



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

A report on

Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd

**Glan-Y-Nant Road
Whitchurch
Cardiff
CF14 1AP**

Date of inspection: May 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd

Name of provider	Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	469
Pupils of statutory school age	344
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	63
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 23.7%)</i>	5.3%
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 13.2%)</i>	2.0%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	52.9%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	02/01/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/06/2015
Start date of inspection	20/05/2024

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

Pupils, staff and parents take pride in the school's friendly, inclusive and Welsh ethos. As a result, pupils build extremely positive working relationships with members of staff, which contributes successfully to the respectful and well-organised learning environment. Pupils' attitudes to learning are a notable strength and their behaviour is excellent.

A strong feature of the school is the pupils' happy and friendly nature. They are thoughtful of others, talk completely naturally with each other and adults in Welsh and show an interest and curiosity in the world around them. Pupils take pride in their school and their local heritage. They show pride in the school's musical successes, for example when succeeding in local and national competitions.

Staff provide a creative, broad and balanced curriculum for pupils. Teachers plan a range of rich experiences and interesting activities that reflect the local nature and context of the school. They provide stimulating learning experiences that motivate pupils to learn successfully. However, a minority of staff have a tendency to over-direct activities which, in turn, limits opportunities for a minority of pupils to develop as increasingly independent learners.

Leaders share a clear vision for providing a well-rounded education based on supporting pupils' well-being. The enthusiastic headteacher has created a caring and supportive environment which ensures a strong sense of teamwork. This ensures that everyone understands the school's priorities and work together supportively to improve provision. However, the school's self-evaluation processes do not always focus purposefully enough on the effect of provision on pupils' progress.

Recommendations

- R1 Share effective teaching practices across the school to support pupils to develop their independent learning skills
- R2 Ensure that self-evaluation processes focus purposefully on the effect of provision on pupils' progress

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 have literacy, numeracy and social skills that are similar to, or above, those that are expected for their age and stage of development. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals, make sound progress.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop robust listening skills and most speak confidently and politely. In the reception class, they develop their listening skills effectively and respect each other's contributions, for example when considering which adjectives to use when discussing the feelings of pirates. As pupils move through the school, most speak Welsh completely naturally and use purposeful vocabulary and rich language when discussing their work, for example when commentating on sports matches. They express themselves maturely in Welsh and English in class discussions and are very considerate of the views of their peers.

Most pupils' reading skills develop well as they mature. The youngest pupils enjoy listening to stories and retelling them to friends and adults. They begin to recognise and name various sounds and use this knowledge to begin to read simple texts in line with their stage of development. By Year 2, most read with increasing fluency and understanding and with good development in their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words. Most of the oldest pupils read intelligently in various contexts in both languages. They vary their tone of voice and use punctuation correctly to show their understanding of the text. Most use their reading skills effectively to gather information from books, various texts and from relevant websites.

Most pupils develop their writing skills successfully. The youngest pupils make big marks in a wide range of experiences and, gradually, they begin writing simple words and sentences skilfully, for example when describing dinosaurs. By Year 2, many use adjectives and similes with increasing accuracy, for example when describing animals in the Amazon. At the top of the school, most pupils' writing skills develop soundly and they present factual and creative information in an interesting range of contexts. For example, Year 6 pupils use rich vocabulary and imaginative phrases when writing a monologue on the voyage of the Mimosas.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress in developing their mathematics skills. Year 2 pupils identify numbers up to 100 and develop an understanding of measuring and interpreting measuring scales well. By Year 5, pupils develop their mathematical skills more extensively, for example by designing vehicles for people with physical disabilities. Many of the oldest pupils take purposeful advantage of opportunities to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum, for example when using co-ordinates to locate significant areas of Cardiff during the Second World War.

Across the school, most pupils develop their digital skills effectively. The youngest pupils use a range of digital programs successfully to support their learning. Year 4 pupils use digital apps to create haikus about Welsh castles, for example. By Year 6, most pupils develop a comprehensive range of digital skills and use them effectively

to extend and present their work. For example, the oldest pupils create a rap to tell the story of the betrayal of the bluebirds.

Pupils' creative skills develop well throughout the school. Most use a variety of materials and styles effectively to produce original work of a high standard, for example when emulating famous artists. Most pupils develop their music skills excellently by performing locally and competing nationally. This is a notable quality of pupils' musical talent.

Nearly all pupils' physical skills develop well and they apply themselves enthusiastically to physical activities. They enjoy the physical education sessions and apply themselves purposefully to develop their skills in a good variety of rich opportunities, for example when competing in a local table tennis tournament.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils' well-being and positive attitudes to learning are a notable strength of the school. Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe within the school. They show obvious pride in their school and value the various experiences that are provided for them. They behave excellently and treat each other, staff and visitors with obvious courtesy, care and respect. They are caring towards their peers, sensitive to the needs of others and know whom to approach if they have a problem.

