



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

A report on

Llanidloes C.P. School

**Llanidloes
Powys
SY18 6EX**

Date of inspection: February 2024

by

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

About Llanidloes C.P. School

Name of provider	Llanidloes C.P. School
Local authority	Powys County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	280
Pupils of statutory school age	239
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%)	16.6%
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%)	17.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	5.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/04/2014
Start date of inspection	19/02/2024

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

Llanidloes Primary School is a caring and welcoming community that fosters a sense of belonging in its pupils. The headteacher provides effective leadership and is well supported by staff who work together successfully as a team. Nearly all pupils behave well. They show positive attitudes to learning and are proud of their school. Where appropriate, they benefit from additional support that helps prepare them for learning, for example by accessing the school's Well-being Centre.

Most pupils make sound progress in developing their skills during their time in school. They develop strong oracy skills in English from an early age and build their reading skills well as they progress through the school. Many develop suitable writing skills. However, overall, the accuracy of pupils' writing is too variable, and older pupils do not receive enough opportunities to write at length. Nearly all pupils develop their Welsh listening skills very well, and become increasingly confident speakers, using a suitable variety of familiar Welsh language patterns. Most pupils develop their number skills well and, by the end of Year 6, most apply a good range of digital skills to their work across the curriculum. Teachers provide pupils with a wealth of opportunities to participate in expressive arts in lessons and via extra-curricular activities. As a result, most pupils develop their artistic and creative skills very well.

Teachers deliver interesting and engaging lessons. They place a special emphasis on activities inspired by the local community or Welsh culture, such as Welsh myths and legends. Staff provide suitable support for pupils during lessons. They give valuable verbal feedback to pupils as they engage with activities in class, although teachers' written feedback is less effective.

The school is federated with Llanidloes High School. This means that the schools share one governing body, and work closely on a few other aspects. For example, secondary aged pupils support their primary peers as Welsh 'reading buddies'.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' writing skills in English
- R2 Provide more purposeful opportunities for pupils to improve their work in response to feedback

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals, make suitable progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding during their time in the school.

Most pupils make sound progress in developing their literacy skills from their starting points. Overall, pupils make stronger progress in their oracy and reading skills than in developing their writing. Nearly all pupils develop as confident speakers. Many use a broad and varied vocabulary, often with precision. They listen attentively to their peers, for instance when taking turns to perform a composition in class. Many pupils across the school are keen to offer relevant answers to questions posed by staff. They share their ideas and opinions thoughtfully.

Most younger pupils build their knowledge of letter sounds quickly and use this to break down unfamiliar words successfully. By Year 2, most pupils read suitably challenging texts with appropriate confidence and understanding. They show enjoyment in reading and in being read to. Many older pupils recall events in stories with enthusiasm and often in lively detail. Most make effective use of their reading skills to support their wider learning, for instance to locate relevant information during their independent research.

Most pupils make steady progress in developing their writing skills. Many of the youngest pupils apply their writing skills appropriately during their independent learning, for instance to produce invitations to a party. Many pupils in Year 2 plan their writing for a purpose, such as to choose suitable words for an alliterative poem. A minority of younger pupils use simple punctuation accurately and spell most common words correctly. By Year 4, most pupils use paragraphs to retell a Welsh legend effectively. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 employ a wider variety of sentence structures and stylistic devices to enliven their work. In the best instances, they use language imaginatively for effect, for instance to create vivid descriptions or generate tension. However, older pupils in particular do not write at length often enough and do not refine their work consistently. Overall, the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation is too variable.

Nearly all pupils show positive attitudes towards hearing and speaking the Welsh language. Most younger pupils join in enthusiastically with Welsh nursery rhymes, matching actions appropriately to the words they sing. By Year 2, many pupils have a sound understanding of a suitable range of simple language patterns and vocabulary. For example, they respond appropriately to questions about their feelings and the weather. By Year 6, most pupils develop strong listening skills. A majority extend their answers to communicate additional relevant detail when responding to questions.

Most pupils across the school develop their number skills well. Younger pupils use natural materials in the outdoors to develop their understanding of measure appropriately, for instance by ordering sticks from shortest to longest. They know the value of coins and use simple addition to total amounts correctly, for instance when

buying and selling milk at break time. By Year 2, most pupils begin to use their multiplication skills to solve word problems and use informal written methods to support their calculation effectively. Most pupils in Year 4 use their understanding of place value to order larger numbers and simple decimals correctly. They identify fractions of shapes accurately and estimate and measure time to the nearest second, for instance to record how long it takes to run a lap of the playground. By Year 6, most pupils use their numeracy skills purposefully, for example to select the most profitable recipe to raise funds for a charity. Overall, pupils' knowledge and understanding of data is less well developed.

