



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

A report on

**Ysgol Dyffryn Iâl
Allt Yr Efail
Llandegla
Wrexham
Denbighshire
LL11 3AW**

Date of inspection: October 2019

by

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

About Ysgol Dyffryn Iâl

Ysgol Dyffryn Iâl is a village school in Llandegla, Denbighshire. The school is under the voluntary control of the Church in Wales. The school has 50 pupils between the ages of 3 and 11, including 6 part-time pupils in the nursery. There are two classes at the school.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 5% which is significantly below the national average of 18%. All pupils are from a white ethnic background. The school has identified around 20% of its pupils as having special educational needs, which is close to the national average of 21%.

The headteacher took up his post in January 2015. The school was last inspected in March 2015.

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

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership, which ensures a clear strategic direction for the school and encourages a culture that promotes continuous improvement.

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are well mannered, and always greet people politely. They show respect for adults and for one another, listen carefully to what their friends and teachers say, and respond to one another's ideas considerately.

The warmth and strength of the working relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils feel safe in school and know what to do if they are worried or anxious.

Teachers and learning support assistants work very effectively as a team and take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' learning. As a result, nearly all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well by Year 6. They recall previous learning well, and use and apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills successfully in a variety of situations.

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 Sharpen monitoring processes so that they focus consistently on evaluating the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve
- R2 Build on the existing good practice and outcomes in order to achieve strong, sustained performance and practice

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, nearly all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well by Year 6. They recall previous learning well, and use and apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills successfully in various situations. Nearly all pupils develop as conscientious and confident learners with high levels of independent working skills.

Nearly all pupils' speaking and listening skills are very secure. They listen carefully to adults and each other, and respond maturely to instructions and questions. In the foundation phase, they talk confidently about their work and experiences, for example, when discussing and explaining what is inside their body. In key stage 2, most pupils are keen to offer answers or comments, for example, when they discuss the use of personification, alliteration and similes in their poem on Llandegla.

Nearly all pupils across the school develop good reading skills. Most pupils in the foundation phase develop a good understanding of phonics. They enjoy reading and are keen to read aloud to adults. By Year 2, most pupils discuss the content of their books enthusiastically, identify their favourite characters and provide sensible reasons for what they like. In key stage 2, nearly all pupils read accurately and fluently and discuss their favourite books maturely. They use their skills purposefully when gathering information in their investigative work about a local business.

By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils write an increasing range of simple sentences, spell correctly and punctuate purposefully. They make good progress in their proficiency in using varied vocabulary and language to write informative pieces, for example, when writing instructions on how to wash their hands. Most pupils in key stage 2 write intelligently and show a sound awareness of different forms of writing. By Year 6, they choose interesting vocabulary and spell, punctuate and paragraph correctly. They write good quality extended pieces for a variety of purposes and audiences, for example, when creating a description of the life of the Welsh Prince, Owain Glyndwr.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress in Welsh. They respond correctly to instructions and display a good understanding of Welsh used by staff. Many pupils are confident to talk in informal situations. As they progress through the school, most develop a good understanding of appropriate Welsh texts and answer questions confidently and with developing accuracy. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils' writing skills in Welsh are progressing well, for example when writing a description about their trip to Cardiff.

Most pupils' numeracy skills across the school are developing effectively. In the foundation phase, most reception class pupils count objects such as conkers and acorns confidently and correctly. By Year 2, they handle money confidently and develop a good understanding of measurement, time and data. They use their skills successfully to measure the length of bones when creating their skeleton pictures. In key stage 2, most pupils apply their skills successfully and develop appropriate

strategies to solve problems, such as calculating the missing angles in a quadrilateral. They measure and compare the length of shadows at different times of the day, and use their data handling skills to create and interpret line graphs accurately when comparing the hours of sunlight in Australia with those in Wales.

