appropriately to support pupils to develop confidence when self-evaluating their own efforts. In general, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to challenge their own learning and achieve to the best of their ability. As a result, this slows down a majority of pupils' progress over time.

Teachers use questioning techniques well to support and assess pupils' understanding of their learning. They encourage pupils effectively and praise their peers for their achievements. In the best practice, teachers plan short 'pit stops' during activities to prompt pupils effectively to reflect on their learning and explain their reasoning. Teachers provide regular feedback to pupils and opportunities are given to the older pupils to respond to oral feedback during their 'Feedback Friday' sessions. However, teachers' feedback does not always allow for the minority of pupils to move forward well enough in their learning. As a result, pupil progress, especially in writing, is less well developed.

Staff share relevant information with parents about their children's learning experiences, well-being and overall progress through informal conversations, pupil progress meetings and informative annual reports.

Care, support and guidance

The school is an inclusive and welcoming community that provides effective care for all pupils. There is a strong sense of belonging where nearly all pupils feel safe, respected and valued. Staff place high emphasis on encouraging pupils to care for each other and promote the importance of good behaviour and courtesy. Staff undertake appropriate training to support pupils' well-being.

The school has suitable arrangements to promote exercise and healthy eating and drinking and, as a result, most pupils understand the importance of choosing a healthy lifestyle. There are effective opportunities for pupils to be active during the school day.

The school's provision for pupils with ALN contributes purposefully to their progress. Pupils who require additional support are identified quickly and make at least the expected progress from their starting point. The Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) attends relevant training and works effectively to ensure that pupils identified receive the necessary support and intervention required. However, improvement targets and monitoring of these pupils are not always used effectively enough to ensure that pupils make sustained progress over time.

The ALNCo communicates appropriately with parents and is trialing a new system, which creates a pupil centred on-line reports giving further suggestions on how the school may support pupils with additional needs. When more significant needs are identified, the ALNCo engages well with relevant agencies to secure the necessary support for these pupils. All staff are aware of learners in need of additional support and help to ensure that they have the best possible opportunities to succeed.

The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to participate in collective worship and to reflect on important moral and spiritual issues. Teachers provide relevant opportunities for pupils to reflect on values, and the beliefs of others. As a result, most pupils believe they are treated equally.

Nearly all pupils are friendly, respectful, and polite to adults and each other. Teachers plan meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn about different countries and cultures. Older pupils benefit from opportunities to study a range of different religions and celebrations, including Diwali. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to share their own cultures and traditions, for example when visiting the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod. Purposeful opportunities are provided for older pupils to enhance their appreciation of Welsh history and culture, such as through opportunities to study Welsh music artists.

School leaders communicate the importance of good attendance of pupils to parents regularly, which has helped improve attendance over time. The procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns about pupils are clear and staff make timely referrals to external agencies, where appropriate. However, issues relating to the school grounds were identified as health and safety issues during the inspection.

Leadership and management

Leaders embrace the vision to provide pupils with a rich learning experience based at the heart of the local community effectively. This vision underpins the purposeful provision for pupils' well-being and learning experiences. The headteacher leads with enthusiasm and a high level of care and consideration for pupils, staff and parents. She provides supportive and effective leadership and engages very well with all partners to share the vision.

Leaders promote a strong culture of teamwork amongst the small number of staff, utilising their expertise effectively amongst the constraints of the staffing structure and budget. For example, specific staff members teach Welsh and physical education to pupils weekly. As a result, most pupils' Welsh language and physical skills are developing effectively.

Leaders have high expectations of staff to provide pupils with a positive and supportive experience in school. There are good arrangements to build leadership capacity and develop the professional learning of staff in line with the school's improvement priorities. For example, teachers are given opportunities to develop their leadership skills through middle management courses and support staff are trusted with responsibilities for pupils' well-being. Leaders link professional learning effectively to improvement priorities. They engage all staff in purposeful training to develop their professional knowledge and understanding of teaching and leadership approaches. For example, support staff have completed a work based apprenticeship to support the development of pupils' physical skills.

The school's improvement plan sets out the strategic direction of the school's improvement work appropriately. There are appropriate timescales and success indicators in place to evaluate school priorities. Leaders are beginning to develop appropriate procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the school's work that leads to tangible improvements. For example, staff received specific training that enabled them to better support pupils' well-being. Overall, the school's improvement priorities link well to the key messages from the self-evaluation process. For example, leaders recognised the need to develop pupils' Welsh language skills and provided valuable professional learning for staff to attend beneficial Welsh courses. However, leaders do not always monitor and track pupil progress in skills well enough, such as the development of pupils' writing skills.

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is part of the Bangor University and the University of Chester education partnership and works collaboratively to support student teacher learning. This means that the school's staff are responsible for mentoring students each year. This reinforces the positive attitude of all staff towards professional learning.

The school addresses local and national priorities well. Work to develop the Curriculum for Wales alongside local schools is thorough and systematic. Leaders and staff work effectively as a cluster of schools. For example, they develop a more consistent approach to teaching and learning to support pupils transition to secondary school.

The governing body is well informed and committed to supporting the school. They have a valuable range of expertise and contribute well to school life and to its place

within the local community. They understand the school's improvement priorities and the reasons that underpin them. They support leaders to implement and monitor improvement work appropriately, for example by visiting the school to observe developments at first hand and speak to pupils about their work. Governors make appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking for pupils. School leaders manage finances thoughtfully and allocate funds to support improvement successfully.

Leaders work thoughtfully to develop positive working relationships with parents and communicate with them well to keep them informed about events at the school, and the progress that their children are making. Staff are on hand to discuss matters timely with parents. As a result, parents feel well informed about their children's learning and experiences and appreciate the staff's efforts in involving the school in all activities in the local community.

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

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