Most pupils make suitable progress in developing their digital skills. Many younger pupils use their skills purposefully. For example, they use a painting app to create an image of the mythical village of 'Cantre'r Gwaelod'. Pupils in Year 2 use a range of digital tools to apply their skills in their topic work, for instance to create animations and present information in simple graphs. Older pupils carry out searches to find relevant information efficiently, such as facts about plastic in our seas and to gather statistics about oceans to populate a database. By Year 6, pupils make imaginative use of green screen technology to create engaging advertisements to market products as part of their enterprise activity.

Nearly all pupils engage enthusiastically with the good range of opportunities that develop their artistic and expressive skills successfully. Most pupils develop their musical skills well, for instance by building on simple drumming rhythms in Year 2 to develop their understanding of timbre in Years 5 and 6. Older pupils collaborate effectively with visiting practitioners to create a piece of music about 'Twm Sion Cati'. Most pupils investigate a wide range of artistic techniques and make creative decisions about their artwork independently, for instance to select the media they wish to use to create an image portraying the legend of Llyn Y Fan Fach.

Most pupils develop their physical skills well. Younger pupils develop their manipulative skills through practical activities indoors and outdoors and participate enthusiastically in the daily mile. Most older pupils show good spatial awareness and demonstrate appropriate coordination and control when practising their ball handling skills.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy within the school's caring and inclusive community. They enjoy coming to school and are proud to welcome visitors, talking confidently about their learning and the exciting opportunities they experience such as taking part in local exhibitions and working with artists.

Pupils have warm and respectful relationships with adults in the school and feel that staff treat them fairly and with respect. They treat others with care and consideration and respect the contribution of their peers. This is particularly evident during the regular Diversity Show assembly that provides an opportunity for pupils and staff to share their experiences in a safe environment that fosters respect.

Pupils know who they can turn to when they need additional help or support. When needed, staff ensure that pupils have access to the Well-being Centre where they

have support to understand and regulate their emotions. This is a notable strength of the school.

From an early age, pupils settle quickly into the morning routine, discussing the weather, reading or choosing tasks in different areas of provision. Nearly all pupils across the school have positive attitudes to learning. They engage enthusiastically with activities in lessons, especially when they have the opportunity to guide their own learning and work independently. They co-operate with their peers to share ideas, for example when they develop a plan to investigate how to increase the speed at which ice melts. Most pupils discuss their work in detail, recalling previously learnt facts with confidence.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate good behaviour during lessons and as they move around the school. The youngest pupils listen attentively to their teachers and enjoy interacting with each other. Older pupils work successfully with their peers in pairs or small groups and support each other's learning.

Across the school, pupils respond well to verbal feedback they receive during lessons. For example, they discuss the correct tool to use in the forest area when making a bird feeder. However, pupils make less effective use of written feedback, which does not always support them in refining their writing skills.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to use the internet safely. Older pupils prepare effective presentations for their younger peers to share tips about how to stay safe online. Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. They make healthy choices at snack and lunchtime and discuss balanced diets in lessons. They understand the benefits of physical exercise on their health such as participating in cricket and hockey, and taking part in running the daily mile.

Pupils benefit from extra-curricular clubs that support the wide range of learning opportunities offered, particularly in expressive arts where pupils enjoy Dawnsio Disgo and performing in the choir. A few older pupils benefit from the opportunity to attend a digital club alongside peers from the high school.

Pupils make good use of the opportunities to develop their leadership roles through groups such as the pupil leadership team, bronze ambassadors and eco committee. Pupils also lead in the local community. A strong example of this is the Criw Cymraeg's influence in promoting Welsh in the local shop and leisure centre. The eco committee share their experience of a detailed and well-planned campaign to reduce the amount of single use plastic across the school. Pupils are ethically aware and enjoy a wide range of opportunities to help others through their charity work and supporting the work of the local foodbank. As a result, they develop empathy for others.

Overall, attendance levels show a trend of recent improvement. However, last year's school attendance levels remain below the figures prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teaching and learning experiences

Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and foster strong relationships, which support learning positively. They manage pupils' behaviour very well, supporting pupils' emotional well-being with sensitivity and respect.

