



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

A report on

**Ysgol Trefnant
Henllan Road
Trefnant
Nr. Denbigh
Sir Ddinbych
LL16 5UF**

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by

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

About Ysgol Trefnant

Ysgol Trefnant Voluntary Aided Church in Wales Primary School serves the village of Trefnant and surrounding area in the county of Denbighshire. There are 83 pupils aged 3 to 11 years at the school including 12 pupils in the nursery. Pupils are taught in four mixed age classes. Around 19% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is close to the national average of 18%.

Nearly all pupils are white British and speak English as their main language. A very few pupils speak Welsh at home. The school identifies that around 22% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is close to the national average of 21%.

The current headteacher took up her post in 2007. In January 2016, the diocese asked the headteacher to take on the role of acting headteacher of another Church in Wales school in Denbighshire. The schools have worked collaboratively since this time but have not established a formal federation. The headteacher shares her time equally between the two sites. An assistant headteacher provides leadership at the school when the headteacher is off site. The school's last inspection was in October 2013.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

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

Nearly all pupils in Ysgol Trefnant make good progress from their starting points, especially in developing their literacy and mathematical skills. They behave well, are eager to learn and engage effectively in lessons. They develop their ability to improve their own work successfully, tackle new tasks enthusiastically and grow into confident and articulate individuals.

The school tracks and monitors pupils' progress carefully, which enables teachers to provide effective support for individuals and groups. Teachers and support staff work well together and develop strong working relationships with pupils. This creates a happy and purposeful atmosphere in the school. Teachers focus successfully on developing pupils' skills systematically and provide interesting and varied learning experiences. There is a worthwhile emphasis on developing strong values and developing pupils as well-rounded individuals.

Leaders have created a strong collaborative ethos in the school and teachers work together effectively as a strong team. They benefit from good quality professional development and share effective practice across the school and with other local schools regularly. Governors provide worthwhile support and challenge. The school benefits from the headteacher's responsibility for leading two schools. A strong partnership between the schools has developed with effective arrangements for sharing resources and expertise.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that pupils apply their numeracy skills as well in their work across the curriculum as they do in their mathematics work
- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to write independently and creatively at length in English lessons and across the curriculum
- R3 Improve pupils' ability to lead and manage pupil groups and provide opportunities for pupils to contribute meaningfully to school improvement

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils start school with speaking and mathematics skills that are at or above those expected for their age. During their time in the school, nearly all pupils, including pupils with additional learning needs and more able pupils, make good progress. A very few pupils make very good progress from their starting points.

Across the school, most pupils develop exceptionally strong speaking skills. Pupils in nursery and reception talk eagerly about what they are doing, for example to explain that they need 'two more pieces there' to complete building a bridge. Nearly all pupils in Year 2 use interesting language to share ideas about bonfire night. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils communicate and share their opinions confidently. They pronounce words clearly, use an extensive range of vocabulary and structure sentences well.

Most pupils in the foundation phase and nearly all pupils in key stage 2 listen well to instructions and to one another. A very few more able pupils in Years 3 and 4 have very well developed listening skills. They listen to others' views carefully and support each other effectively in conversations.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop their reading skills successfully. For example, pupils in Year 2 select suitable strategies to tackle unfamiliar words, including their knowledge of phonics. They use punctuation, such as exclamation marks, enthusiastically to convey meaning. Pupils in Year 6 are confident, expressive readers who talk enthusiastically about books they read and their favourite authors. They know how to use information books, dictionaries and thesauruses well.

Nearly all pupils are confident writers. More able pupils in the nursery begin to form the letters in their name correctly. By the end of their time in the reception class, they write short sentences using simple words and forming letters correctly. By Year 2, most pupils understand how to use simple punctuation and use connectives well to retell a story about the 'Three Little Pigs'. In a few tasks, for instance when writing a passage that builds tension or fear, pupils in Year 6 develop their ideas in interesting ways. When writing descriptive poems, they use a good range of similes and examples of personification and alliteration. However, across the school, pupils do not develop their ability to write creatively and at length well enough. A few older pupils do not take enough care when they present their work.

