



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

A report on
Ysgol Llanddulas Controlled

**Minfordd Road
Llanddulas
Abergele
Conwy
LL22 8EW**

Date of inspection: May 2023

by

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

About Ysgol Llanddulas Controlled

Name of provider	Ysgol Llanddulas Controlled
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church in Wales voluntarily controlled
Number of pupils on roll	154
Pupils of statutory school age	116
Number in nursery classes	17
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 23.0%)	14.4%
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 16.1%)	31.9%
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	01/09/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	19/01/2015
Start date of inspection	09/05/2023

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

Ysgol Llanddulas is a friendly, welcoming community with clear values and a strong ethos. Staff build strong relationships with pupils that help them to feel secure and confident in their care. They involve pupils in decisions about what and how they learn and enable them to play an active role in school life and in their local community. As a result, nearly all pupils feel invested in their school, behave well and show positive attitudes towards their learning.

Teachers plan for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills successfully. However, provision to develop pupils' use of spoken Welsh is less effective. Teachers provide a broad range of engaging learning experiences that sustain the interest of nearly all pupils well. They make beneficial use of many practical activities to develop pupils' initiative and creativity. Most pupils tackle tasks with independence and show self-reliance in their learning. Teaching assistants provide valuable additional support where needed to bolster pupils' skills and to nurture their well-being. However, teachers do not always challenge more able pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in contexts that stretch their ability fully. The school makes worthwhile use of visits and visitors and an extensive variety of after school clubs to enhance pupils' enjoyment of their learning beneficially.

Leaders know their school well. They monitor pupils' progress thoroughly and evaluate the quality of provision robustly. They use their findings to bring about improvements in specific areas successfully, such as to improve the quality of pupils' writing. Leaders generate a strong shared commitment across the staff team. They make strategic use of professional development to build capacity and foster collaboration within and beyond the school. This supports staff to make changes confidently, such as to enhance pupils' role in developing the school's curriculum. Governors support the work of the school purposefully. They provide constructive challenge to leaders and monitor the school's finances carefully. Leaders and governors sustain beneficial relationships with parents and with community partners such as the local church and pre-school. These partnerships strengthen the school's role in the life of the community it serves.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' use of spoken Welsh
- R2 Ensure that teaching challenges more able pupils fully

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time in school nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress from their individual starting points. They engage well during lessons, often applying their skills with independence and focus.

Nearly all pupils listen well in a range of situations. They attend to adults' instructions and explanations and show a good understanding of what they have to do. Most younger pupils speak confidently about their learning. Many more able pupils use a good range of vocabulary and express their thoughts and ideas clearly. Nearly all older pupils listen politely to their peers and take turns to respond and make suggestions. They offer their opinions thoughtfully and provide reasons for their thinking, for instance to explain what makes one description of a character more vivid than another.

Most pupils develop their reading skills successfully as they move through the school. Most pupils in the nursery class begin recognising individual letters and sounds. As they move through the school, younger pupils build on this knowledge to blend sounds into simple words. By Year 2, many pupils read with increasing confidence and fluency. Most older pupils apply their skills to read a range of appropriately challenging texts with independence. Many older pupils show enjoyment in reading and express preferences for particular genres and authors. Most show a good understanding of what they read and offer their opinions, referring to the text.

Nearly all pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. Most younger pupils begin to develop their motor control effectively and start to write individual letters with correct orientation. By Year 2, most pupils write at increasing length using basic punctuation correctly and spelling many familiar words accurately. Older pupils use a variety of familiar techniques to improve the quality of their writing beneficially. They evaluate their work to ensure that their writing meets its purpose well. However, more able pupils in particular, do not routinely improve their writing as fully as they could. Most older pupils show positive attitudes to writing and enjoy the freedom to use their imagination to produce creative work that engages the reader successfully.

Most pupils develop their mathematical skills well as they move through the school. Younger pupils use their skills in many practical contexts indoors and outdoors, such as to make measurements during woodwork. Many pupils develop an increasing knowledge of mathematical vocabulary and use this to describe how to carry out simple calculations. Most older pupils use a variety of methods to solve word problems effectively, identifying the steps and strategies they need to be successful. Most pupils draw beneficially on their mental maths skills to aid their written work. Many older pupils are keen to select more challenging work during lessons and enjoy working on authentic problems, such as finding the cost of tickets and travel for all pupils to visit a local theatre. However, older pupils do not generally apply their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum in contexts that stretch their thinking fully.

