



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

A report on
Ysgol Bro Dyfrdwy

**Cynwyd Site
Cynwyd
Corwen
Denbighshire
LL21 0LG**

Date of inspection: October 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Bro Dyfrdwy

Name of provider	Ysgol Bro Dyfrdwy
Local authority	Denbighshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	125
Pupils of statutory school age	97
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	17
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 23.0%)</i>	8.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 16.1%)</i>	11.3%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	50.9%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	09/06/2015
Start date of inspection	23/10/2023

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from 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 Gynradd Bro Dyfrdwy is a happy and homely school. All staff work together effectively to create a caring, Welsh, inclusive and hard-working ethos where staff and pupils care for each other naturally.

Pupils enjoy their time at the school greatly. They are happy to attend, behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils show strong motivation, a curious interest in their learning and make sound progress from their starting points.

The school has a strong Welsh ethos and an obvious feature is the provision of a range of valuable experiences with a clear emphasis on promoting pupils' awareness of their locality and the history and traditions of Wales. Through this, pupils show pride in their heritage and a clear appreciation of the culture and history of the local area and beyond.

Teachers provide rich and stimulating learning experiences that engage the interest of most pupils. This enables them to develop the skills they need to take advantage of the full curriculum. Pupils have a strong voice in the life of the school and enjoy the opportunities they are given to influence what they would like to learn within the term's theme. They thrive by contributing to a variety of councils that have a positive effect on school life. This creates a strong sense of belonging.

The headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership which provides a clear direction for the school. She receives strong support from the dedicated staff who work well together as a team and share responsibilities sensibly. They show a strong commitment to promoting continuous and sustainable improvements. Governors have a good understanding of the school's work and support the school effectively.

Recommendations

- R1 Provide more opportunities for pupils to make decisions about how they organise and present their work and think for themselves about how they respond to learning tasks
- R2 Provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum

What happens next

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

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, most pupils' skills are similar to what is expected for their stage of development, apart from their Welsh language skills, which is a new language for around half of them. Pupils who are latecomers to the Welsh language make sound progress in the language and gain the confidence to use it quickly. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress and achieve well.

Most pupils develop their language and communication skills well. The youngest pupils listen with increasing interest and continue to concentrate for extended periods. They recall a variety of Welsh songs and nursery rhymes well. This has a positive effect as they acquire and internalise the language. They develop the confidence to speak during activities and play sessions effectively, for example when retelling the tale of Melangell with puppets. As pupils move through the school, many speak Welsh completely naturally and use rich language and purposeful vocabulary when discussing their work. They express themselves maturely in Welsh and English, for example when explaining 'Dydd Llun Lles' well-being activities.

Across the school, most pupils develop their reading skills successfully. They show enthusiasm towards reading and appreciate the interesting range of reading texts, in terms of books and digital resources, that are available to them. Nursery and reception pupils enjoy listening to stories and retelling them to friends and adults. They begin to recognise and name a variety of sounds and use this knowledge to begin reading simple texts that are appropriate for their stage of development. By Year 2, many pupils read confidently and are happy to tackle unfamiliar words by using a variety of purposeful reading methods. Most of the oldest pupils read correctly with clear and distinct intonation and show a well-informed understanding of the context in Welsh and English. Most use their reading skills effectively to gather information from books and various texts from appropriate websites, for example when researching and presenting information about various animals that live in the reef to support their work on 'Life under the Sea'.

From a young age, many pupils show enthusiasm for writing when experimenting with mark making. They develop to write with increasing independence and fluency. By Year 2, many write an increasing range of sentences effectively about their visit to Llangar Church, for example. The oldest pupils use their writing skills in both languages in a variety of genres. Most use suitable vocabulary and write appropriately for different purposes and for various audiences. At the top of the school, they draft and re-draft their work effectively and show imagination and originality, for example when writing about the legend of Bendigeidfran.

Most pupils across the school make sound progress in their mathematics and numeracy skills. Nursery pupils develop a useful range of mathematical skills and enjoy mathematical challenges and take part enthusiastically in counting games and matching activities. Most of the oldest pupils work confidently with the four number rules, shape and measurement and develop sound data-handling skills. Many apply their numeracy skills skilfully to solve problems, for example when deciding whether

they got their money's worth or a poor deal when purchasing goods. However, only a minority of pupils apply their reasoning and inquiry skills regularly enough in subjects across the curriculum.

