



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Amlwch
Amlwch
Anglesey
LL68 9DY**

Date of inspection: December 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Amlwch

Ysgol Gynradd Amlwch is situated in Anglesey. There are 293 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 27 part-time nursery age pupils. They are divided into 10 classes, including 5 mixed-age classes.

On average, around 22% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals over a three-year period. This is slightly higher than the national percentage of 18%. A few pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and a very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Very few pupils at the school speak English as an additional language. The school has identified 18% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. This is slightly lower than the national percentage of 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher began in post in September 2017 and the school was last inspected in February 2011.

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

Pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of all of the school's work. Provision for vulnerable pupils is commendable and responds well to pupils' needs. Across the school, pupils are very polite and caring towards each other.

The school has a strong community ethos and pupils take pride in their local community. This is supported well by numerous visits to the local area and the visitors that come to the school.

On the whole, teaching is sound and teachers provide a wide range of interesting learning experiences that ignite pupils' enthusiasm in their learning. As a result, many pupils show positive attitudes to learning. However, a majority of pupils are unwilling to speak Welsh regularly.

The headteacher and governors provide clear leadership for the school's work. They have clear information about standards and use a purposeful range of suitable evaluation activities to ensure improvement.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that leaders act on the findings of self-evaluation processes in a more effective and timely manner
- R2 Address the safeguarding issues that were raised during the inspection
- R3 Raise standards of Welsh oracy and writing
- R4 Ensure regular opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R5 Ensure consistency in teaching and assessment for learning

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

On entry to the reception class, many pupils have numeracy skills that are appropriate or higher than expected for their age. However, many pupils' literacy skills on entry are lower than the expected level. During their time at the school, many pupils make sound progress from their starting points. They build on previous learning effectively and apply their thinking skills and creative skills purposefully across all areas of learning and the curriculum, for example as Year 2 pupils research into different materials to make a waterproof jacket for Father Christmas.

Many pupils' Welsh oral skills in the foundation phase are developing suitably. From an early age, they listen to stories and instructions, and respond appropriately. A very few nursery pupils, who have a sound grasp of the Welsh language, re-tell the story of the Gingerbread Boy with accuracy and clear sentence patterns. By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils speak confidently when discussing ingredients and the method of making food for Father Christmas' reindeer. In Year 6, many develop their ideas confidently when preparing a speech to persuade against the flooding of Cwm Celyn. However, many pupils across the school often turn to English with their peers, both inside and outside the classroom, and are unwilling to speak Welsh regularly.

In the foundation phase, many pupils make good progress in their reading. They develop an understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds, and apply these skills effectively in order to read unfamiliar words. Many read with expression and fluency. A majority of pupils make purposeful progress in their writing skills by using writing frames to help them. By the end of the phase, a few more able pupils use adjectives, similes and basic punctuation correctly, for example when writing a creative story based on Manza's journey in Africa. However, over-use of ready-made worksheets and writing frames prevents pupils from writing freely regularly.

In key stage 2, many pupils read confidently and fluently in both languages. They discuss the main events and characters from books knowledgeably, and express an opinion about their favourite authors. They use higher order reading skills well to find information from different sources, for example when preparing a multimedia presentation about a well-known person from the 60s. Across the stage, many pupils' writing skills are developing suitably. In Year 4, many develop their ideas appropriately in a range of forms for different purposes, for example when writing a newspaper article about Neil Armstrong in English. However, across the school, a few pupils' sentence structure is unclear, particularly in Welsh. Many pupils' standards of writing in the school's oldest class are sound.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their number skills effectively in a range of numeracy activities. They apply their skills successfully to solve problems in a variety of situations, for example when measuring paper to wrap Christmas presents in Father Christmas' workshop and calculating how many ingredients are needed to make bread. Many of the school's oldest pupils use the scale on a map successfully to calculate the distance between Amlwch and various places. Although there are good examples of pupils applying their numeracy skills across aspects of the curriculum, this is not consistent across all classes.

