



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

A report on
Ysgol Penyffordd

**Parc Crescent
Penyffordd
Flintshire
CH4 0HE**

Date of inspection: June 2023

by

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

About Ysgol Penyffordd

Name of provider	Ysgol Penyffordd
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	334
Pupils of statutory school age	249
Number in nursery classes	43
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%)	10.0%
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%)	9.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2013
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	09/02/2015
Start date of inspection	19/06/2023

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

Nearly all pupils at Ysgol Penyffordd behave well, enjoy learning and feel proud of their school. Pupils feel safe and happy and develop strong working relationships with staff. Most pupils have positive attitudes and engage well in their learning. Most speak confidently and read for pleasure. Pupils approach challenging tasks confidently and use a range of strategies to help them learn. As a result, most pupils make good progress during their time at Ysgol Penyffordd.

Staff work collaboratively to establish a calm and nurturing environment where they care about the wellbeing and the educational progress of all pupils. Teachers design a rich and varied curriculum. Pupils speak positively about having an influence over what they learn because teachers ask them to contribute when they plan topics. Staff make good use of the school environment to support pupils' learning. The use of the outdoor learning areas is particularly strong across all classes and encourages pupils to be active learners.

Teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and digital skills and apply these in rich and authentic tasks across the curriculum. However, teachers do not always plan enough opportunities for pupils to choose how to apply their writing skills independently.

The headteacher provides clear strategic leadership. The school's vision, mission and values are evident in the work of senior leaders, staff and governors. The headteacher has developed a strong team ethos where all staff feel valued and are passionate about providing a quality education for all pupils. Governors work well alongside senior leaders to carry out their statutory duties. However, governors do not have a secure enough understanding of pupils' progress and standards.

Recommendations

- R1 Provide opportunities for pupils to decide how they respond to learning tasks, including how they organise and present their work
- R2 Enable governors to develop their skills and knowledge to undertake their role as a critical friend

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils enter the school with skills at or slightly above the expected level. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those eligible for free school meals, make good progress in their learning. By Year 6, most pupils are skilled, competent and capable learners.

From an early age, most pupils speak clearly and enthusiastically about their work. As they progress through the school, they continue to speak confidently and by Year 6 most are articulate speakers with a sophisticated spoken vocabulary. Pupils listen well to each other and adults and respond confidently to questions about their work. For example, when discussing refugees, Year 5 and 6 pupils use emotive language successfully to talk about the plight of Syrian refugees.

Most younger pupils develop strong reading skills. They use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. Throughout the school, pupils talk enthusiastically about a broad range of texts and demonstrate a strong appreciation of fiction and non-fiction books. By Year 6, most pupils read independently, with fluency and expression. Older pupils have a good understanding of the texts they read. For example, they explain a character's feelings with sensitivity. As they move through the school, pupils apply their reading skills effectively to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Most pupils develop their writing skills successfully. From an early age, they use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write simple sentences. For example, younger pupils use appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures to create a job advert for a builder. By Year 2, they write for a range of purposes and include a variety of words for effect to engage the reader. Older pupils write at increasing length and use a rich vocabulary to add interest to their work. For example, when writing about Vortigern and the Ravine, pupils choose dramatic vocabulary to add suspense and mystery. Most pupils develop a fluent handwriting style and take pride in the presentation of their work. They apply their writing skills well across the curriculum and adapt their writing style for different audiences. There are occasions where the unnecessary use of scaffolds for writing restricts pupils' independent writing.

Most younger pupils display a positive attitude to speaking Welsh. They use Welsh language patterns confidently when greeting their friends and when describing how they feel. By Year 4, pupils can hold simple conversations, describing the weather in different parts of the world. By the time they leave the school, many pupils show an appropriate understanding of spoken language and use it in familiar situations.

