



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

**A report on**

**YGG Gwauncaegurwen  
New Road  
Gwauncaegurwen  
Ammanford  
SA18 1UN**

**Date of inspection: November 2019**

**by**

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

## About YGG Gwauncaegurwen

The school is situated in the village of Gwauncaegurwen in Neath Port Talbot local authority. There are 173 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 24 nursery age pupils. They are divided into seven classes, one of which is a mixed-age class.

On average, over the last three years, 18% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals, which is similar to the national average. Twenty three per cent (23%) of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is slightly higher than the national percentage of 21%.

Around 62% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Nearly all are from white British backgrounds and very few are from other white backgrounds.

The school was last inspected in March 2012 and the headteacher was appointed in September 2015.

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

The school is a welcoming community with a Welsh atmosphere and ethos. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and treat others with mature respect. On the whole, they make sound progress and recall previous learning successfully.

The curriculum engages pupils' interest skilfully and there is an effective emphasis on develop their skills across the areas of learning. Overall, teaching succeeds in providing valuable experiences for pupils, and the outdoor area is used very effectively to reinforce learning activities.

Leaders focus sensibly on improving pupils' skills continuously and plan carefully in order to strengthen provision to improve standards further. They identify the school's strengths and main areas for improvement, and use this information appropriately to set a relevant strategic direction for the school.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Address the safeguarding issues that were raised during the inspection
- R2 Ensure that teaching provides an appropriate challenge for all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability, and that teachers' feedback enables pupils to improve their work further
- R3 Improve pupils' spelling and punctuation skills

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

On entry to the school, many pupils' basic skills correspond with what is expected for their age. During their time there, many make sound progress and recall previous learning successfully. However, a few pupils do not always progress as well as expected.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against their targets.

Most pupils' Welsh literacy skills in the foundation phase are developing well. Many listen to their peers maturely and contribute sensibly to discussions, for example when thinking about the importance of feeding birds in winter. Many read to a standard that corresponds appropriately with their age. The youngest pupils come to know new vocabulary quickly and, by Year 2, most explain relevant details from texts confidently. In the foundation phase, most pupils' writing skills are sound. In the reception class, they experiment with mark making clearly and produce pieces of early writing. In Year 1, many pupils record events briefly, such as in a timeline about the history of Twm Siôn Cati. By the end of the foundation phase, many write well for different purposes, for example when writing methodical instructions on how to make soup, and creating an invitation to a party.

Many pupils in key stage 2 build purposefully on their Welsh and English literacy skills. They gain confidence in speaking and listening maturely and, by Year 6, for example, they hold a debate effectively about whether or not there is a need to wear school uniform. Many read appropriately in both languages and enjoy fictional and factual books. They practise their reading skills with increasing independence in order to find information from different sources, for example about countries around the world and the benefits of eating different fruit. Most write for different purposes confidently across the areas of the curriculum. Good examples of this are the pupils' imaginative stories about talented inventors and their descriptions of their trip to Pen y Fan. However, a majority of pupils' spelling and use of punctuation are not accurate enough.

On the whole, pupils' numeracy skills across the school are sound. In the foundation phase, many handle money with increasing accuracy and develop a good understanding of measurement, time and weight. By Year 2, many use their subtraction and addition skills to solve problems, for example in connection with their class story. In key stage 2, many pupils recall their previous mathematical knowledge suitably in order to support their work across different areas of the curriculum. Good examples of this include the way in which pupils at the bottom of the key stage record information about rugby players and present it in the form of a graph bar, and solve mathematical problems about rugby stadiums in different countries. By Year 6, most pupils use percentages correctly when researching different issues, such as food ingredients. Across key stage 2, pupils combine their numeracy skills and scientific investigation skills successfully when completing various projects, for example based on the function of a skeleton.