Nearly all pupils across the school make effective use of their ICT skills to support their work in other areas of learning. In the foundation phase, nearly all pupils use electronic tablets confidently to record and share their work, for example when investigating the impact of exercise on their heart rate. They use simple data bases to record information correctly about the different kinds of trees that grow in the school garden. In key stage 2, nearly all pupils use a wide range of programs and applications exceptionally well. By Year 6, they use the internet confidently to undertake research and they use their skills to present their work in a variety of interesting ways. For example, they create multimedia presentations successfully to share information about their local community.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils are confident in the school environment. The warmth and strength of the working relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils feel safe in school and know what to do if they are worried or anxious. They feel valued and this encourages them to take part in all school activities.

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are well mannered, and always greet people politely. They show respect for adults and for one another, listening carefully to what their friends and teachers say and responding to their ideas considerately. They show care and concern for each other during break times.

Nearly all pupils are proud of their school and their work. They have positive attitudes to learning. They settle in lessons quickly and move between tasks sensibly and efficiently. Most concentrate well in class and persevere when they find work hard. Pupils enjoy the themes they study and they work successfully in groups and independently. As pupils move through the school, they have an increasing understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Most pupils take their responsibilities seriously and appreciate the opportunities that they receive to support the work of the school. One of the school's strong features is the very kind and supportive way in which the older pupils care for the younger pupils. The support of playground buddies, lunch time buddies and reading buddies contributes well to the school's inclusive and caring ethos.

A cross-section of pupils has been elected to different groups, such as the school council, eco-council, digital leaders and 'Criw Cymraeg'. The school council has its own list of improvement priorities and has been successful in improving playtime equipment and developing guidance on anti-bullying. The eco council works conscientiously to reduce litter around the school. Pupils weigh and record to check the effectiveness of their strategies. Members of the 'Criw Cymraeg' encourage pupils to speak Welsh during break times and reward pupils with language tokens for their efforts. All groups undertake their work enthusiastically and conscientiously.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and take part in physical exercise activities regularly. They understand the dangers that may arise in their everyday lives and know what steps to take, if necessary. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of staying safe online, and outline the dangers that may arise as a result of unsuitable use of the internet.

Pupils take pride in the opportunity to support various charities, and have raised a significant amount of money for a local hospice, Children in Need and the Poppy Appeal. This has a positive effect on pupils' awareness of the needs of others in their community and the wider world.

Pupils enjoy attending school and attendance rates are consistently very high. They have been above that of similar schools regularly over the past six years.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Staff establish a positive working relationship with pupils, which fosters successful learning. The school's system of planning activities, which is based on interesting and imaginative learning experiences, ensures that pupils achieve good standards. A successful feature of the school's practice is the role that pupils play in providing suggestions and ideas at the beginning of each theme about what they would like to study and determine how they want to present their work. This engages their interest and curiosity and strengthens their commitment to their work.

Teachers and learning support assistants work very effectively as a team and take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' learning. They encourage pupils to express their ideas and opinions enthusiastically and effectively. Staff have high expectations of all pupils, and the quality of their presentations and their questioning of pupils is challenging and purposeful. This helps to ensure that nearly all pupils apply themselves fully to their tasks, concentrate for extended periods and show a high level of motivation.

Teachers make skilful use of a range of assessment strategies. They give pupils useful oral feedback and question them effectively to explore their understanding. This encourages them to reflect on their learning and evaluate their efforts regularly. Where appropriate, teachers also give pupils constructive written feedback, which enables them to develop a good understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

Schemes of work and teachers' planning across all areas of the curriculum take good account of the national curriculum, the literacy and numeracy framework and ICT. The principles of the foundation phase are embedded firmly. Staff provide effective focused tasks and continuous activities, which include beneficial opportunities for pupils to investigate, role-play, build and practise their physical skills. A good example of this is their work on learning about the human body and how it works. In key stage 2, pupils gradually take more responsibility for planning their activities. A good example of this is 'Wales in a box' where pupils are challenged to use their imagination and creative skills to create the box. As a result, most pupils develop to become very confident independent learners.

