



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

A report on

Ysgol Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog

**Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog
Near Llangollen
Wrexham
LL20 7LF**

Date of inspection: July 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog

Name of provider	Ysgol Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	18
Pupils of statutory school age	11
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	5
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>	0.0%
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>	
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	81.8%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	23/09/2014
Start date of inspection	03/07/2023

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 Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog and Ysgol Cynddelw are part of the Dyffryn Ceiriog federation. The headteacher is supported by a deputy headteacher at the Ysgol Cynddelw site and a head of site at Ysgol Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog.

With the enthusiastic support of the staff, the headteacher has created a clear and robust vision based on ensuring that pupils' well-being and the development of their Welsh language skills are at the forefront of the life and work of the schools in the federation. Leaders, including governors, have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They include staff in the school's self-improvement process effectively by developing their understanding of the standard of provision and progress in pupils' skills. However, self-evaluation processes do not always enable leaders to identify areas for improvement and the steps needed to develop provision further.

Leaders are extremely active in ensuring that all members of staff work together effectively to improve the quality of provision for pupils. Teachers plan jointly effectively to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of most pupils successfully. Teachers provide learning experiences that are effective in supporting pupils to make progress in their skills, particularly their spoken Welsh skills and digital skills. However, teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to apply their extended written skills or numeracy skills consistently enough across the areas of learning and experience.

Nearly all pupils behave exceptionally well. They treat each other, staff and visitors with respect. Pupils enjoy the range of stimulating and engaging experiences that are provided for them. They work together effectively in the learning areas and are willing to contribute to class discussions and share their ideas maturely and sensibly. When pupils are given an opportunity to do so, most concentrate well and engage conscientiously when responding to challenges in their work. However, teachers do not always provide enough purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in independent learning activities.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that self-evaluation processes identify areas for improvement in a timely manner to support pupils to make progress in their skills
- R2 Provide activities that support pupils to stretch their skills to the best of their ability by applying them in independent learning activities

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, nearly all pupils' oral Welsh skills and social skills are in line with their stage of development. During their time at the school, most pupils make sound progress in their learning.

Most of the youngest pupils communicate confidently in Welsh and use familiar words correctly. Most pupils listen attentively to instructions from staff and each other's contributions. They use a suitable range of vocabulary and language patterns in interesting contexts. Most discuss enthusiastically in the learning area while talking about their experiences and interests, for example by adapting their vocabulary and tone of voice skilfully while role-playing as small animals. Most of the oldest pupils' oral skills develop effectively. Pupils speak confidently when discussing their ideas with their peers, for example when discussing what to include in a story to describe the life of their endangered animal. Across the school, nearly all pupils take pride in the Welsh language.

Most of the youngest pupils recognise sounds and letters and build a sound understanding of basic vocabulary. They read suitable texts with increasing confidence. By Year 2, most pupils discuss the content of text meaningfully and sensibly, for example when following instructions to wash hands by using imperative verbs. Most of the oldest pupils read a range of factual texts confidently in Welsh and English, for example when reading various websites to discover facts about the conditions that are needed for a polar bear to survive.

The early writing skills of many of the youngest pupils develop skilfully. They use simple sentence structures and include punctuation that is suitable for the text, for example when writing vocabulary to describe a picture of residents in a foreign country as part of their humanities work. As they move through the school, the writing skills of most of the oldest pupils develop successfully in both languages. They adapt the style and structure of their writing for different topics effectively. For example, they write a formal letter to the local Member of Parliament to express their opinion on the effect of deforestation on the environment. However, teachers do not provide enough appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their extended writing skills in interesting contexts, particularly in the school's higher years.

Most pupils develop sound mathematics skills and use simple number strategies correctly. The youngest pupils calculate numbers up to 100 confidently and recognise the names and properties of two and three-dimensional shapes confidently. In the oldest pupils' class, most pupils' mathematics skills develop well. By Year 6, they have a sound understanding of place value up to a million and are confident in

changing equivalent fractions to their simplest form. They calculate the perimeter and area of regular shapes, some compound shapes and triangles successfully. The numeracy skills of many pupils across the school develop appropriately. However, many pupils, particularly the oldest pupils, do not apply their numeracy skills to the best of their ability in an interesting variety of contexts.