Many pupils apply for information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively across various areas of the curriculum. Most use different software confidently and when saving and recalling information from an online source. Most of the youngest pupils in the foundation phase create pictures that are linked to their class story, and control a programmable toy to move in a specific direction successfully. By the end of the foundation phase, most use electronic tablets effectively. They use a simple database confidently to record the favourite fruit of members of the class. In key stage 2, many use ICT sensibly when presenting information. Good examples of this include their presentations on countries in the Rugby World Cup and their use of a green screen to present weather forecasts. On the whole, pupils are aware of the importance of staying safe when using the internet.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude towards their school. They feel safe there and know whom to approach if they are worried or upset. Nearly all are welcoming and polite towards visitors and each other. They greet each other, staff and visitors in a very friendly, natural and personable manner.

Most pupils behave well. They show positive attitudes towards their work and strive diligently for extended periods. They are very caring towards each other and treat others with respect during lessons and break times. The 'cyfeillion caredig' (kind friends) strategy works successfully in order to ensure that other pupils are safe and happy, for example by encouraging them to use reflection benches ('meinciau myfyrio') at break time. The 'ystafell stwnsh' works very effectively by encouraging and rewarding good behaviour and work.

Most pupils listen attentively to teachers' instructions and move smoothly within lessons and follow-up activities. Pupils' independence when applying themselves to practical activities, both inside and outside the classroom, is clear. Most concentrate well on their tasks and work together successfully, by listening to the contributions and ideas of their peers effectively and respecting them. By conducting an 'inspiration week' at the beginning of every theme, pupils contribute sensible ideas about activities that they would like to study. A majority of pupils across the school are beginning to understand what they need to do to improve their work, and evaluate their efforts and improve them increasingly independently as a result of their teachers' timely feedback. However, a minority of pupils are still a little uncertain about how to respond to this feedback.

Nearly all pupils take good advantage of the varied experiences that they are given to improve their fitness, health and physical wellbeing. This is one of the school's strengths. Good examples include the way in which pupils respond to 'chwarter chwim' sessions, in which they are given an opportunity to walk a mile a day and take part in regular sessions to calm their bodies and minds. They have a strong awareness of the importance of eating healthily, drinking water and keeping fit. Most pupils take part in a good range of physical exercise activities that make a beneficial contribution to their fitness. The school has close links with the community and takes advantage of the expertise of different individuals in health and fitness, for example a member of Swansea football club comes to train pupils and improve their football skills every week.

The contribution of the pupil's voice is prominent in several aspects of the school's life and work. Members of the school council are an enthusiastic group of pupils who play an active role. They work together and support members of the school's other committees, such as the eco committee, the digital wizards, the rights committee and the Welsh language development committee. Pupils are responsible and ethical citizens who are able to make a positive contribution to society, for example by organising a petition about traffic calming around the school and sending it to the local councillor. Many pupils show a strong awareness of their rights, and the school works effectively with external agencies that promote their awareness of fairness and tolerance successfully.

The school has developed a number of successful strategies to address and improve pupils' attendance and, as a result, the school's attendance rates have remained consistently high over the last three years.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

There is a good working relationship between staff and pupils, which has a positive effect on their standards and wellbeing. The learning environment is positive and supportive, which develops pupils' enthusiasm towards learning. Staff and teachers work together effectively, motivate pupils and manage their behaviour successfully.

Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to recall previous learning regularly and build on what they already know. Most teachers use various questioning techniques successfully to extend pupils' responses and develop them further, and gauge their understanding. They ask open-ended questions and often require pupils to give more detailed responses. Teachers' instructions and explanations usually ensure that pupils understand what they need to achieve, although this is not always consistent. Learning sessions are interesting and staff encourage pupils to persevere when they face difficulties. However, where teaching is less effective, teachers do not always challenge pupils effectively enough in order for them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Staff intervene sensibly to support pupils with their work at appropriate times and provide them with regular oral support. This encourages pupils to concentrate, encourages them to reflect on their efforts and to check specific pieces of work. Teachers usually provide pupils with constructive written feedback, which enables them to know what they have achieved and what they should consider to improve their work further. In a majority of classes, there are useful opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback. However, at times, teachers' comments are too difficult for a majority of the youngest pupils to understand what they need to improve.

