



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

A report on

**Ysgol y Foryd
Morfa Avenue
Foryd
Conwy
LL18 5LE**

Date of inspection: January 2019

by

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

About Ysgol y Foryd

Ysgol y Foryd Infant School is in Kinmel Bay in Conwy. The school has 225 pupils between the ages of three and seven, including 50 part-time pupils in the nursery. There are eight classes at the school.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 29%. This is higher than the national average of 19%. A very few pupils are from a minority ethnic background. The school has identified 35% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is well above the national average of 21%.

The acting headteacher took up her post in September 2017 as a result of the secondment of the headteacher to work for the local education consortium. The school was last inspected in December 2013.

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

Nearly all pupils including those with additional learning needs make good and often very good progress in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills by the end of Year 2, sometimes from low starting-points.

Nearly all pupils' attitude towards learning is exemplary. Standards of behaviour and self-discipline in lessons and around the school are high. They are polite and considerate, and they relate well to each other.

The quality of teaching supports very high levels of pupils' engagement and very strong progress in learning. Teachers and assistants work highly effectively as a team and create an enthusiastic learning environment in all classes. They have very high expectations of each pupil.

The quality of care, support and guidance provided is excellent and has a very positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Senior leaders provide a strong strategic direction for the school with a clear focus on meeting the diverse needs and wellbeing of all pupils. Team work is a strength of the school. The governing body is highly supportive of the school.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Excellent
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Excellent

Recommendations

R1 Improve the extended writing skills of more able pupils

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to assessment for learning for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

On entry to the school, most pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are below those expected for pupils of their age. However, nearly all pupils including those with additional learning needs make good and often very good progress in the development of these skills by the end of Year 2. Most achieve very well in line with their age and ability.

Nearly all pupils across the school develop their oracy skills exceptionally well. They listen extremely carefully to each other and to adults. As they move through the school, most pupils become highly confident speakers who express themselves very clearly. Older pupils, for example, talk enthusiastically and use extensive vocabulary when talking about their topic the frozen planet.

Most pupils develop their writing skills well. Younger pupils confidently communicate meaning through simple words and phrases. Many older pupils use simple sentences to record their ideas well and include basic punctuation such as capital letters and full stops correctly, for instance when they write letters to the tooth fairy. More able pupils write to a high standard, producing their work neatly and use speech marks and paragraphs correctly. They use an imaginative vocabulary when, for example, they write a story about the evil elf. However, a few more able pupils do not always develop their extended writing as well as they could.

Across the school nearly all pupils develop their reading skills successfully. Younger pupils talk enthusiastically about the books in class that they enjoy. They correctly identify the title and handle books well as a reader. The majority of older pupils are beginning to read with confidence and expression. They use a range of strategies to decipher words they are not familiar with including the effective use of letter sounds. Many talk knowledgeably about how to use books to research and find information. More able pupils read fluently, using punctuation well to read expressively. They recall in detail what they have read and predict how the story will end. Nearly all pupils use their literacy skills effectively to support their work across the curriculum.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress in Welsh. They respond positively to instructions and display a good understanding of the Welsh used by staff. Many are confident to talk in informal situations. As they progress through the school, many pupils develop a good understanding of simple Welsh texts associated with their work about animals in the Arctic and they answer basic questions about them with developing accuracy.

From an early age most pupils count, order, add and subtract numbers accurately when solving problems up to 10 objects. They read and write the numbers correctly. By Year 2, nearly all pupils have a firm grasp of numeracy skills, and use them effectively to solve everyday problems. They use simple addition, subtraction, division and multiplication strategies confidently when solving verbal and written problems, for example when calculating time and the cost of items. They use standard measuring equipment and units accurately when weighing the school pet and record their results accurately in lists, tables, diagrams and simple block graphs.