Many pupils develop and apply their digital skills skilfully. The youngest pupils log in to a range of digital platforms confidently to access their work. By the end of Year 2, many succeed in creating an animation to explain the importance of washing their hands regularly to prevent infection from spreading. They are confident in incorporating images and sound creatively to present information to the audience in an attractive manner. Most of the oldest pupils create personal websites to collate and apply their work.

The creative skills of nearly all pupils develop skilfully. For example, the youngest pupils develop their skills effectively by emulating a famous picture by a Japanese artist as part of their theme to create individual tiles to form a creative complete composition. The oldest pupils develop their skills well, for example by creating and displaying information about four endangered animals from different habitats.

Most pupils' physical skills develop strongly through a variety of beneficial experiences and activities. For example, the youngest pupils use a fishing rod to catch fish in the water tub. The oldest pupils develop their physical skills successfully by taking part in activities that develop their ability to balance and stretch, for example by using the multi-purpose climbing equipment.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils across the school are polite, friendly and treat their peers, staff and visitors with respect and care. Most enjoy coming to school and feel happy within its inclusive ethos. Pupils and their parents value the care that staff provide and are confident that staff respond immediately to any concerns they may have. Nearly all pupils behave excellently in lessons and during break times.

Through their awareness of the values that are promoted by the school, most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of moral and creative citizenship. They have a sound awareness of their rights, for example the right to relax and play and when taking part in mass assemblies. Nearly all understand the importance of supporting others in society and are keen to organise fundraising activities for various charities. This has a positive effect on their understanding of the needs of others, both locally and nationally.

Most pupils converse maturely and enjoy sharing their experiences with adults. Members of the school council and eco council contribute their ideas well in an appropriate range of activities. For example, members of the school council create new rules for break times to ensure that everyone plays together happily. Members of the eco council also play a prominent part in planning and creating a bug hotel as part of the eco day celebrations. As part of their themes, pupils are given beneficial opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of global issues, such as the negative effect that rainforest deforestation has on climate change. As a result,

nearly all pupils develop as knowledgeable citizens who discuss contemporary and ethical topics sensibly.

Across the school, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and express their views maturely when responding to the termly enquiries. The youngest pupils make suggestions about how to enrich the outdoor areas further, for example by developing a water wall that includes pipes of different sizes. Pupils in the oldest classes enjoy contributing ideas and questions to the mind maps at the beginning of new themes. Pupils across the federation enjoy sharing their ideas with their peers. This has a positive effect on strengthening the working and social relationship between the pupils at both schools.

Most pupils concentrate well and engage conscientiously in lessons. When teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their skills independently, they learn diligently and complete their activities enthusiastically. However, teachers do not always provide activities that support pupils to develop their independent learning skills to the best of their ability. Most pupils enjoy working with their peers in pairs or groups to solve challenges and make effective use of self-correction methods to move their learning forwards. They listen maturely to each other's points of view and discuss their ideas effectively, for example when deciding how to group waste that has been collected at the seaside.

Most pupils understand how to stay healthy through the variety of fitness activities within the school. Through their themes, they have a sound understanding of the effect that a balanced diet and physical exercise have on their health. Most pupils participate enthusiastically in physical activities, including the forest school physical education sessions. Most pupils enjoy taking part in physical activities, for example by building and using an obstacle course using a range of natural and man-made equipment on the school field. The oldest pupils are proud that there are arrangements available for them to join their peers across the federation to compete as a team in a variety of local tournaments.

Teaching and learning experiences

Leaders promote regular and effective co-operation across the federation. Teachers plan in detail to deliver the Curriculum for Wales and share ideas continuously to provide a broad and rich curriculum for pupils at both schools. They hold regular meetings to discuss provision and pupils' progress which, in turn, facilitates teaching and learning highly effectively.

The school curriculum is rooted firmly in the pupils' local area or *cynefin*. Staff plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and traditions of Wales, while also promoting their awareness that Welsh is part of the lively and modern culture of their local area. Teachers promote pupils' learning beneficially by capturing their ideas and interests. For example, teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to look at the effects of the past on their present day lives and their hopes for the future. By doing so, pupils develop their awareness of the importance of the Welsh language to the communities of Wales today.