Nearly all pupils progress well in mathematics. In the reception class, most pupils count objects, such as the gingerbread man's buttons successfully. By Year 2, most pupils have a secure understanding of number bonds and use their knowledge of addition and multiplication to solve simple problems. Most pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop a suitable understanding of polygons and non-polygons during their mathematics lesson, and more able pupils work successfully in a small group to work out fractions of a whole number. Nearly all pupils in Year 6 complete a worthwhile range of work accurately, including adding and subtracting five and six-digit numbers. They apply their numeracy skills in different contexts regularly but not to the same standard as in their mathematics lessons.

Pupils across the school develop a range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively. In the foundation phase, most pupils use tablet computers confidently to photograph their work and save the images. By Year 2, many pupils add comments and voice over explanations to their work independently. By Year 6, nearly all pupils use word processing skills confidently. They import images and choose suitable fonts to create a striking poster collage for Remembrance Day. They use effective data handling skills to create line graphs comparing climates in different countries and nearly all pupils make worthwhile progress in developing their modelling skills.

Most pupils express enthusiasm about learning Welsh. Most key stage 2 pupils talk positively about the advantages of learning Welsh and becoming bilingual. In the foundation phase, nearly all pupils name colours confidently, count fluently and respond to simple instructions given in Welsh. Most use simple phrases confidently with a little support, for example to say how they are feeling. Most pupils progress suitably and, by Year 6, more able pupils use familiar vocabulary and language patterns fluently such as to describe where they live and the members of their family. Most use their Welsh language skills appropriately in structured situations outside lessons. In general, most pupils develop their Welsh reading and writing skills appropriately.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop their physical and creative skills well. For example, pupils in key stage 2 make good progress with refining their throwing and catching skills during their physical education lesson while younger pupils develop hand to eye co-ordination skills well using playground equipment at break time. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 explore using different artistic techniques successfully to create eye-catching bonfire night pictures.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils are ready to learn at the start of lessons. They show interest in their work and are excited about learning new things. Most pupils concentrate well on tasks and work well individually, in pairs and in small groups. Many pupils develop a positive approach to tackling challenging work. They show determination to overcome difficulties and persevere for suitable periods. For example, most pupils in Years 5 and 6 persevere effectively until they succeed in programming a sequence of flashing lights to illuminate a relief drawing of the Swansea Blitz.

Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy in school. They talk confidently about making healthy food choices and know that drinking plenty of water is good for them. During break times, most pupils play actively. For example, they run around energetically. Many speak enthusiastically about their involvement in after school football and dance clubs. Nearly all pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online. For example, they know that they should not share personal information, such as their address, with others.

Nearly all pupils develop a strong sense of belonging to the school community. Their positive behaviour is a notable feature in lessons and around the school. There is particularly positive interaction between pupils of different age groups, for example at play times and during activities such as singing in the school choir. Older pupils talk sensibly about strategies they use to resolve disputes. Overall, pupils show high levels of courtesy and respect to each other and adults.

Pupils are proud of their leadership roles on groups such as the school council, the eco-committee and the criw Cymraeg. They take their responsibilities seriously and this helps them develop their confidence and resilience well. For example, the criw Cymraeg are enthusiastic ambassadors for the Welsh language. They share the Welsh phrase of the week confidently in front of their peers in assembly and encourage them write it on the board on the schoolyard. The school council has helped raise pupils' awareness of important issues such as children's rights and sustainability. However, overall, pupils do not always lead and manage groups with enough independence. Occasionally, they are over reliant on adult guidance.