From an early age, most pupils apply their digital skills in a range of creative contexts to support their wider learning. Many of the youngest pupils use a digital tablet to record their learning, for example by using an animation program to tell the tale of the White Stag. Many pupils in Years 3 to 6 use their digital skills confidently to support independent research and write, edit, re-draft and present their findings. For example, they develop their skills effectively when creating and presenting a video to show their creative work on the effect of pollution on the ocean. They handle data confidently and are beginning to develop their coding skills, for example to control a device to pick up objects.

Most pupils develop strong creative and artistic skills. From an early age, they use scissors, glue and paint brushes confidently and work imaginatively with a wide variety of materials and techniques. They develop strong physical skills, for example when creating a dance based on a familiar legend. Most of the oldest pupils make wise choices in terms of which technique and equipment to use when emulating the work of artists from Wales and further afield. They take pride in their homework projects to design 3D work which supports their 'Under the sea' theme successfully.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe within the school's supportive, inclusive and stimulating environment. They are mature when welcoming visitors. Most show obvious pride in the school and appreciate the rich range of experiences that are provided for them. This is reflected in pupils' enthusiasm towards their learning and the school's high attendance rate.

Nearly all pupils behave well and treat each other and adults with obvious courtesy, care and respect. Most develop a clear understanding of the essential values that contribute to their development as well-rounded individuals and responsible and knowledgeable citizens. The way in which the oldest pupils care and take advantage of opportunities to teach the youngest pupils reflects this effectively. This is highlighted through the '*Ffrindiau Mawr a Ffrindiau Bach*' ('Big Friends and Little Friends') approach, where the oldest pupils lead sports on the playground.

Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They talk enthusiastically about their work and engage positively with class topics. From an early age, pupils familiarise themselves quickly with the organisation of the class when choosing tasks in different areas of provision. Across the school, many pupils show an increasing ability to concentrate for extended periods and show motivation and curiosity in their learning. They develop increasing resilience when facing new learning experiences and situations. Pupils understand the principle of seeking a solution themselves when they face difficulties in their learning. They act in accordance with the 'Try Three Before Me' strategy, which strengthens their development as independent learners. However, at times, pupils do not think enough for themselves about how to organise and present their work when responding to their tasks.

The pupil's voice has a central place in the life and work of the school. Pupils are happy to discuss any concerns with members of staff and have the confidence to listen to them. Most pupils are enthusiastic when suggesting ideas about what they would like to learn in their themes. Many take ownership of their learning, for example by playing an active part in the process of setting individual targets and assessing themselves. They are able to discuss the process knowledgeably, giving reasons for their numeracy, literacy and personal targets and the steps to achieve those aspects that they need to improve. Most respond positively to feedback from teachers and assistants when improving and refining their work.

Most pupils are ready to shoulder responsibilities regularly. Many make good use of opportunities to develop their leadership skills through a range of roles and pupil's voice councils. Through this, many pupils are confident and can explain where their work has made a difference to the life of the school. For example, they speak enthusiastically about the influence of the eco council in developing the school grounds.

Most pupils develop a sound understanding of how to take care of their mental and emotional well-being. They develop the ability and confidence to discuss and share their feelings, which helps them understand and show empathy for others who are in distress. They show a good understanding of cultural diversity, for example when learning about different religions. They are beginning to understand some of the ethical issues facing the world, such as the problems that waste cause to the environment. Members of the school council are proud of their efforts and support local and national charities, for example by raising money for a school in Uganda.

Most pupils understand the importance of making good choices that affect their health. They understand the importance of a balanced diet and the need to keep the body and mind healthy. They make informed decisions about what they eat and drink and their lifestyle, for example by drinking water regularly and cooking healthy meals. They apply themselves enthusiastically to their physical education lessons and to a range of activities that promote fitness, such as sports clubs and rugby, football and hockey tournaments.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of procedures for staying safe, including staying safe online. They apply this effectively when undertaking their learning tasks. They are aware of the importance of attending school regularly and punctually, which contributes effectively to maintaining high attendance rates.

Teaching and learning experiences

Leaders have a clear and robust vision for the school's curriculum. By listening to the contribution of all stakeholders, the curriculum is developed in a broad, skilful and balanced manner. Staff have designed and personalised the principles of the Curriculum for Wales highly effectively and have embedded them successfully in all aspects of the school.