Provision within the indoor and outdoor learning areas is rich and provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to play, learn and investigate in an interesting environment.

The youngest pupils benefit greatly from experiences that develop their skills successfully. Teachers question pupils about their ideas and adapt provision creatively, in line with their interests.

Provision to develop pupils' oral and reading skills is effective. As a result, many pupils speak confidently in both languages about different aspects of their work. Teachers plan interesting reading activities well, which develop their confidence successfully. Provision to develop pupils' digital skills is effective. For example, most of the oldest pupils discuss their computer work confidently and explain how their personal website is a means for them to save and access their work easily. However, teachers do not provide enough appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their extended writing skills or numeracy skills across the areas of learning and experience.

Teachers and support staff are confident in their strong Welsh-speaking skills and support pupils highly effectively to develop their understanding of the correct use of the language. They support the oral skills of pupils who come from Welsh-speaking homes and develop the early speaking skills of pupils who are learning to speak and use the Welsh language successfully. As a result, pupils speak Welsh confidently and with increasing accuracy from an early age and use the language wholly naturally with each other while they learn and play.

Staff foster a close and highly supportive working relationship with pupils. Teachers question pupils skilfully and encourage them to think for themselves, to express an opinion and give reasons for their views. Teachers present suitable learning aims and success criteria. As a result, many pupils have an appropriate understanding of different activities.

Staff provide pupils with useful oral feedback during their activities and many pupils have an increasing understanding of what they need to do to develop their work further. Written feedback from their peers and teachers supports pupils effectively to consider the success criteria of particular tasks. However, teachers do not always provide activities that support pupils to develop their independent learning skills to the best of their ability.

Leaders scrutinise pupils' progress effectively. Teachers and support staff focus on a range of information about progress in pupils' skills and also pay effective attention to their well-being. This provides a detailed picture of the development of pupils as well-rounded individuals, in addition to providing useful information about the progress of particular groups.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring and inclusive community that promotes the well-being of pupils and staff highly successfully. This means that nearly all pupils settle quickly at the school. Staff deal with any issues that arise in a supportive manner and concerns are resolved quickly. As a result of the supportive relationship between pupils and staff, nearly all pupils are happy to come to school, work well together in lessons and play together appropriately during break times.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) has robust processes to identify pupils' needs at an early stage. Leaders track pupils' progress in detail and evaluate the effect of support programmes on their progress effectively. Appropriate one-page profiles include useful information about pupils' individual needs and what they need to develop further. The ALNCo provides opportunities for parents, staff and pupils to contribute appropriately to pupils' individual development plans. Staff evaluate pupils' progress against their targets to support them to make progress in their skills over time.

The school has valuable arrangements for collective worship. For example, teachers and pupils hold assemblies on themes such as the rights of the child. Teachers inspire pupils by sharing the stories of influential famous people, such as Betsi Cadwaladr, and encourage pupils to reflect on people they admire.

Through stimulating themes, teachers develop pupils' understanding of their identity, heritage and Welsh culture successfully. For example, pupils learn about Welsh hymns, such as 'Calon Lân', to sing at a 'wedding' held at the local church following their work on celebrations. Staff promote pupils' Welshness highly effectively in all aspects of school life. For example, pupils enjoy competing in the school eisteddfod and Eisteddfod Glyn Ceiriog. Valuable opportunities are also provided for pupils at both schools to compete as a federation in the Urdd Eisteddfod, locally, regionally and nationally.

The school provides a range of appealing clubs and activities that enrich the curriculum and provide social and purposeful opportunities for pupils. For example, pupils are given opportunities to take part in drum workshops, to attend the Urdd club and the cooking club. By doing so, pupils develop their personal and creative skills highly successfully.

Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to influence a number of issues relating to school life through the activities of the school council and the eco council. For example, members of the eco council play a leading part in develop the school's outdoor areas, including applying for a grant to develop the school field and the fruit and vegetable garden. As a result, many pupils have a good understanding of their food's journey from field to fork. By discussing a range of global issues, teachers develop pupils' understanding of how to be principled and knowledgeable citizens. For example, teachers organise for a representative of an international charity to visit the school to deepen pupils' understanding of the importance of water to everyone around the world.