Overall, lessons meet pupils' needs suitably. Classrooms are stimulating and engaging places. Staff plan suitable activities in the outdoors, such as when older pupils create videos to promote the benefit of physical activity for younger pupils. Another notable example is the range of engaging activities provided for pupils in the school's forest area.

Teachers give clear instructions and provide appropriate support within lessons to develop pupils' learning, tailoring their approaches when needed. Many teachers use questioning well to support deeper thinking and learning. Most adults are strong language role models in both English and in Welsh. Support staff are deployed appropriately to support pupils' learning and emotional needs. The school places an appropriate focus on developing pupils' Welsh language communication skills through regular timetabled activities and by promoting Welsh in the daily life of the school.

Most teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils. For example, older pupils are challenged to plot and compare monthly household energy costs. With valuable support, they make good progress in applying their numeracy skills during the lesson. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve in their writing are not sufficiently high and this impacts on their progress over time.

Most teachers provide effective verbal feedback, which supports pupils to make good progress within lessons. However, opportunities for pupils to improve their work in light of written feedback are variable. As a result, pupils' written work isn't always developed to the highest possible standard. The school makes suitable use of reading, spelling and numeracy assessments along with a range of other information to track the progress of individual pupils and groups. Recently, leaders have introduced pupil progress meetings, which are beginning to increase the focus on individual pupil progress.

The school has a clear vision for the curriculum, which is based on developing pupils' appreciation of the richness of the local community. This has been developed with pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community. The school's curriculum is suitably broad and inclusive, and it enables pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy, and digital skills appropriately. The school is beginning to develop its curriculum so that it builds systematically to include progression in knowledge, skills and understanding over time. Along with local schools, they are beginning to establish a shared understanding of progression across all areas of learning and experience.

Teachers plan many interesting and engaging learning experiences, which provide pupils with opportunities to learn in purposeful and meaningful ways. For example, older pupils work with a local confectionery business to explore the world of work and elements of chocolate production. Teachers plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider world. For example, pupils research influential Welsh people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and celebrate their achievements.

Pupils receive valuable opportunities to develop their personal and social skills through a structured approach to learning about their mental and physical health. For example, they learn how to foster healthy relationships and older pupils learn about the changes to their bodies that occur as part of puberty.

Pupils benefit from a range of visits within the locality and further afield to support their learning and enrich the curriculum. For example, younger pupils visit the local St Idloes Church to examine the church furniture and to evaluate the stained-glass windows before creating their own designs.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring and nurturing environment. Staff build strong working relationships with pupils, parents and carers and are committed to securing the well-being of pupils across the school. The school's inclusive ethos enables pupils to settle well and to feel safe and happy in school.

Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and they respond promptly and sensitively to their emotional and social needs. This is a strength of the school. They provide a wide range of well-being strategies that underpin the caring and nurturing culture of the school successfully. For example, daily 'check-ins' with pupils enable teachers to monitor their well-being sensitively and to provide appropriate support quickly when needed. There are beneficial relationships between school and home that result in a strong sense of community. As a result, most parents value the care and guidance their children receive.

The school has suitable processes for tracking and monitoring the progress and well-being of pupils, including those with ALN. Staff identify pupils' specific needs at an early stage and provide them with appropriate support. Teachers set targets for pupils who require additional support and use these to inform provision. Staff support identified individuals and groups suitably. For example, they provide a useful range of specific literacy, numeracy and well-being programmes that help them to make suitable progress during their time in school.

The ALN co-ordinator has a secure understanding of her role. She works closely with parents and pupils to tailor appropriate support and to agree suitable targets for pupils' progress. Leaders are developing systems to monitor this provision to ensure it meets pupils' needs effectively. The school works purposefully with a range of external agencies, such as the education psychology team, to enhance its ALN provision. The provision in the Sunflower Room, which is a specialist resource base for pupils with moderate learning difficulties funded by the local authority, meets pupils' needs adequately. The school is proactive in managing transition, maintaining close links with the pre-school provision and high school. For example, pupils who are feeling anxious about transferring to secondary school benefit from regular familiarisation visits.

The school places a strong emphasis on 'Cynefin' and participates in a range of community partnerships that reinforce pupils' sense of belonging well. For example, pupils collect and deliver food to a local charity that supports vulnerable families. This develops their understanding of the contribution they make as responsible members of their community.