Pupils develop a suitable understanding of fairness and justice through taking part in activities such as collecting food for the Denbigh foodbank and selling poppies to support the British Legion. However, pupils' contribution to school improvement processes both as individuals and through their pupil groups is at a very early stage of development.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress in learning how to improve their own work. For example, at the start of the school day, nearly all pupils in key stage 2 check their mathematics books and use feedback from their teacher successfully to edit and improve their work. This helps consolidate their understanding of mathematical skills effectively. Most pupils in key stage 2 talk with understanding about trying to overcome difficulties by themselves or by working together as a group before asking for help from an adult. However, in the foundation phase, pupils' ability to seek other solutions when their first approach to a problem is unsuccessful is at an early stage of development. In Years 5 and 6, pupils record what they already know and what they would like to know about their topics. This involvement sparks their interest and helps them to engage fully in their work. However, in other classes, pupils' contribution to what and how they learn is more limited.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Nearly all teachers and learning assistants develop strong working relationships with pupils. This creates a warm and purposeful atmosphere in the school where nearly all pupils are confident and willing learners. They take a consistently positive approach to managing pupils' behaviour, and pupils respond well to this.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and in general, provide clear lesson objectives that support pupils' learning effectively. Where teaching is particularly strong, teachers plan engaging activities and set the scene for their lessons imaginatively. For example, they use dimmed lights and video to create a powerful sense of awe and wonder during the introduction to an investigation into the evacuation of Dunkirk. This captures pupils' interest particularly well. However, in a few lessons, the pace of teaching is too slow, and pupils do not have enough opportunities to work collaboratively. This restricts their progress at times. Many teachers use a variety of questioning techniques effectively to develop pupils' responses and gauge their understanding.

Most teachers and teaching assistants provide constructive oral and written feedback that helps pupils know how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. Teachers develop pupils' ability to improve their own work progressively as they move through the school. This develops pupils' resilience and confidence to learn

from their mistakes successfully. Teachers use information from regular assessments well to plan next steps in learning and to provide purposeful additional support for individuals and groups of learners. This develops pupils' skills successfully. For example, more able pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefit from opportunities to work together in a small group to extend their mathematical skills. A flexible approach to grouping enables teachers to meet pupils' changing needs well. Teachers use assessment information effectively to identify particular areas for development and this has led to a beneficial emphasis recently on developing pupils' reading and mathematical reasoning skills.

In the foundation phase, there are valuable opportunities for pupils to learn through carefully planned adult directed activities, with a strong focus on developing their literacy and numeracy skills. In general, teachers provide a stimulating learning environment and they plan specific tasks so that pupils can practise their skills appropriately. Teachers link these carefully to topics. For example, in the upper foundation phase, there are good opportunities for pupils to practise writing descriptive words independently using white chalk on black paper backgrounds as part of their light and dark theme. The school is making suitable progress in developing its outdoor provision and small groups access this regularly to develop their skills, such as building dark dens, and using large crates to build a bridge for the gingerbread man to cross the river.

There is a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills systematically and progressively as they move through the school. However, teachers structure pupils' work carefully and there is an over-reliance on worksheets that tends to limit pupils' opportunities to practise these skills independently and creatively. There are regular opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in different contexts. However, teachers do not always plan carefully enough for pupils to apply their skills at an appropriate level to consolidate their learning. Teachers make good use of available resources and plan appropriately to allow pupils to develop a worthwhile range of ICT skills.

Teachers work together effectively to plan a broad and balanced curriculum that provides pupils with a rich education across a range of different subjects. This includes topics that pupils enjoy such as 'Marvellous Me', 'Wonderful Water' and the current topic in Years 5 and 6 about the Second World War. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about their Welsh heritage, including studying important historical figures such as William Morgan, practising Welsh folk dancing in physical education lesson, and learning about the work of Welsh artists such as Kyffin Williams in their art lessons.

The school promotes use of Welsh effectively. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills in their lessons and through other activities such as the Welsh assembly, singing in the school choir and through regular routines such as asking for a school dinner. There has been a recent focus on developing children's reading skills, which is beginning to have a positive impact, and there are suitable opportunities for pupils to practise their Welsh writing.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy community that fosters mutual respect and politeness consistently and effectively through its nurturing ethos. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' wellbeing and the good standards they achieve.

The school focuses effectively on helping pupils develop positive attitudes towards healthy lifestyle choices. For example, pupils have valuable opportunities to develop physical skills that encourage them to be active, including learning to swim in their regular physical education lessons. There are popular after school clubs that promote pupils' health and wellbeing successfully, including football, gardening and dance clubs. The school makes appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. These include initiatives such as the 'Fruity Shop' and opportunities in lessons for pupils to learn the importance of a balanced, healthy diet

The school offers worthwhile opportunities for all pupils, including pupils from different groups, to take on active roles and responsibilities within the school in groups such as the school council, eco-committee and the criw Cymraeg. These provide useful opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and sense of self-worth. However, they do not all provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to take full responsibility for leading and managing the groups.