Most pupils make strong progress in mathematics. Younger pupils engage enthusiastically in practical mathematical activities. For example, reception pupils select a variety of materials to create a repeating pattern of up to four objects to make a decorative crown. By the end of Year 2, most have a secure knowledge of number facts, understand simple properties of shapes and use analogue clocks to tell the time. Older pupils develop a good understanding of the four rules of number,

shape, measure and data handling. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of how fractions, percentages and decimals relate to the probability of events occurring. Most older pupils apply their numeracy skills well across a variety of real-life contexts. For example, older pupils generate numeracy-based questions on money, shape and measure when exploring a house that is for sale.

Across the school, most pupils develop strong digital skills and apply these confidently to different situations. Younger pupils apply simple directions to move programmable toys and use tablet devices to support their learning successfully. By Year 2, pupils use programmes effectively, for instance, to create short films. Most older pupils apply their digital skills independently to enhance their work across the curriculum. For example, they use programmes to produce and display their work, such as information leaflets about endangered species, and use coding to programme a light to turn on and off in a house they designed.

Most pupils enjoy practical problem-solving activities. They persevere and show determination as they modify and change their designs and models. For example, younger pupils discuss how they will secure their model bridge to hold a weight and older pupils consider carefully how they can build a virtual world that meets the needs of all people.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils behave well and are polite. They are welcoming to visitors and speak proudly about their school, especially the outdoor learning areas. Nearly all pupils appreciate the care and support they receive from the adults at the school. They talk confidently about their school rules, 'Ready, Respectful, Safe'. Nearly all pupils enjoy attending school and feel happy and safe within its inclusive and caring ethos.

Most pupils know who to turn to if they are worried or have a problem and they feel well supported by staff and their peers. As pupils progress through the school, they talk confidently about the support they receive from adults in their classrooms. Older pupils are confident that staff listen to them and deal appropriately with any concerns.

Most pupils are ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn. Most concentrate well when activities engage them. They listen attentively to their peers and respect the views and opinions of others. Most pupils are resilient and positive. They apply useful strategies when they are not sure how to complete a task before asking for support from an adult. Nearly all pupils work well independently or when working as part of a group. For example, Year 2 and Year 3 pupils co-operate to plan, listen to others' views and collectively decide on which elements to include in their stop-go animation of the 'Tri Mochyn Bach'.

Most pupils have a positive attitude to learning. They talk enthusiastically about their current work and previous topics they have studied, such as the work on Romans and Celts. Most pupils explain how they have an influence over the activities they study, by making suggestions at the beginning of a topic of things that interest them.

Many pupils reflect on and improve their own work and that of their peers suitably. For example, pupils reflect on previous learning, and explain what went well and

what they need to do to make progress. Where this is most effective, pupils consistently refer to agreed criteria to measure how successful they have been and to further improve their work.

Nearly all pupils contribute to the work of pupil leadership teams. They understand that their voice is important and express their ideas and views considerately. Pupil groups, such as the school council, known as the 'Senedd', strongly influence school decisions, such as the recent purchase of a reading shed for pupils to use at breaktimes, along with the choice of books. Members of the Criw Cymraeg contribute to raising standards of spoken Welsh in the school, for instance by leading assemblies and encouraging others to use Welsh phrases around the school.

Nearly all pupils show a growing awareness of global issues and the impact these have on people's lives. For example, pupils' recent work on refugees has had a positive effect on their understanding of the needs of others, locally, nationally and internationally. From a young age, most pupils have a strong understanding of equality and rights. By Year 6, nearly all pupils are ethical, informed citizens who show empathy and sensitivity when discussing issues that impact on other people from different backgrounds.

Nearly all pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online. They understand the importance of not sharing personal information on social media. For example, the Digital Leaders promote safe behaviour online via their own video and through posters displayed around the school.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and discuss the effect of exercise on their health knowledgeably. They take part in an appropriate range of physical activity, including regular outdoor learning and suitable PE lessons. From a young age, pupils play co-operatively and are willing to take turns.

Most pupils contribute to various charities regularly and they have clear ideas of who should benefit from their contributions. For example, during an exhibition of their work as part of their topic on endangered animals, pupils decided to raise money for a charity by designing, printing and selling t-shirts, bookmarks and key rings.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has created a clear aim and vision for its curriculum. As a result, the curriculum is broad and balanced and builds successfully on their pupils' knowledge, skills, and experiences as they move through the school. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting topics that reflect their local context, and that of Wales and the wider world. For example, older pupils plan and conduct a visit to the local Zoo to widen their understanding of the issues in protecting endangered species from across the world.