Teachers provide effective provision to promote healthy lifestyles. They provide regular PE lessons where pupils develop their skills well within engaging contexts. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to access a range of competitive sports. For example, pupils compete in the Urdd sporting events. These activities promote and develop pupils' resilience and their ability to work effectively as a member of a team.

There is an effective range of trips and visits to support pupils' learning. Visits from the local police officer deepen pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe in their own community and online. The school makes good use of residential trips to broaden pupils' experience and promote their independence successfully.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to join leadership groups including the pupil leadership team, Criw Cymraeg, eco-committee and bronze ambassadors. This provision supports pupils to take on responsibilities and contribute to developing the school. For example, bronze ambassadors promote pupils' physical skills and improve the outdoor provision for physical activity at playtimes.

Teachers make beneficial use of links with local businesses to develop pupils' knowledge of the world of work and to raise their aspirations. For example, they hold a job swap day that enables pupils to learn about careers and the headteacher hosts individual career meetings with Year 6 pupils.

The school's inclusive culture supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Teachers provide worthwhile opportunities in lessons and collective worship to develop pupils' understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion. For example, pupils learn about causes of deafness and how to use sign language as a means of communication. The school enables pupils to develop empathy and compassion. For example, the school's 'Diversity Show' encourages pupils to reflect on the experience of others and nurtures their understanding of right and wrong.

The school's provision for expressive arts is highly effective in developing pupils' creativity and imagination. Staff across the school provide frequent opportunities for pupils to appreciate and recognise the characteristics of different types of music and to compose and perform their work in front of an audience. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 engage in a week's residency with an opera company to create a production of the 'Cunning Fox'.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff have a sound understanding of processes that help protect children from harm. Leaders maintain close links with external agencies in order to support families where appropriate. The school site is a safe environment that is managed effectively by school leaders. Leaders are aware of the need to further improve attendance levels. They monitor pupils' attendance carefully on a group and individual pupil level and implement a range of appropriate strategies to support pupils to attend school regularly.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads the school well. She has a clear vision based on creating a sense of enthusiasm for learning inspired by the local community and Welsh culture,

so that pupils develop the skills to become 'lifelong learners'. Leaders value the input of all members of staff and create a strong teamworking ethic. Leaders place a clear emphasis on pupils' well-being, and as a result the school has a strong culture of safeguarding.

The school has well established self-evaluation procedures, based on gathering first-hand evidence. Leaders link evaluation activities to the current school development priorities well, allocating clear roles to staff, governors and pupils. As a result, they have a strong sense of ownership and joint responsibility for school improvement. Overall, leaders identify strengths and areas for development accurately, for example by implementing recent changes to develop pupils' writing skills. However, a few of the evaluation activities are not rigorous enough to make an impact on pupils' progress.

Leaders have a track record of making positive changes to the provision that impact beneficially on pupils' learning. For example, they introduced regular structured guided reading sessions across the school that have led to an improvement in pupils' reading skills. They take national priorities into account appropriately. For example, they have raised the profile of Welsh culture, set clear expectations of teachers in relation to developing pupils' Welsh language skills, and have developed a culture of reading in English.

The school has suitable performance management processes for staff. Leaders set annual targets based on individual and school needs and revisit these targets regularly. Leaders have created a culture of professional learning in the school. All staff are included in teams that meet regularly to discuss and improve different aspects of the curriculum. They have access to beneficial training opportunities that help them to support pupils' learning and well-being and engage in research projects based on school priorities.

Governors support and challenge senior leaders appropriately. They visit the school regularly and take part in worthwhile activities that help them to develop a sound understanding of the school's work. The governing body ensures that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

The school business manager, headteacher and governing body manage the school budget well. They prioritise expenditure appropriately to match the school's current areas for improvement. Leaders ensure that alleviating the impact of poverty on pupils' education is a central part of their improvement planning. They make suitable use of grants, including the pupil development grant. For example, they provide pupils with emotional support in the school's Well-being Centre.

Leaders maintain effective links with parents. They share information with them about school events in a timely manner and provide useful guidance to help them support their children's learning. For example, staff run parental drop-in sessions about supporting pupils to read and online safety. Leaders work closely with the Friends of the School who raise funds to buy additional resources, for instance to enrich the playground.

The school is part of a federation with Llanidloes High School. This means that the schools share one governing body, and work closely on a few other aspects. For example, pupils from both schools perform together in theatrical productions.

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:

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