Teachers give a high priority to communicating effectively with parents. This is a strong element of the school's work. An attractive weekly newsletter and the effective use of social media provide parents with useful information about children's learning and important issues such as attendance. There are weekly drop-in sessions for parents to discuss any matters related to their child's education and wellbeing. There are frequent opportunities for parents to visit the school, such as opportunities for parents of foundation phase pupils to attend storytelling sessions with their children, and visits to the library to highlight the importance of reading.

The school tracks and monitors pupils' progress thoroughly as they move through the school. This enables teachers to identify pupils in need of additional support successfully and to ensure that all pupils, including the more able, make good progress. Teachers use this information well to put in place useful and flexible arrangements for grouping pupils and providing effective support. This includes valuable support for individual pupils' emotional needs that helps them access the curriculum successfully. The school makes good use of partnerships with other professional agencies. For example, a visiting professional provides valuable support to help develop pupils' communication skills in the foundation phase.

Teachers model and foster values such as honesty, fairness and justice purposefully, as well as pupils' understanding of what is right and wrong. They reinforce these well throughout the school day, reflecting the school's positive ethos. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about their place in a diverse global world through their topic work and through initiatives such as Fairtrade and collecting food for the local foodbank. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to engage with the creative arts when they explore a variety of styles of music and the work of different artists in lessons. The school choir develops pupils' confidence as well as developing their ability to perform as a group. Teachers make sure that pupils learn about recycling and conserving energy effectively, such as through the eco-committee's work, and the gardening club helps develop pupils' understanding of sustainability well.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

Senior leaders provide strong strategic direction for the school and have high expectations of staff and pupils. They ensure the school has a clear vision and appropriate aims that focus on meeting the needs of all pupils. All teaching staff contribute effectively to raising standards and improving provision through leading the development of curriculum areas. Staff work together as a close and effective team. Their work has a positive impact particularly on implementing actions to address the school's priorities for improvement

The school acts positively on advice from external advisors, for instance to improve the use of the indoor and outdoor learning environments in the foundation phase. There are strong collaborative arrangements with a local school. These have a positive impact on many aspects of school life including sharing good practice and resources, such as the school secretary and the cost of visits.

Governors know the school well. They have a secure understanding of the standards that pupils achieve and the provision the school makes for their learning. They use their knowledge well to challenge the school appropriately. The governing body has been particularly effective in ensuring the collaborative arrangements with a local school has positive benefits for both establishments including career development opportunities for staff.

School leaders make effective use of a wide range of first-hand evidence to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, leaders track pupil performance very carefully and use the information effectively to identify areas where standards need to improve. This has led to worthwhile developments, such as improving teachers' use of assessment for learning strategies across the school and improving teaching and provision for reading. Leaders review progress towards addressing the school's priorities at weekly staff meetings, and this involves all teachers effectively. They consult all support staff to improve specific aspects of provision, for example the use of Welsh across the school. Parents have a suitable range of opportunities to express their views, including through questionnaires, a suggestion box and weekly drop in sessions. However, pupils are not sufficiently involved in planning for school improvement.

The school's arrangements for the performance management of teaching staff are effective. They help strengthen teachers' professional practice and support the school to achieve its improvement goals. Leaders ensure that all staff have regular opportunities to undertake professional development and training. They evaluate the impact of training effectively on outcomes for pupils and the school. Additional professional development opportunities support staff well in developing their leadership skills. This ensures that the school works successfully in the absence of the Headteacher and that staff develop the skills to mentor newly qualified teachers. Teachers take an active role in sharing expertise from the school with the wider community, for example by making presentations at a national digital learning event. Well-established links with local schools provide valuable opportunities to observe and trial new ideas such as in the provision for mathematics. This has involved

useful visits to schools further afield to observe good practice that have had a positive impact on the school's approach to teaching mathematics.

The school buildings and grounds provide a welcoming and engaging environment that supports pupils' learning and wellbeing effectively. Leaders deploy staff purposefully to make best use of their experience and expertise, for example in teaching Welsh, the provision for pupils with additional learning needs and developing the school's ICT curriculum. The headteacher and governing body manage the school finances effectively and keep spending under careful review.

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:

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