Standards of information and communication technology (ICT) across the school are good and are an integral part of all pupils' work. In both key stages, pupils use a wide variety of programs confidently to support and improve aspects of their work regularly. They use laptops and electronic tablets independently to support and develop their literacy and numeracy skills. They take photographs of their work and use them to create various presentations and assess their own work. In key stage 2, most pupils use ICT confidently to search for information and share it through numerous multimedia presentations, for example to describe the life of Martin Luther King and present the story of Llywelyn the Last. They add music and sound effects to them confidently. At the top of the school, most pupils use spreadsheets confidently to calculate the cost of Andy Warhol's paintings in dollars and pounds.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and understand whom to approach if they are worried or upset. They are welcoming towards each other and treat visitors with respect. Most pupils behave well in the classrooms, on the corridors and in assemblies. They work well together, listen and respect the contributions and ideas of others, for example when working together in small groups to prepare Christmas presents in Father Christmas' workshop.

Pupils take part in a number of councils, which encourages responsibility and care among pupils successfully. Many have a very good awareness of the importance of buying local goods and fair trade products, and the effect this has on overseas producers. This is supported well by the work of the school's fair trade council.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to make healthy choices in relation to diet. For example, the healthy sandwich project and Year 6 healthy plate of food reinforce this successfully. The eco council grows vegetables to be used in the kitchen in order to raise money to buy gardening equipment. This develops pupils' understanding of sustainability and entrepreneurship well.

The pupil's voice is developed purposefully as they suggest ideas for class work and play a role in their own learning. As a result of listening to the voice of their fellow pupils, the school council has purchased playtime sports resources in order to promote exercise and wellbeing during break time. This has a positive effect on their personal and social skills, in addition to developing their self-confidence and fitness successfully.

Most pupils have a strong knowledge of how to stay safe, including when they are online. For example, pupils in Year 4 have created posters to raise awareness of e-safety.

In the foundation phase, many pupils respond to their tasks well and, on the whole, they work independently and play an active part in their work. With the teacher's support, they are willing to try new experiences and know whom to approach for support, when necessary. At the top of the school, most pupils work independently and show resilience and perseverance.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

On the whole, teachers provide a wide range of rich learning experiences. which engage pupils' interest successfully and develop them as confident and creative

individuals. Many teachers question skilfully in order to ensure pupils' understanding of their tasks and encourage them to think independently. The principles of the foundation phase have been established firmly and, in these lessons, teachers plan practical, stimulating and rich learning experiences. Teachers use the school's resources effectively, including the outdoor areas regularly, in order to develop pupils' skills in a wide range of activities. Assistants are used effectively to support individuals and specific groups of pupils.

Where teaching is of a very high standard, teachers challenge pupils purposefully and develop pupils' skills expertly through a wide range of modern topics. In the best practice, teachers create a creative learning environment that leads pupils to an imaginary world. A notable example of this is the stimulating activities based on the era of Prince Llywelyn. These activities incorporate aspects of the new curriculum for Wales. However, where teaching is less effective, activities lack challenge and tasks do not always respond to all pupils' needs. At times, over-use of ready-made worksheets prevents pupils from writing freely. As a result, a few pupils, particular those who are more able, do not make the expected progress.

Teachers provide pupils with appropriate oral and written feedback in order for them to know how well they have achieved. In a minority of classes, teachers provide constructive comments in order for pupils to know how to make improvements and develop their work further. This is not consistent across the classes and subjects and, as a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school provides a rich curriculum about Wales in order to ensure that pupils develop their understanding of their local area and Wales. For example, numerous visits, such as the visit to Oriel Môn, enrich pupils' understanding well of the work and style and the artist, Kyffin Williams.

The school is in the process of planning the literacy, numeracy and digital competence frameworks into its curricular plans. However, this has not been developed effectively enough to ensure regular opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in a wider context. Teachers plan very skilfully to develop pupils' ICT skills through a wide and rich variety of interesting learning experiences. This ensures that they build on previous learning successfully and develop their skills further as they move through the school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

One of the school's strengths is provision for pupils who attend a specific class for those with additional learning needs. Members of staff create a happy, caring and inclusive environment that places a clear emphasis on developing pupils' emotional and social skills, and their curricular skills, very successfully. As a result, most pupils in this class make good progress in line with their needs.