Most pupils enjoy and engage with their tasks enthusiastically, particularly during the forest activities. These sessions contribute effectively to developing pupils' co-operation and creative skills. Many show perseverance in their tasks and concentrate for extended periods. They work together effectively in groups, pairs or by supporting each other, when necessary. Overall, most pupils respond well to oral feedback from staff. However, pupils do not always understand or respond proactively enough to teachers' written feedback. As a result, they do not understand what and how to improve their work to make consistent progress in their learning.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet. They discuss the importance of not sharing passwords and the dangers of revealing personal information maturely. As a result, nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of making wise decisions. Through 'good start to the day' activities, nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of making good choices in terms of eating and drinking healthily and the effect it has on their health. They participate enthusiastically in physical activities and clearly enjoy taking part in them. Most of the oldest pupils enjoy representing the school in a variety of sports competitions.

Across the school, most pupils develop increasing resilience when facing new learning experiences and situations. They demonstrate innate motivation and curiosity in their learning. As a result, most pupils develop into ambitious and confident learners who are ready to learn. However, a minority of pupils tend to be over-reliant on staff which, in turn, slows the development of their independent learning skills.

Many pupils enjoy undertaking roles and responsibilities within the school and the community. The '*dreigiau*' council promotes the use of the Welsh language effectively

in the community by designing and sharing posters in the local shops to encourage residents to speak Welsh. The school council has created an anti-bullying policy for pupils which contributes successfully to creating a caring ethos that exists throughout the school.

Most pupils develop to become ethical and informed citizens. Many have a good awareness of the importance of equality and respecting others. They have an understanding of their rights, which includes an awareness of the right to be happy. Through enquiries such as 'How multicultural is Cardiff?', for example, they develop empathy and a mature understanding of the experiences of people from diverse backgrounds.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school provides a rich curriculum and offers learning experiences that spark pupils' imaginations successfully. This valuable provision works productively with all of the school's stakeholders to design a broad and comprehensive curriculum that supports the principles of Curriculum for Wales and is relevant to the community of Whitchurch. This engages and maintains pupils' interest and enjoyment in their learning and ensures progression in their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Teachers ensure that there is an appropriate balance and breadth in pupils' experiences across all areas of the curriculum.

Staff consider pupils' ideas effectively as part of the planning process and work well with them and their parents to develop a curriculum that incorporates the community nature of the school in full. The ethos of Welshness is a prominent feature of the curriculum which weaves skilfully throughout of all the school's life and work. Pupils' awareness and ownership of their local community, Wales and the wider world are developed successfully.

The robust working relationship between staff and pupils is strong and staff know their pupils well. They encourage and praise pupils' efforts regularly as they succeed in their activities. Teachers and learning assistants provide valuable and effective support for pupils and an attractive learning environment is provided in the classrooms and the outdoor areas to support pupils. Throughout the school, the forest area is used effectively to expand and enrich learning experiences, for example as pupils create native Australian pictures from natural materials. Local educational visits to Cardiff Bay, in addition to residential visits, for example, strengthen learning experiences and support pupils' awareness of their local area successfully.

Teachers provide clear guidance during learning activities. They motivate pupils skilfully and, as a result, most pupils concentrate for extended periods. In the best practice, teachers ensure that sessions have a purposeful pace and ambitious challenges. They ensure a consistent balance between activities that are led by staff and opportunities to engage and hold interest and develop pupils as independent learners. However, these effective practices are not consistent across the school. A minority of teachers have a tendency to over-direct learning which hinders pupils' innate curiosity. This, in turn, limits pupils' ability to make increasingly independent choices about their learning.

The school's strong Welsh ethos, along with wider provision, encourages pupils to use the Welsh language purposefully. As a result, by the top of the school, most pupils develop as competent bilingual learners. Staff show enthusiasm towards the language and hold high expectations for pupils' standards of oracy. This enables most pupils to make sound progress in their Welsh speaking and literacy skills.

Teachers provide pupils with regular feedback about their learning. In classes where this is effective, pupils improve their work and, as a result, understand what they need to do next time to make their work better. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to respond to this feedback or ensure that it is specific enough to help pupils improve important aspects of their work.

The school tracks pupils' progress effectively and makes purposeful use of various assessments. By doing so, teachers ensure that pupils receive the support they need to succeed. As a result, most pupils make sound progress in all aspects of their learning. The school shares information about pupils' progress with parents in a timely manner and includes improvement targets, where relevant.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a safe, happy and caring community and the relationship between pupils, and between pupils and staff, is a strength. This makes a valuable contribution towards fostering the school's familial atmosphere. The respect and care from staff are a strong feature which has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and willingness to learn.

Across the school, staff support pupils' well-being, health and social needs successfully to support them to engage regularly with their learning and benefit from the variety of opportunities available to them. Support sessions which focus on fostering pupils' well-being, for example, are effective and enrich their self-respect and social skills successfully.