Teachers plan engaging themes each term that relate well to the needs and interests of pupils. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to contribute ideas to what they learn. For instance, when beginning a topic, all pupils can suggest ideas of what they would like to learn about and use a voting system to choose their favourite ideas. Across the school, teachers use a range of engaging stimuli for learning at the

start of each topic. For example, younger pupils finding an egg containing a toy 'baby dragon' on the playground provided a stimulus for their topic on dragons.

Staff have developed a strong culture of reading across the school. The school's focus on fostering a love of reading in the pupils has a positive effect in developing pupils' reading skills. The school library has a wide selection of books to engage and inspire pupils to read and pupils have frequent access to these alongside designated spaces within their classrooms and on the playground to enjoy reading.

Teachers have a good understanding of how to plan for the progressive development of pupils' literacy, numeracy, and digital skills. This means that teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop these skills through their thematic work across the curriculum. To enhance pupils' learning, staff make good use of the outdoor area. For example, across the school, pupils have regular opportunities to learn in the school's designated woodland area and apply their literacy, numeracy and digital skills practically and purposefully. The school also offers beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn about the world of work to inspire them to consider a range of possible careers. For example, Year 2 pupils plan a jobs fair for parents of the school to attend and share with pupils what they do in their roles.

Provision to develop pupils' Welsh skills is suitable to meet the needs of most pupils. Many teachers across the school, model Welsh phrases and sentences appropriately to give instructions, praise or ask simple questions. This is particularly strong in the teaching of the younger pupils' classes.

Across the school, teachers develop strong and positive working relationships with pupils. Teachers have high aspirations for all pupils and ensure that learning moves on at a good pace. However, at times, in many classes across the school, over-directed activities do not allow pupils to develop their independent skills well enough. For example, teachers provide too many scaffolds and worksheets that do not always allow pupils the opportunities to write at length or decide how they would like to present their ideas.

The very effective partnerships between teachers and support staff are a strength of the school. They work successfully together towards a common goal when leading or supporting activities.

Throughout the school, teachers and support staff use questioning effectively to support learning and promote pupils' thinking skills. All staff are good language role models and use a wide variety of interesting vocabulary in their teaching and interactions with pupils. Most teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to recap previous learning at the start of lessons and during activities. Most staff use timely feedback during lessons to help pupils make progress in their learning. They plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and those of their peers. As a result, most pupils reflect well on their own learning to improve their work following feedback.

Care, support and guidance

The school creates a caring and supportive environment in which pupils and adults thrive and feel valued. Effective relationships with families help to foster a strong and

supportive partnership between school and home. The use of family engagement events and workshops provide worthwhile opportunities for parents to engage purposefully with the school.

The headteacher and staff have a thorough knowledge of the needs of all pupils. Leaders have developed effective systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' well-being and progress. They place a strong emphasis on offering provision that meets the individual needs of pupils to develop them as well-rounded learners. As a result, staff provide effective support to meet the needs of nearly all pupils.

The care and support given by school staff is effective in ensuring that pupils have a good awareness of being safe and develop respect for others. The school's policies and processes for promoting positive behaviour throughout the school are successful in ensuring that pupils behave well in lessons, breaktimes and as they move around the school. The school has effective systems to monitor and promote attendance.

The school supports pupils with additional learning needs very effectively, and benefits from strong leadership from the school's additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) and support from experienced and well-trained support assistants. The school applies clear and consistent approaches, in line with national guidance, to identify and meet the needs of pupils with additional learning needs. Staff work purposefully with the ALNCo to identify appropriate, specific actions to support identified pupils. All pupils with additional learning needs have pupil profiles that reflect their needs precisely. As a result, support programmes impact positively on pupils' self-esteem and progress. The ALNCo works well in partnership with external agencies to provide specialist provision where necessary.