Provision for developing the Welsh language is of a high standard. Staff create an extremely positive Welsh ethos and promote the language effectively. This captures the interest and enthusiasm of nearly all pupils very well. Provision to develop the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is effective. As a result, all pupils have regular opportunities to enrich learning in order to develop their understanding of their area and Welsh culture. A good example of this is the key stage 2 work about Llandegla, which includes, for example opportunities to learn about 'Tegla's Well'.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The good quality of care, support and guidance from staff has a very positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe at school. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Pupils' moral and social skills are developing very successfully. The school's strong focus on promoting high expectations and values encourages pupils to take responsibility for their actions maturely. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to express their opinions through various pupil groups, as well as through their contributions to planning the curriculum. Staff take their views seriously, and this has a positive effect on pupils' confidence and nurtures a sense of pride and responsibility for others.

Respecting multiculturalism, promoting aspects of diversity, anti-racism and developing fairness and equal opportunities are strong elements of the school's culture. For example, the playground, lunchtime and reading buddies scheme, which encourages pupils to support and care for each, makes a strong contribution towards ensuring an inclusive and equal community. This has a positive influence on pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning.

Staff know the pupils and their families very well, and have positive relationships with them. They make effective use of an app to communicate with parents. This provides parents with a detailed insight into their child's school experiences, for example by enabling them to hear their child speaking Welsh. Parents receive valuable information about their child's progress through regular meetings and reports. This positive partnership with parents promotes positive attitudes to learning amongst pupils and enables parents to support children successfully.

The school has thorough arrangements for tracking pupils' progress and wellbeing. Teachers use this information purposefully to track pupils' progress and to target additional support quickly for individuals and specific groups. All pupils with special educational needs have an education plan that includes clear and measurable targets. Staff review these plans regularly with parents and their children. Classroom assistants play an important part in implementing a wide range of effective intervention programmes.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. It provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of making healthy choices in their lives. For example, a wide variety of extra-curricular activities and clubs contribute successfully towards pupils' wellbeing and fitness.

Teachers plan an appropriate range of activities to develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of Welsh history, culture and traditions. A good example of this is the work on the local mediaeval mansion and the Welsh prince Owain Glyndwr. This develops a good understanding of the history of Wales.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership, which ensures a clear strategic direction for the school and a culture that promotes continuous improvement. He conveys the vision clearly to staff, pupils, parents and governors.

There are regular staff meetings and these focus clearly on the school's priorities for improvement. Leaders ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in fulfilling these priorities. Staff work together effectively as a team and support the headteacher diligently. There are effective performance management arrangements in place, which include relevant targets for staff that link closely to the school's improvement priorities. This has a positive effect on improving the wide-ranging and valuable opportunities that the school provides for its pupils which has resulted, for example, in a marked improvement in pupils' ICT skills and how they apply them successfully across all areas of the curriculum.

Leaders respond well to national and local priorities, such as introducing strategies to develop the digital competence framework and the development of pupils' Welsh language skills. This is having a positive effect on pupils' standards, particularly in these areas. Leaders are beginning to plan and prepare for the new curriculum and, as a result, staff are already adapting their planning to create more opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills. This is impacting positively on pupils' ability to make decisions about their learning.

Governors are very supportive of the work of the school and they carry out their responsibilities conscientiously. Through working in partnership with the staff, frequent visits to the school and regular meetings, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use this information to challenge the school successfully to improve and maintain standards.

There are clear procedures for monitoring the school's performance. Staff consider a wide range of direct, relevant evidence, such as lesson observations, scrutinising pupils' work, performance data and discussions with learners. However, monitoring activities do not always focus sharply enough on the standards that pupils achieve or the progress they make. As a result, the school does not always have the information it needs to guide improvement work and raise standards further.

The headteacher ensures that there are suitable opportunities for staff to benefit from regular professional learning experiences. The school has established effective working relationships with other, similar schools and has benefitted greatly in improving the quality of provision for pupils with additional educational needs and in preparing for the new curriculum.

The headteacher and governors manage the budget carefully, and expenditure links well with the plans for improvement. The school uses the pupil development grant prudently to ensure the successful and full inclusion of the very few pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent 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 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' wellbeing, 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)

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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Publication date: 23/12/20219