Staff develop a curriculum that reflects the nature and context of the whole community in full, including learning activities that incorporate the linguistic and cultural nature of the area to enrich themes. Teachers organise valuable visits, for example to Llangar Church, the Rhug Estate and Corwen Museum and a virtual

workshop was held by officers from St Fagans National History Museum to deepen pupils' understanding of local and national traditions. Activities that focus on contemporary Welsh culture reinforce pupils' understanding of Welshness successfully. By inviting visitors to the school, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to celebrate diversity and respect different religions. There is a close relationship between the school and parents and the flow of information about pupils' progress ensures that parents have up-to-date information about their children's progress and well-being.

Across the school, teachers provide broad and stimulating opportunities that support most pupils to develop valuable skills. For example, teachers provide food and nutrition lessons effectively and pupils grow and harvest vegetables in the garden. They exhibit and sell produce from the garden at a local show, which reinforces their understanding of taking care of their well-being and eating healthily. Music lessons and outdoor lessons enrich provision further, which supports pupils to develop as ambitious and confident learners. Teachers plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and digital skills effectively. However, they do not provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills consistently enough across the curriculum.

All staff forge sound relationships with pupils and treat them with respect. They know their pupils well and develop a culture of positive support within the school community. Staff have high expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour and take advantage of regular opportunities to reinforce positive attitudes to learning. As a result, most pupils immerse themselves and maximise their learning successfully.

All staff model the Welsh language in a polished manner to reinforce pupils' spoken language. They use songs and nursery rhymes effectively to reinforce language patterns and extend pupils' vocabulary skilfully. Through probing questioning, nearly all members of staff challenge learners to develop thinking skills and problem-solving skills successfully. For example, the oldest pupils work together in pairs to create a large tidying tool by using a coding program skilfully.

Overall, all members of staff use consistent and varied methods to assess pupils' progress and understanding of what they are doing well and the next steps in their learning. On the whole, teachers use oral and written feedback effectively to support and challenge pupils' learning through effective methods. In most cases, teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and that of their peers. Teachers give clear and timely instructions, which ensures that many activities are well paced. However, at times, there is a tendency for teachers to over-direct activities, which limits opportunities for pupils to decide for themselves how they organise and present their work.

All staff work together effectively to create interesting and attractive learning areas. The outside areas are used effectively to enrich and reinforce learning. A clear emphasis is placed on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding by providing practical experiences that support them to develop their skills effectively. On the whole, activities are planned purposefully to motivate pupils to develop their independent thinking skills and support previous learning. For example, the construction area for the youngest pupils encourages co-operation and building with

bricks and sand effectively. Staff challenge the oldest pupils to build on their skills through purposeful woodworking opportunities.

Care, support and guidance

The school's staff create a safe, happy and caring community that succeeds in nurturing pupils' personal and social skills successfully. They provide an inclusive, supportive environment that reflects the school motto, '*Yn y llaw fach, mae'r holl fyd*'. Support for pupils' emotional, health and social needs is embedded in all of the school's work. This has a positive effect on pupils' well-being and enthusiasm for learning and is reflected in their positive behaviour. Developing the learner voice is one of the pillars of the school's vision. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to give their input on the curriculum and to the life and work of the school in general.

The headteacher and teaching staff have a thorough knowledge of each child. Staff discussions, along with the approach of regular monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, contribute successfully to identifying a clear and current picture of each pupil's needs. This helps firmly to identify and take early action when responding to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. Provision for pupils with ALN is well organised and effective. The co-ordinator works closely with teachers and support staff to provide a comprehensive programme, which includes a range of interventions that meet the needs of pupils on the ALN register and those who are a cause for concern well. Staff include pupils, parents and the views of external agencies to plan the next steps in pupils' learning effectively.

Promoting the Welsh language and the use of the language within the school and socially is one of the school's priorities. Valuable opportunities are provided for the enthusiastic members of the Welsh Language Charter council to lead activities, such as promoting the Welsh language in local shops in Corwen. They are enthusiastic in raising money for audio equipment to promote Welsh music across the school, organising a '*Clwb Cwtsh*' and create an interactive pack for parents to develop their Welsh language skills.