Most staff take good advantage of opportunities to enrich pupils' language, which contributes successfully towards their oral skills. The strong Welsh ethos, as well as the provision, encourage pupils to make full use of the Welsh language in all aspects of school life. Teachers plan successfully to develop the Welsh dimension, and this reinforces pupils' sense of pride towards the local area and Welsh culture. As a result, pupils develop as competent and confident bilingual learners.

Staff provide a broad curriculum for pupils, which inspires them to learn successfully. They prepare interesting activities for them, which are based on the four purposes of

the new curriculum for Wales. Staff provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to influence planning at the beginning of themes, which motivates them to play an active part in their learning. Teachers adapt planning skilfully to follow these ideas and lines of enquiry. A good example of this includes the way in which staff have used pupils' ideas to study an element of keeping fit and eating healthily.

Teachers concentrate well on developing pupils' skills and ensure that their plans and teaching provide regular opportunities for them to build on their ability and previous knowledge. On the whole, they develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills successfully across the areas of learning. Key stage 2 teachers use 'skills sessions' effectively to develop all pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and valuable multimedia resources are used purposefully to develop their digital skills. Another effective aspect of the school's work is the purposeful way in which they plan to develop pupils' investigative skills, in addition to their ability to solve problems, particularly at the top of the school. By developing science, technology, engineering and mathematics schemes and pedagogy, they provide stimulating experiences for pupils to use a range of skills in order to conduct research into various projects, such as creating a home for a squirrel. However, progress and continuity in developing pupils' skills in a very few classes in key stage 2 are limited.

The principles of the foundation phase have been embedded firmly and valuable focus tasks are provided for pupils in the different learning areas. Very good use is made of the outdoor area to support teaching and stimulate pupils' interest, for example by providing opportunities for them to apply their skills and conduct relevant investigations in the forest area.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is a welcoming and inclusive community with a Welsh atmosphere and ethos. Staff know the pupils well and developing their confidence to succeed is at the heart of their work.

The school has effective procedures to monitor and track pupils' progress, and staff update them regularly to ensure that the information is up-to-date and accurate. By conducting regular evaluations and analysing pupils' performance regularly, teachers have a good knowledge of the progress of groups and individuals. Learning assistants are used successfully to support individuals in particular areas and implement a suitable range of valuable support programmes for them. The school has a successful procedure to improve pupils' emotional wellbeing by providing intervention programmes on emotional literacy for those who need them. These activities enable a few pupils to talk about their feelings in small, supportive groups and help them to cope well with daily life.

Staff identify pupils' personal and special educational needs at an early stage and provide purposeful intervention programmes for them. These pupils have detailed individual education plans, in addition to specific and measurable targets. Plans and targets are reviewed jointly by staff, parents and pupils in order to promote progress effectively. The additional learning needs co-ordinator fulfils her role skilfully by working effectively with external agencies to ensure the best support possible for pupils. As a result, most pupils with special educational needs make sound progress towards their personal targets.

There is a robust partnership between the school and parents, which is based on its open door policy. As a result, parents work successfully with the school and have an effective understanding of what they need to do to support their children. A good example of this is the opportunity that was organised by the school for parents to observe lessons and develop their understanding of procedures and expectations within the classrooms.

The school has successful arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. Teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the effect of eating and drinking healthily on their bodies as part of the curriculum. For example, pupils are given opportunities to research into the elements in sweets and the essentials of the food groups that are needed on a healthy plate of food. This has a positive effect on their understanding of the importance of a balanced diet. The school provides a range of beneficial opportunities to ensure that pupils play an active part in physical exercise activities regularly. There are rich opportunities for pupils to take advantage of a range of adventurous experiences, for example through the effective use of outdoor resources on the school grounds, by organising a trip to Pen y Fan and by visiting adventure centres and one of the Urdd's residential centres.