Most pupils across the school use their spoken Welsh in regular short sessions in class and as part of routines across the school day. Younger pupils are familiar with songs and rhymes and use known vocabulary to describe daily events, such as the weather. Older pupils use and respond to a variety of familiar questions. They relate personal information in context, for example when participating in a short dialogue they have prepared but are less confident in using their spoken Welsh more conversationally. Overall, pupils' ability to speak using a wider vocabulary and variety of sentence patterns as they move through the school is underdeveloped.

Nearly all pupils make good progress in developing their digital skills. Most younger pupils integrate the use of technology into their learning effectively, for instance to practise their number skills and to carry out tasks by accessing resources through QR codes. Nearly all older pupils use digital resources to support their learning in class and at home beneficially. They use their skills creatively for a good variety of purposes. For example, pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 use a programming app to code an animation. Pupils in Year 6 develop their skills purposefully through a film making project. They collaborate in small groups to plan, record and edit their work, solving technical and creative problems successfully during the process.

Most pupils develop their creative skills well. Most younger pupils enjoy making artwork and modelling in tasks linked to their class theme. They use inspiration from artists as a stimulus for their creativity and develop their ability to manipulate and experiment with techniques and materials well. Older pupils collaborate together on creative projects and activities, such as to compose and perform a piece of music using tuned and untuned percussion instruments.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

All pupils feel happy, safe and secure in school. They behave well, value their peers and respect the adults and others around them. All pupils are confident that they are listened to and that any concerns they express will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Most pupils show a positive attitude to their work and approach their time in school with an eagerness to learn. They concentrate well during lessons and sustain their focus for an appropriate length of time. Many pupils recognise that encountering difficulties is part of learning and are confident to attempt more ambitious tasks that they select from a menu of difficulty. They persevere and show resourcefulness to overcome obstacles without requesting help from adults. For example, they make effective use of classroom displays and support from their peers to complete their work independently.

All pupils in Years 3 to 6 participate in the work of Y Senedd which is split into a variety of groups linked to areas of the school's curriculum. Pupils take on specific roles as apprentices, leaders and directors to collaborate purposefully on initiatives to enrich pupils' experience in these areas. For example, the Health and Well-being group work with organisations beyond the school to provide additional opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities. Y Senedd also plays a key role in pupils' fundraising activity for charities, such as Marie Curie and Shelter Cymru. The active participation of all older pupils helps to develop their communication and decision-making skills well.

Nearly all pupils engage enthusiastically with the worthwhile opportunities they have to influence what they learn about. For example, younger pupils carry out a variety of activities to answer questions they raise about tigers after visiting a local zoo. Most pupils are keen to talk about their work and show a good understanding of what they need to do to be successful in their efforts. They reflect on their progress and take note of feedback from their peers and from adults. Most take pride in their work and enjoy producing carefully presented final versions of their extended writing.

Most pupils are developing as ethical and informed citizens. For example, older pupils study the lives of influential campaigners such as Greta Thunberg and Martin Luther King. They show a developing awareness of social inequality and the impact of their individual actions on the health of the planet and the experience of others. Through learning about fair trade, pupils have become more aware of where everyday products have travelled from and understand the ethical motives that underpin the approach.

Nearly all pupils have a clear understanding of how to be healthy. They understand the importance of exercising regularly and know that what they eat and drink affects their physical and mental well-being. Most pupils make healthy food choices at lunch time and enjoy being physically active, for instance by safely climbing trees in the school grounds during play time. Many pupils participate in the broad range of extracurricular clubs the school offers. They enjoy the opportunity these provide to use and improve their physical and creative skills alongside their peers in fun activities. Nearly all pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school's curriculum provides a rich mix of learning experiences that reflect pupils' varied interests successfully. Teachers make good use of their detailed knowledge of how their pupils learn to plan stimulating activities that use a range of approaches and resources to motivate them well. For example, in classes with younger pupils, teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to make choices and to cooperate on playful activities that reinforce their learning and develop their communication skills beneficially. Across the school, pupils' learning often links to class themes that support them to practise their skills and develop their knowledge within a purposeful context. This enables teachers to build on pupils' prior learning effectively and helps pupils to make meaningful connections between different aspects of their experience.