The school's ethos and collective worship assemblies promote pupils' spiritual and moral development successfully. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on values such as fairness, friendship and kindness and to consider the opinions of others sensitively, for example as the oldest pupils lead an assembly on Show Racism the Red Card. Learning about Christianity and other religions through lessons and collective worship sessions promotes pupils' understanding of the importance of tolerance and the right to be free from harassment. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to learn about the wider world. As a result, many pupils discuss the differences between the lives of children in Uganda and Ghana and their life here in Wales maturely. The school has taken early steps to introduce French as a means of promoting pupils' development and broadening their horizons.

Developing pupils' awareness and knowledge of the importance of protecting the planet by reducing the effects of climate change and global warming is an important part of the school's curriculum. Valuable opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute in a practical and direct manner, which is an effective means of learning about these issues in a more meaningful way, for example by planting trees on the school's grounds.

The school provides opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of how to stay physically, mentally and emotionally healthy purposefully. Pupils are encouraged to drink water regularly, to ensure that their packed lunches are healthy and to learn to cook nutritious meals. A clear emphasis is also placed on providing purposeful and successful opportunities to promote pupils' physical fitness by participating in a range of sports and physical exercise.

The school's culture of safeguarding is sound and all staff understand their roles and responsibilities, in terms of contributing to pupils' safety and well-being. There is effective provision to help pupils to keep themselves safe when working online. The school has robust strategies to promote punctuality and regular attendance among pupils, including daily monitoring, communicating with parents regularly and follow-up work supported by the local authority. As a result, attendance rates are consistently high.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides effective and considerate leadership, which ensures that the school has a clear strategic direction and a culture that promotes continuous improvement, in addition to a positive learning environment. She has a clear vision which is communicated and embraced effectively by all of the school's stakeholders to promote a positive learning environment in a close-knit, inclusive and happy community.

The headteacher sets high expectations for herself, staff and pupils. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher. They model professional values and behaviour that contribute successfully to effective co-operation and lead to a strong team ethos among staff. Leaders ensure valuable opportunities for all members of staff to develop leadership responsibilities. This ensures that staff at all levels understand and undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively. They model and promote professional values and conduct, which contributes positively towards improving the school. This ensures that the school's vision is realised in full in the school's work. Promoting the Welsh language and Welshness is a priority and is at the heart of the school's vision and all of its work.

Leaders create a positive culture and ethos to promote and support the professional learning of all staff, including leadership training. This links clearly with the school's improvement priorities and staff's professional needs. Leaders keep a detailed report on the professional learning opportunities that are attended by staff and measure them accurately to understand the effect on pupils' experiences and progress. Leaders identify the best practices in the school and ensure that other members of staff benefit from them. For example, they encourage purposeful co-operation with nearby schools to develop strategies to improve pupils' literacy, numeracy, digital and inquiry skills.

The school has developed rigorous processes to evaluate its performance and plan for improvement. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are embedded skilfully and enable leaders to identify clearly aspects that need to be prioritised for improvement. The headteacher ensures that all staff have an active role in the process. This ensures that they are aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher and school leaders use the findings of the

self-evaluation process to devise a clear strategic direction that focuses on constant improvement. For example, they have identified the need to continue to develop pupils' mathematics and numeracy skills through different contexts and life experiences.

There is a strong awareness and commitment among leaders and staff to tackle local and national priorities successfully. Leaders at all levels have created a positive culture of safeguarding, where pupils feel safe and valued. Staff work together effectively to implement the Curriculum for Wales and reform the ALN system. Thoughtful and highly considerate planning ensures that the schools addresses these priorities successfully.

The school establishes productive relationships with parents. Effective communication methods ensure that parents are able to raise any issues that may have an effect on their child's learning and well-being in a timely manner.

Governors understand their roles well and fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and successfully. They contribute purposefully to setting the school's strategic priorities and have a clear understanding of provision and its effect on pupils' learning. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge and hold the school to account on behalf of the local community in their role as critical friends. The governing body ensures that the food and drink provided by the school comply with legislation and has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

The school manages its funding efficiently and uses it sensibly in line with the priorities in the school improvement plan. It uses additional grant funding purposefully, including the pupil development grant, which is used wisely to provide focused support to help and encourage pupils' learning and well-being.

Staff use the school's resources effectively to provide a stimulating learning environment that supports teaching and learning and strengthens pupils' physical and mental well-being. They use the school's extensive grounds regularly, which include a well-developed forest area, to provide stimulating and creative opportunities for outdoor learning.

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/members of the management committee 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, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), 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 (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- 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 (<http://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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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