They give plausible reasons for the changes in weight over time and explain the method they have used. Most use their skills very successfully across other areas of learning, for example when surveying their favourite food to produce high quality bar and line graphs.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are very good. In nursery, they use tablet computers confidently to access a range of applications to help them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Most pupils confidently open a broad range of applications, create files and save and retrieve their work. They are confident in using a camera to record their work. By Year 2, most pupils program a toy to move it in a given direction, while at the same time follow the life cycle path of a butterfly. By Year 2, pupils use green screen technology effectively to produce their own quality videos, highlighting endangered species in the Arctic.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils have exemplary attitudes to learning. Standards of behaviour and self-discipline in lessons and around the school are high. Nearly all pupils are polite, considerate and relate well to each other. They give careful consideration to their friends' needs, for example by helping them during lessons, lunchtime and other times, such as playtime. Pupils throughout the school can say and explain what the school values are and live up to them conscientiously. This is an excellent feature of the school's life and contributes significantly to the very effective learning environment that exists there.

Nearly all pupils are extremely courteous and welcoming towards visitors. They are proud of their school. They demonstrate enjoyment and pride in their work, and persevere with their tasks for extended periods. Nearly all pupils take responsibility for their own learning and show a high level of confidence and maturity while working. Many pupils throughout the school are confident to select their own level of challenge before starting their work. By the end of the foundation phase, pupils' ability to improve their own learning is a very strong aspect of their work.

Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities to voice an opinion and to influence the school's life and work. Members of the school council, eco council, digital leaders and the Criw Cymraeg are very enthusiastic and understand that they are representing the views of other pupils in the school community. The eco council for example, have written to their milk supplier explaining their concern for the volume of non-recyclable milk cartons that are disposed of. They have requested that the milk be delivered in larger recyclable containers. The supplier has agreed to this request. The school council describe how they have influenced priorities in the school improvement plan by identifying the need to raise the awareness of parents of what and how they learn, particularly language.

Nearly all pupils feel safe and appreciate that they receive high quality support from adults at the school. They are confident in turning to any member of staff if they have concerns. Most have a sound understanding of the importance of eating healthily and of keeping fit. They are aware of the dangers of searching on the internet and the need to make healthy choices when eating and drinking.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

A highly successful blend of teaching strategies has an extremely positive effect on pupils' achievement and wellbeing.

The quality of teaching supports very high levels of pupils' engagement and very strong progress in learning. In the best practice, teaching is energetic and ignites nearly all pupils' imagination. Teachers and assistants work highly effectively as a team. They have very high expectations of each child, and the quality of their presentations and questions is challenging and very purposeful. This ensures that nearly all pupils apply themselves fully to their tasks, concentrate for extended periods and show a high level of motivation. There is an enthusiastic learning environment in all classes and an active relationship in each lesson.

The effective use of assessment for learning strategies supports pupils' progress and development as independent learners. Pupils receive constructive feedback in order for them to understand what they need to do in order to improve their work. There are regular opportunities for pupils to plan jointly with teachers, to reflect on their own learning and that of their peers, and to contribute effectively in choosing their own level of challenge. This is exceptionally strong practice in all classes.

Teachers plan particularly well to meet the needs of all pupils. This is a very strong feature. Teachers take into consideration pupils' ideas as part of the planning process. They use these suggestions to create interesting topics and imaginative learning experiences. At the start of each topic, pupils state what they already know and what they would like to learn, and at the end of the study period they explain what they have learned. This stimulates their interest well and develops their skills and curiosity towards learning skilfully, and strengthens their commitment to their work extremely successfully.

Teachers' careful and thorough planning ensures that tasks build successfully on previous ones and that there is clear progression and continuity in pupils' independent learning skills as they move through the school. Tasks challenge pupils to work independently in the learning areas very well. As a result, most pupils develop into very confident and mature learners.

The successful way that the school uses the literacy and numeracy framework in its plans is a particular strength across the school. As a result, pupils develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively in all classes and use them purposefully in rich contexts across the curriculum. The principles of the new 'Successful Futures' curriculum are evident in the school's work.

Provision for developing the Welsh language is successful in ensuring continuity and progression in pupils' learning. Staff create an extremely positive Welsh ethos and promote the language effectively. This gains the interest and enthusiasm of nearly all pupils. Through cross-curricular work, visits and opportunities to compete in eisteddfodau, pupils receive interesting experiences to learn about Welsh history and culture.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The quality of care, support and guidance provided is excellent and has a very positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The school has highly effective systems and procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress and wellbeing. This starts with home visits before a child begins school. The information gathered enables staff to plan and provide comprehensive support to address the needs of individuals and specific groups of pupils. As a result, nearly all pupils make very good progress from their starting points.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very successfully by providing stimulating work, through classroom activities and acts of collective worship. Staff ensure that pupils develop a sound understanding of the school's five core values. This is demonstrated clearly in the gentle way in which the school offers valuable guidance to pupils to foster good behaviour. Pupils' friendly behaviour towards each other is evidence of the success of this caring support.