Teachers set clear learning objectives during lessons and provide helpful explanations that enable pupils to tackle tasks with confidence. As a result, in most instances, pupils settle to work quickly and make sound progress independently. In a very few lessons, where expectations are less clear, the pace of learning slows, and pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Teachers use success criteria to guide pupils' learning appropriately. They encourage pupils to reflect on their progress and to work together to identify where they have been successful and what they can do to develop their work further. For example, pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 evaluate how well their musical composition meets the goals they have been set. This helps them to collaborate as a group and to refine their composition successfully.

All adults have positive relationships with pupils. They create a calm and relaxed atmosphere in classes that helps pupils to concentrate and to work cooperatively with one another. Teachers organise the learning environment to engage pupils' interest effectively and to support them to exercise initiative in their learning. As a result, most pupils across the school, work with independence and make productive use of their time in lessons. Teachers make good use of the school's outdoor environment to enrich pupils' learning. They plan a good variety of practical, physical and creative activities in the outdoor spaces that motivate pupils well. For example, younger pupils learn about their surroundings by searching the school grounds for natural materials to create their own garden on a plate.

Teachers support the development of pupils' literacy, mathematical and digital skills effectively. For example, they model a consistent repertoire of techniques that develop pupils' writing skills successfully. This practice impacts positively on pupils' individual understanding of the actions they can take to write imaginatively to good effect. However, teachers do not always set ambitious enough expectations, for more able pupils in particular. For example, opportunities for more able pupils to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum often provide less challenge than they usefully could, and teachers do not encourage more able writers to improve their draft writing fully.

Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively. They use questioning to assess pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking purposefully. They provide helpful verbal feedback to pupils that enables them to move forward with their learning when they become stuck and to enhance their work. Teachers' written feedback to pupils identifies strengths in their work and specific steps for pupils to take to improve. In most instances, teachers provide appropriate opportunities during lessons for pupils to act on the guidance they receive.

Pupils have worthwhile opportunities to learn about the culture and history of Wales. For example, through a range of visits and visitors to school, all pupils learn about their local area and how it has changed over time. Teachers provide short daily sessions that help pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. Many are capable role models for the language and demonstrate confidence in using spoken Welsh in class. Overall, however, teachers do not provide enough opportunity for pupils to use their spoken Welsh or to develop their knowledge progressively as they move through the school.

Care, support and guidance

The school provides a caring and inclusive environment where pupils feel well looked after and enjoy the variety of experiences available to them. The relaxed atmosphere is underpinned by a shared commitment to develop pupils in line with to the school's values and ethos. The consistent high quality of care shown by the whole staff team ensures that all pupils have trust and confidence in the adults they work with. Overall, the school has successfully established a strong safeguarding culture.

The school makes very effective provision for pupils with ALN. Staff work well together to identify where pupils require specific support and act swiftly to adapt provision to meet their individual needs. The ALN leader draws purposefully on the expertise of specialists and external agencies to implement strategies that benefit

pupils directly. As a result of this approach, most pupils with ALN make good progress and in some instances the school is able to reduce the level of additional support as pupils' independence develops. Where ongoing support is needed, staff maintain strong relationships with parents to build a shared understanding of pupils' needs and to tailor future provision effectively. This includes enhanced transition for pupils within and beyond the school that helps them to sustain progress and to feel secure during periods of change.

Leaders have established an effective system of interventions that help pupils to narrow gaps in their learning and to support their emotional needs. These interventions are systematically planned and consistently delivered by trained staff who know the pupils' needs well. Staff communicate together effectively to monitor pupils' progress and to identify their next steps. As a result of this robust approach, interventions impact positively on pupils' well-being and progress, and support them to feel more confident in class.

The school makes valuable provision to develop older pupils' independence through regular 'life-skills' sessions. These lessons provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to engage in practical activities that develop their sense of responsibility as part of a family and community. For example, pupils deepen their appreciation of their role in the school community through gardening in the school grounds and by helping to look after and organise resources that are used in class.

Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to play a leading role in their learning and in the daily life and work of the school. They timetable regular sessions for pupils to carry out their roles within Y Senedd that enable pupils to contribute to the range of learning experiences the school offers. For example, members of the Health and Well-being group worked together to organise a day of sporting activity led by students from the local tertiary college. These opportunities also provide a valuable means for pupils of different ages within the school to work together. This helps to cement the strong sense of community that pupils feel.