The school is an inclusive learning community. It provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about diversity. For example, when developing teaching and learning activities relating to events such as Refugee Week, staff offer beneficial opportunities to increase pupils' awareness and understanding of issues relating to diversity and equality.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively through weekly whole-school assemblies and acts of daily worship. During these sessions, staff provide pupils with valuable opportunities to discuss and share their views and opinions on a variety of issues, including human rights and equality. As part of the school's themes, teachers plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of moral issues such as the effects of slavery during Roman times.

To promote pupils' cultural development, teachers offer a variety of valuable experiences, including opportunities for them to celebrate their Welsh heritage and culture. For example, staff plan experiences based on Welsh stimuli, such as the environmental artwork of Tim Pugh, for pupils to create their own environmental art using stones, shells and wood. Leaders encourage pupils, including those from vulnerable backgrounds, to develop leadership skills by being members of school committees and groups. This means that pupils feel they make a valuable contribution to the school.

The school values the role of visitors in supporting the curriculum and in raising pupil aspirations for pupils. For example, following work with museum curators and a visit to a museum, pupils created their own Victorian exhibition to display their work to parents as part of a family engagement event.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. The school's arrangements to keep pupils safe meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. Working collaboratively, leaders have created a school vision where all members of staff, governors and parents contribute effectively to a strong culture of learning. The headteacher has high expectations for all staff and she encourages them to trial new ideas to develop a rich curriculum for the pupils. Staff care passionately for their pupils and continually look for ways to develop their practice to support pupils' educational and emotional development. Staff have high aspirations for all pupils. The school understands their pupils and families well and provides worthwhile family engagement sessions to strengthen the relationship between school and home.

Senior leaders have developed a positive working ethos across the school and all staff work together well as part of one team. All staff feel valued and conduct their roles and responsibilities diligently. Distributed leadership is a strength of the school. Senior leaders view all staff as leaders. Everyone contributes effectively to the work of the three leadership teams. They willingly lead projects, share practice and evaluate the impact of actions on pupils in their leadership teams and across the school. Through the skilful use of these groups of staff, school leaders have increased the capacity to implement school improvement work successfully. For example, one of these groups has been instrumental in the development of the reading culture through researching effective practices, implementing a whole school approach and ensuring the availability of high quality, richly diverse books that engage pupils and foster the love of reading.

Senior leaders have identified a relevant set of improvement priorities for the school. A clear rationale for each priority, based on robust analysis and first-hand evidence, ensures that leaders focus clearly on the most important aspects that require improvement. These priorities link well to local and national priorities. For example, staff have worked collaboratively and made good progress in designing a curriculum that meets the needs of the Curriculum for Wales. Through a clear process of actions, success criteria and milestones, school leaders identify and plan the steps to address each priority well. A well-structured timetable of self-evaluation processes ensures that senior leaders monitor and evaluate progress regularly and lead to improvements in pupil progress and the provision for learning.

School leaders promote and support professional learning for all staff. As a result, staff have a wide range of expertise, which they use effectively to support the needs of nearly all pupils in the school. For example, the school has made a significant and worthwhile investment in employing and training dedicated staff to provide a wide range of nurture support, which can be adapted to meet the needs of individuals. All teachers have leadership qualifications and lead staff development sessions following any professional learning opportunities. As a result, the school shares

effective practice with their own staff and with other schools across the region. For example, staff lead successful oracy workshops for other schools in the consortium.

Members of the governing body are strong advocates for the school. They visit the school regularly, attending key events including assemblies, open evenings and family engagement sessions. Members of the governing body are active members of the three leadership groups. They attend termly meetings with members of staff, participating in discussions regarding progress made against the school's priorities. Governors scrutinise reports provided by the headteacher and have a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, the governing body does not take an active role in the school's self-improvement processes and therefore does not have a secure understanding of the standards of pupils' work. Governors work alongside leaders to carry out their duty to promote healthy eating and drinking well. Governors and school leaders manage the school's finances efficiently and deploy appropriate resources to support improvement priorities. School leaders use grant funding, such as the pupil development grant, suitably to support their pupils, for example by ensuring equal access to curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities.

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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