The school provides regular opportunities to develop pupils' moral and social skills successfully in relevant lessons and during other activities, such as anti-bullying week. By reflecting in collective worship sessions, staff provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to experience spiritual and moral elements. The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the wider world, for example by comparing food from Wales and Japan while completing theme work on the Rugby World Cup.

Staff provide stimulating opportunities for pupils to experiment with a variety of creative media. These make an extensive contribution towards increasing their self-confidence, expressive skills and their ability to work well as a team. For example, pupils have worked with Welsh artists to create murals, competed in eisteddfodau and performed with presenters on S4C.

Staff plan a wide range of interesting activities that develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of Welsh culture. This ensures that pupils develop a very sound awareness of Welsh history and traditions and contributes to the school's Welsh atmosphere and ethos.

Although the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements, the governors' attention was drawn to safety issues during the inspection.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher provides the school with effective leadership and ensures a clear strategic direction, in addition to a homely and inclusive community for pupils. He has a clear vision that is based on ensuring that learners succeed by providing them with a range of rich learning experiences in a happy and supportive environment. Promoting the Welsh language and Welshness are a priority to him and are at the heart of all of the school's work. The headteacher works purposefully and successfully with pupils, staff, governors and parents to implement this vision.

Members of the senior management team understand their roles and responsibilities clearly and act on them purposefully. A specific example is the way in which they take responsibility for leading planning and assessment work across the school. Members of staff work together effectively, fulfil their roles well and support the headteacher conscientiously. Teachers meet formally and informally regularly to discuss progress and improvement objectives purposefully. This ensures that the school's day-to-day procedures work well and provide a clear focus for all of the staff's work.

The school has a robust culture and ethos of supporting staff's professional development. Teachers address recent developments in education enthusiastically, for example preparing for the new curriculum and introducing the digital competence framework. The headteacher provides good opportunities for all members of staff to improve their practice, raise standards and respond to individual pupils' needs. A good example of this is the training that has been provided to enable them to respond to the needs of autistic pupils. Arrangements to manage staff performance are sound and link directly with the school's priorities and individual teachers' professional needs. As a result, staff are given good opportunities to develop professionally and contribute skilfully to improving teaching and learning, for example by improving provision for literacy.

Self-evaluation procedures are at the heart of the school's life and work, with a clear focus on improving pupils' outcomes. The process is based on a wide range of first-hand evidence about the quality of provision and pupils' achievement. As a result, leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and most of the main areas for improvement. The headteacher ensures that all staff play an active role in the process. This ensures that they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school responds purposefully to its priorities for improvement. This is reflected in the way in which the school has implemented a useful scheme to improve pupils' skills. A good example of this includes the emphasis that has been placed on developing pupils' ICT skills over the last year, which has raised standards in this area successfully.

The governing body is committed and supportive of the school. By working with staff, observing lessons and discussing examples of work with pupils, they play an active role in the self-evaluation processes. This, in addition to receiving purposeful reports from the senior management team, leads to a thorough understanding of the strengths of provision and areas for improvement. As a result, governors' strategic role as critical friends is developing successfully and enables them to challenge the school about its performance conscientiously.

Leaders manage resources effectively. They allocate funding appropriately to support the school's priorities and ensure that the pupil development grant is used effectively to alleviate the effects of poverty. The school has a very extensive outdoor area and it is used very valuably to promote pupils' personal, social and creative skills. The school benefits greatly from financial contributions from the parent, teacher and friends of the school association to purchase resources, for example for the outdoor area, which contribute successfully towards pupils' learning experiences.

## 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 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 and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read 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 classes, including learning support groups 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 and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- 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' wellbeing, 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 ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	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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