The school has established productive relationships with community partners and parents. For example, close ties with the playgroup ensure continuity for the school's youngest pupils when they move between settings and help parents with their childcare needs. The school's active partnership with the local church impacts positively on the development of pupils' spiritual knowledge and understanding. The school works well with parents to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

Teachers promote pupils' tolerance, compassion and awareness of diversity effectively. For example, pupils in Year 2 work with a visiting artist on a puppetry project to develop their understanding of the qualities of friendship. Older pupils were inspired to carry out an enterprise project using old military buttons to make cufflinks after meeting with a blind ex-Serviceman. They marketed and sold these to raise funds for the local branch of a blind veterans' charity.

The school makes effective use of visits and visitors to develop pupils' knowledge of their locality and of the culture and landscape of Wales. For instance, the youngest pupils use the train to visit a nearby town and take a horse-drawn barge trip to learn about the area's industrial past. Older pupils make a residential visit to an outdoor centre to experience adventurous activities such as canoeing and climbing. The

school provides an extensive variety of extra-curricular activities across the year that include drama, choir, gymnastics and art clubs. These opportunities are highly valued by pupils who enjoy the chance to pursue their interests with their friends.

The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to participate in performance and to share skills that they develop within and beyond school. For example, pupils rehearse and perform music as part of concerts in the local church. Overall, the school's commitment to developing pupils' creativity and self-expression through its curriculum and in a broad range of enrichment activities is a strength of its provision.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, ably supported by leaders throughout the school, communicates a clear vision that sets high expectations for every pupil's progress and well-being. Leaders have established a highly valued and committed team of teachers and support staff and nurture their well-being diligently. They model and promote professional values and behaviours that contribute positively to school improvement. They foster professional collaboration between staff and with other providers well.

Leaders take good account of the longer-term needs of the school. They manage the school's finances efficiently and ensure that grants are spent effectively. For instance, to provide valuable support for the well-being of vulnerable learners throughout the school. Leaders evaluate the impact of initiatives funded by these grants robustly.

Governors know the school's strengths and areas for development well. Although many are new to their roles, they provide good support for the school and act as a critical friend. They are informed about progress on the school's priorities through detailed reports provided by the headteacher and visit the school to gain first-hand information that contributes to the school's self-evaluation processes. The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations and takes full account of relevant regulation and guidance, such as to promote healthy eating and drinking in the school. Governors support the school's leaders to make robust provision for the safeguarding and well-being of pupils and staff.

Leaders establish productive relationships with parents, the community and Church. They use a number of effective lines of communication, such as regular parents' evenings and interim pupil reports, to enhance these relationships. Staff make themselves readily available to parents and carers who can raise concerns about their children as soon as they arise. Visits to the local church and acts of collective worship involving members of the Church community feature regularly throughout the year.

Leaders develop a detailed knowledge of the school's overall performance through a range of self-evaluation activities. For example, leaders of areas of learning and experience gather first-hand evidence to produce detailed, helpful reports that inform the school's improvement plan. This sets specific, realistic timescales and allocates appropriate staff responsible for securing improvement.

The school has a strong track record of making and sustaining improvement. For example, the development of an online tracking toolkit has improved leaders'

capacity to monitor pupils' progress effectively. Senior leaders work closely to track pupils' progress in all areas of learning and this helps to identify and address any inconsistency in provision a timely manner.

Leaders create a positive culture that promotes the professional learning of all staff effectively. They use training to improve capacity to meet pupils' needs well, both in terms of their academic progress and their well-being. A particular strength is the professional collaboration among staff within and beyond the school to implement the Curriculum for Wales. This enables staff to adapt to changes effectively and to develop a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of pupils and to the school's community.

Leaders plan professional learning in response to their self-evaluation findings. For example, the school introduced woodworking sessions for younger pupils to help develop their social and communication skills through practical activity. This training is shared with staff from other schools in the region and has impacted positively on the confidence and capacity of staff within the school to lead improvements.

Staff engage successfully in action research projects to investigate and develop effective practice in teaching and learning. They share their findings across the staff team and this impacts positively on outcomes for pupils. For example, their research into pupils' use of an online reading programme supported staff to target its use more effectively. The school plays a lead role in supporting the development of ALN provision across the cluster. This benefits staff in the school and locally.

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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