Staff discussions, along with effective arrangements for tracking pupils' progress, contribute effectively to identifying the needs of all pupils. This is beneficial to staff as they identify and implement support at an early stage while responding to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. Provision for pupils with ALN is organised and effective. Staff provide a range of valuable support programmes and interventions that are tailored carefully to respond to pupils' needs and their personal targets. The school makes good use of external agencies, such as the speech therapist and the language and communication team. Learning assistants work knowledgeably and skilfully when supporting pupils to make progress in their skills. Staff include pupils, parents and the comments of external agencies to plan the next steps in their learning effectively.

Staff promote the importance of healthy eating and encourage physical fitness through a range of physical education activities, which include extra-curricular sports clubs. The extensive playing fields allow staff to organise and provide a range of outdoor activities that contribute well to pupils' well-being and enjoyment of activities. Provision also promotes pupils' understanding of how to make healthy choices in terms of their lifestyle and the importance of keeping fit successfully.

Staff organise collective worship sessions well, which provide meaningful opportunities to support pupils' spiritual and moral development. Valuable opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in them actively, for example when singing a variety of contemporary hymns and songs. Children's rights are a regular part of school assemblies. Staff also ensure beneficial opportunities for pupils to reflect on current affairs and different religions and cultures in valuable activities, for example when studying how many mosques there are in Cardiff.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which staff promote and develop pupils' understanding of their Welsh identity, heritage and culture. Pupils are given rich opportunities to develop their expressive skills and embrace the culture and history of Wales effectively. For example, they listen to contemporary Welsh music and emulate the work of Welsh authors and artists successfully. This develops pupils' creative and artistic skills and self-confidence well and contributes to fostering pupils' respect and pride in their *'cynefin'* successfully, both locally and nationally.

Staff provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to contribute to decision-making processes within the school. For example, staff support pupils to provide a school uniform recycling arrangement, where pupils bring used clothes to school to be redistributed to other pupils who need them. The school council has also organised a day to celebrate diversity successfully. As a result, these experiences help pupils to research and appreciate issues relating to tolerance, empathy and respect for others.

The school's arrangements for ensuring pupils' punctuality and regular attendance are sound. Staff keep appropriate records of cases of absence and contact parents in a timely manner to discuss any concerns about their children's attendance. Effective use is made of the family support officer and external services to support this. Leaders set high expectations for pupils' safety and have established a robust culture of safeguarding across the school. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision based on creating a happy and caring learning environment to provide a firm foundation for pupils to develop their core skills. This is based on supporting pupils to be respectful and ambitious learners who are ready to succeed. As a result, there is a strong sense of trust and pride between pupils and staff which permeates the school's Welsh and close-knit community naturally.

Arrangements to support, develop and distribute leadership across the school are developing appropriately. Within a short period, the enthusiastic headteacher has developed an effective team of staff by distributing roles and responsibilities suitably. They are completely clear about their roles and are committed fully to the school's values, promoting a culture of effective co-operation between all members of staff. As a result, they are keen to develop provision to improve pupils' experiences, progress and skills.

Members of the governing body play an active and purposeful role in the life and work of the school. They provide useful guidance, support and challenge to the headteacher. Governors have specific and extensive skills and use them purposefully to support leaders in making decisions, for example when working with staff to draft

information about methods of tracking progress pupils' skills. Members of the governing body are active in self-evaluation activities and, as a result, they have a sound awareness of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Governors ensure that suitable arrangements are implemented to support pupils to eat and drink healthily, which comply with statutory legislation.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils, the school and its community exceptionally well. The school's relationship with parents is a notable strength and the continuous co-operation and communication promote the school in its community extremely effectively. The school's parent-teacher association is extremely active in holding events at the school. As a result of holding a St Dwynwen's disco, for example, a good amount of profit was made to contribute to providing a digital reading program to enable parents to support their children's reading skills at home.

Leaders have developed appropriate procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the school's activity, which leads to purposeful improvements. For example, scrutiny of progress in pupils' numeracy skills has led to the development of valuable teaching and learning strategies across the school. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their numeracy skills. However, monitoring and evaluation activities do not always focus purposeful enough on the effect of provision on pupils' progress, such as the need to plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop as increasingly independent learners.

Over time, leaders create a positive ethos and culture that supports and promote the professional learning of all staff. They provide beneficial opportunities for them to undertake a good range of professional learning, which responds firmly to their individual requirements and the school's priorities. The individual experiences and expertise of staff are used effectively to promote professional learning and allocate curricular responsibilities. As a result, all members of staff take advantage of valuable opportunities to develop their skills and understanding and they understand their responsibilities well.

The school is part of the Cardiff Metropolitan University education partnership and is a lead school for initial teacher education. This means that the school staff are responsible for mentoring students each year. This reinforces the positive attitude of all staff towards professional learning.

The school has a sensible spending plan which ensures that it has enough resources to meet pupils' needs purposefully. Leaders monitor the budget carefully and ensure sensible expenditure to align with important needs. They make good use of different grants that have been allocated to the school, for example by using the pupil development grant to provide programmes for pupils who need further support with their learning.

Leaders work to ensure that families that are disadvantaged by poverty are supported well. They also provide opportunities for a school uniform exchange to reduce costs.

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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