Staff provide a rich range of experiences that encourage pupils to use their imagination creatively. For example, following their work on Welsh history, they designed and created love spoons out of clay. They also designed and created a model of an animal park on a large scale. Pupils develop their creative skills skilfully, for example when choosing a specific medium to create a self-portrait and conveying effect by using chalk, pencil or paint.

Teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills in an appropriate range of activities such as beneficial forest sessions. Staff also organise football and netball tournaments for pupils to develop their skills beneficially.

Nearly all pupils enjoy the variety of equipment that is available to them during break time, including the climbing frame and the obstacle course.

Leaders foster an effective culture of safeguarding across the schools in the federation. All members of staff have a sound understanding of child protection policies and processes. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

Since being appointed in 2021, the headteacher has succeeded in creating a clear and consistent vision for the schools in the federation. Staff work together highly effectively to ensure that the well-being of pupils and staff is at the forefront at both schools. The schools are happy and friendly communities and a sense of being part of one big family permeates all aspects of the federation's life and work.

All staff work together appropriately to provide stimulating and engaging learning experiences that meet the needs of most pupils. They place a clear priority on developing all pupils' Welsh language skills and their pride in Wales. As a result, pupils speak Welsh confidently and take pride in their identity.

The headteacher has high expectations of herself, the staff and pupils. All members of teaching staff have individual targets that link purposefully to the priorities for improvement and meet their professional learning needs. The school has clear arrangements to ensure that pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave appropriately around the school. As a result, the behaviour and commitment of nearly all pupils to their work and to the life of the school are good.

The headteacher has worked diligently to share responsibilities effectively between the staff. Across the federation, all staff work in teams, including teams to develop the curriculum and improve pupils' well-being. Support staff are given beneficial opportunities to lead in a number of areas, for example by providing intervention sessions for pupils with emotional and social needs and by holding sessions to develop pupils' literacy skills. As a result, pupils receive robust well-being support and stimulating, engaging learning experiences.

Governors and staff have appropriate knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. As part of the self-evaluation processes, leaders and teachers take part in a suitable variety of regular monitoring exercises, for example analysing information about pupils' progress, scrutinising their work and conducting learning walks. However, self-evaluation processes do not always identify the areas for improvement or provide purposeful steps to develop provision further in a timely enough manner.

Leaders organise beneficial professional learning opportunities for staff. For example, teachers are given opportunities to attend courses to develop their leadership role as part of provision to support them to consider the next steps in their careers. Teachers at both schools are given beneficial opportunities to work with each other and other schools within the cluster, for example by leading on important aspects of the Curriculum for Wales, which includes developing pupils' Welsh oracy and literacy and their digital skills.

Leaders manage the schools' budget effectively. They make suitable decisions about expenditure for the benefit of pupils and their experiences. They have recently made a significant investment in the outdoor areas for the youngest pupils. This has a positive effect on enriching provision and learning experiences for the youngest pupils. Good use is made of the pupil development grant to provide sessions to promote pupils' well-being which, in turn, has a beneficial effect on the confidence and behaviour of pupils with emotional and social needs.

The governing body works diligently to support the school's work. They attend meetings as a full governing body each term and as part of their responsibilities on the sub-committees, which include the curriculum, finance and well-being committees. During the meetings, they scrutinise documentation and contribute to discussions with members of staff, and hold leaders to account when necessary. The governing body promotes healthy eating and drinking for pupils effectively. Governors have recently contributed to the content of letters to parents about the need to provide their children with nutritious food in their lunchboxes. Together, the leaders of the federation promote a culture of safeguarding successfully.

Across the federation, working with parents and the local community is an integral part of the work of the schools' staff. Parents are given regular opportunities to contribute and share their ideas about provision, for example through questionnaires and open evenings about desired learning experiences for their children and the content of the curriculum. Leaders welcome members of the community to the schools regularly to discuss their work and share their expertise with pupils. For example, one resident has visited the school recently to teach pupils clog dancing to traditional Welsh music.

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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