Well-organised nurture groups provide effective and sensitive sessions for vulnerable pupils to discuss their feelings at difficult times. This improves their confidence and ensures that they are ready to learn and supports them to become successful learners. All pupils with additional learning needs have a clear education plan, which includes specific, measurable and challenging targets. Pupils receive valuable support through an extensive range of intervention programmes. The school works effectively with parents and out of school support agencies to produce and monitor these plans. This ensures that the careful and suitable provision for pupils has a very positive effect on their progress.

The school provides numerous opportunities for pupils to play an active part in decision-making and to undertake leadership roles. It places great store on developing learners that are responsible citizens.

The school offers an innovative range of opportunities for parents to find out about the work their children are doing in school. Staff organise sessions where parents regularly work alongside their children on activities such as literacy and numeracy through play. This has led to many parents developing a better understanding of how to prepare their child for school and how to support their learning at home. Other initiatives such as 'Eat Well and Spend Less' are very successful in educating parents about aspects of healthy eating.

There are appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and for ensuring that pupils understand how to stay safe. A good range of visits and visitors to the school enrich pupils' learning experiences successfully. Activities such as using the local beach and local sports centre offer valuable opportunities for them to develop their fitness regularly.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The acting headteacher provides very strong leadership for the school and has the support of a highly effective senior leadership team. They provide a strong strategic direction for the school with a clear focus on meeting the diverse needs of pupils. This highly effective leadership secures consistently high standards in learning and wellbeing across the school. Team work is a strength of the school, with all teachers and teaching assistants having designated leadership roles that they undertake diligently.

The five Foryd values of 'gentle hands, kind words, listening, showing respect for everyone and doing our best', are displayed prominently in school. The values underpin the daily life of the school in an exemplary manner. Pupils talk eloquently about the values and explain enthusiastically how the values influence their lives. Pupils refer to the values incidentally during the school day, for example when praising their peers for using kind hands.

The school is highly proactive in working collaboratively with other schools to share and develop good practice. Staff are currently with 12 other schools as part of a regional initiative. The school is involved in a pilot research project led by the local university with a focus on pupils' readiness to learn, which is having a positive impact on the attainment of pupils.

Senior leaders ensure that all staff have access to valuable professional learning opportunities. Support for the professional development of teaching assistants is exceptional. They take full advantage of the opportunities available and enhance their qualifications significantly.

The governing body is highly supportive of the school. Many governors undertake monitoring activities that enable them to engage fully in discussion, particularly about pupils' wellbeing. Teachers or small groups of teaching assistants regularly join governing body meetings and share aspects of their work. This ensures that governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, enabling them to challenge the school successfully to improve standards and ensure provision of high quality.

The process of planning for improvement has been highly effective in maintaining the very high standards over time. Monitoring includes detailed discussion with pupils on their work, and has identified, for example, a lack of understanding on aspects of marking by a few pupils. The involvement of pupils in securing improvement is outstanding. The school council decide how the three main priorities will impact on their learning and their views are prominently displayed in the school foyer. Council members share their views with other pupils in class and assembly. As a result, pupils are fully aware of the school priorities and understand them from a pupil's perspective.

Areas of learning leaders report in detail on progress in their area of responsibility, providing valuable information to support school improvement. Outcomes of monitoring clearly inform continuous school improvement. The positive impact of improvement work is evident in many aspects of school life and includes, for example, the exceptionally high standards that pupils are achieving in mathematics and the high-quality support for pupils in small group sessions.

Senior leaders make highly effective use of staff expertise and experience. This includes the exemplary use of staff strengths in the allocation of roles of responsibility. Staff successfully secure grant funding, in particular to support school priorities. For example, a grant to support creative development has had a significant impact on staff confidence in delivering dance, drama and music. The school uses the pupil development grant effectively to provide a wide variety of support activities for all relevant pupils, for example to improve their reading skills. The headteacher and governing body manage the school finances effectively and keep spending under close review.

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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