

A report on

Ysgol Gymraeg Rhyd-Y-Grug

**Aberfan
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 4NT**

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for

Education and Training in Wales

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Gymraeg Rhyd-Y-Grug

Name of provider	Ysgol Gymraeg Rhyd-Y-Grug
Local authority	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh medium provision	Welsh language primary school
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	286
Pupils of statutory school age	219
Number in nursery classes	33
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year <i>average</i> (<i>The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 22.9%</i>)	13.8%
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 11.1%</i>)	15.5%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	26.9%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	03/01/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	19/01/2017

Start date of inspection	09/06/2025
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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

Summary

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug is an inclusive community that places emphasis on pupils' well-being in a welcoming and friendly environment. Pupils are happy coming to school and show enthusiasm towards their learning. The staff's caring nature creates a safe haven for pupils, and they know that they can turn to anyone if they feel anxious. Pupils have great respect for each other, staff and visitors.

The headteacher has a clear vision and has established a productive ethos and a team of dedicated staff. She is an effective leader who is respected highly by all stakeholders. The school has thorough school improvement systems that develop the school further and the numerous professional learning opportunities have a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and learning. Governors are very supportive of the school and understand their roles and responsibilities well.

Teachers prepare and deliver a range of tasks that develop pupils' Welsh and English oral and writing skills, and numeracy and digital skills, successfully. As a result, they make good progress and use and apply their skills effectively across all areas of learning. However, pupils' Welsh reading skills do not develop as well.

Staff create a stimulating and attractive environment inside and outside the classroom to ignite pupils' interest in their work. They plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to contribute towards what they would like to learn and, more recently, effective opportunities for pupils to improve their own work. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in their work are inconsistent across the school. Staff ensure that pupils develop very useful personal, social and creative skills. As a result, pupils have sound awareness of the history and culture of their local area, the wider community and Wales.

Recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve

- R1 Improve pupils' Welsh reading skills
- R2 Ensure high expectations consistently from staff to support all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The headteacher, leaders, and all staff work together effectively to create a happy and familial community and provide beneficial education and care for pupils. They work well as a team and fulfil their roles and responsibilities successfully.

The headteacher is an excellent role model who is respected and appreciated by all the school's stakeholders. Her vision and passion for ensuring the best possible well-being, education and experiences for all pupils is a strength. She has high expectations of herself and staff who, in turn, develop pupils' positive attitudes to their learning. As a result, most pupils' behaviour and commitment towards their work is a strength.

Governors play an important role in developing the school. They are supportive, know the area they serve well and work enthusiastically to ensure that all pupils have the best opportunities. They challenge leaders on aspects of provision and the financial position purposefully.

Leaders have established successful self-evaluation processes and, together with the well-informed contribution of governors, they have a sound understanding of the quality of provision and pupils' achievement. They evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development effectively. For example, recently, they have led on improvements in pupils' numeracy application skills.

Leaders implement a culture of developing and supporting staff's professional learning purposefully. They share ideas and adopt new joint practices well and this contributes effectively to the school's learning ethos. Leaders support staff to reflect and consider the effect of professional learning on pupils' wellbeing and progress.

Teachers often offer pupils extensive opportunities to cooperate and share ideas to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts through practical methods. As a result, most pupils acquire sound numeracy skills and use them regularly in other areas of their learning. Most pupils develop digital skills well and apply them effectively to support and present their work. Literacy is developed purposefully across the curriculum and by the time they reach the top of the school, many pupils develop robust writing skills in a range of genres. Recently, many pupils have begun to improve their work skilfully which leads to completed work of a good standard in both Welsh and English.

The school places appropriate emphasis on developing the Welsh language and staff's enthusiasm is evident as they encourage pupils to speak Welsh from a very early age. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards the language, which increases as they mature and improve their oral skills. As a result, when they reach the top of the school, many pupils are confident to communicate in both languages. In addition, leaders plan valuable

opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh skills in informal situations such as attending coffee mornings to speak Welsh with residents of the community. However, although the school has robust provision to develop pupils' early reading skills in Welsh, their reading skills do not develop effectively enough to read fluently and to understand the text.

Teachers provide a broad, rich and contemporary curriculum that is embedded well in daily activities. They ensure that there are rich links with the local community and learning about their local area is an integral part of the provision. This deepens pupils' sense of belonging successfully. In addition, the opportunities to discuss important issues such as diversity, and spiritual and moral aspects, develop pupils' understanding of identity robustly. As a result, pupils have a mature attitude towards life and show high levels of respect for each other and all adults.

Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and the working relationships between staff and pupils are good. From an early age, pupils work with their peers effectively and listen carefully to each other and to teachers. Many of the older pupils contribute to class discussions purposefully.

Teachers use various teaching methods effectively to build on pupils' previous learning and to extend their knowledge and deepen their understanding of different themes. They plan creative and stimulating activities that link pupils' learning experiences and lives skilfully. In addition, teachers use outdoor experiences productively, including the use of the forest, to develop pupils' physical, social and emotional skills. This has a positive effect on their cooperation skills and develops personal resilience both inside and outside the classroom. Most lessons have clear learning intentions and move at a purposeful pace. However, there are inconsistencies in staff's expectations, which means that they do not always provide sufficiently challenging activities to enable pupils to achieve the best of their ability consistently.

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those affected by poverty and disadvantage, make strong progress from their starting points. Provision for pupils with ALN is co-ordinated effectively and responds well to pupils' needs. Staff develop a productive relationship with parents and offer beneficial support for them, for example, to improve their children's attendance. The school uses all useful information and contacts with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the best possible support both inside and outside the school.

The headteacher fosters an effective relationship with parents, and shares relevant information about the school's news and events in a timely manner. A purposeful effort is made to seek parents' views on the school's activities, and developing a productive working relationship with parents, is an important part of the school's ethos. In addition,

the school offers a number of workshops with parents to support their children's wellbeing and learning. As a result, pupils settle in school quickly and are ready to learn from a very early age. The school has strong links with the wider community which enriches pupils' knowledge of staying healthy and fit, and raise their aspiration for the world of work.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are not a cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for the management of the site are not a cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's funding appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers questionnaires and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers, staff and the governing body/members of the management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers 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, 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 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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report refers to different quantities and proportions, e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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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This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).