The school has established comprehensive tracking procedures to track pupils' progress from their starting points. Teachers use this information well in order to identify pupils who need additional support in order to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers use this information effectively in order to stream and ensure efficient mathematics provision for individuals and specific groups of learners. Early indications show that this is having a positive effect on pupils' standards of mathematics.

Individual education plans and learning profiles for pupils with additional learning needs are purposeful. Members of staff monitor the progress that they make towards meeting their individual targets regularly. Learning assistants are used effectively across the school to support pupils in their learning and implement a range of intervention programmes. The school works well with parents to ensure their commitment to supporting their children. The school has a sound relationship with a range of external agencies in order to support pupils and provide support and guidance to staff.

There are suitable arrangements for promoting eating and drinking healthily. Through numerous activities, such as swimming and physical education lessons in the local leisure centre, provision to promote pupils' understanding of choosing a healthy lifestyle is sound.

Pupil's voice councils help to develop pupils' citizenship skills successfully. For example, the eco committee conducts regular recycling and energy saving audits, which strengthen their awareness of the importance of recycling to save money and protect the environment.

Provision to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils' moral development is promoted well through reflection time in assemblies, and close co-operation with the local church contributes well to this. The school promotes equality and diversity effectively, particularly in sports activities.

During the inspection, a few safeguarding issues were raised, and the school is beginning to respond to them. On the whole, safeguarding arrangements are suitable and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

Since being appointed in 2017, the headteacher has established a vision that is based on clear aims and objectives to ensure that pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of all of the school's work. She has shared this vision appropriately with staff, pupils and parents. In a short time, the headteacher has focused on establishing an ethos of trust among staff. This has ensured that, on the whole, staff work together purposefully to provide interesting experiences for pupils.

Regular meetings for staff and senior leaders provide a beneficial opportunity to discuss the school's procedures and consider standards of achievement. Overall, meetings lead to suitable action points, which ensure better consistency across the school, for example when establishing and using the procedure for tracking pupils' progress.

By strengthening the performance management process, the headteacher has created a clear structure of accountability at the school. These arrangements link staff targets with the development plan successfully. As part of the process, leaders organise suitable professional development opportunities for teachers and support staff to broaden their knowledge and expertise, for example through training on developing a growth mindset, which is beginning to become embedded in the school.

The school works purposefully with local schools and schools in the region on areas such as creativity and the new curriculum. This is beginning to have a positive effect on the quality of teaching in a few classes. However, the school has been too slow to respond to national priorities, for example in terms of establishing the literacy and numeracy framework, and reducing the effect of poverty on pupils' attainment.

Governors are supportive of the school and provide appropriate challenge. They know the school well and contribute extensively to self-evaluation and improvement planning processes by observing teaching and scrutinising pupils' work. This enables them to challenge the school on its performance and pupils' progress.

The school gathers first-hand information about the school's work through an appropriate range of self-evaluation activities. This includes learning walks, lesson observations, scrutiny of books and seeking the views of pupils and parents. Reports that derive from these processes identify strengths and areas for improvement successfully. Leaders use data increasingly to identify areas that pupils need to improve. However, leaders do not always act on findings robustly enough in order to ensure improvement in a timely manner.

There is a clear link between self-evaluation findings and the school improvement plan. The plan includes appropriate priorities with suitable activities and clear success criteria for raising standards and improving provision and leadership. However, it is too early to see the effect of this on the priorities in the school development plan, for example on attendance and provision for skills. The school has not made adequate progress over time against the recommendations from the last inspection.

Governors and the headteacher manage the budget carefully and allocate expenditure suitably in order to increase provision to support and promote pupils' wellbeing. The school's resources are of good quality, including ICT equipment and resources in the outdoor area. The school has enough qualified teachers and support staff to provide an appropriate curriculum and support for pupils.

The pupil development grant is used suitably to support vulnerable pupils and those who are eligible for free school meals. This includes employing additional staff to teach a target group of pupils. Pupils in this group are developing their self-confidence well and apply themselves enthusiastically to their work.

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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