



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

**A report on**

**Gwenfro Community Primary School  
Queensway  
Wrexham  
LL13 8UW**

**Date of inspection: March 2017**

**by**

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

## Summary

In Gwenfro Primary School, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and show great pride in their school and in their work. Pupils have very good manners and show respect for one another and for adults. Many make suitable progress from their starting points, and demonstrate particular strengths in literacy. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well, understand their needs and interests, and make learning relevant and interesting for them. The school cares particularly well for its pupils and provides them with valuable support. The school benefits from strong leadership that provides a secure future for its pupils and the school in the community.

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to maintain high standards and quality of provision and address the recommendations.

## Recommendations

- R1 Secure pupils' understanding of the relationships between numbers and improve their ability to carry out mental calculations
- R2 Improve standards and provision for all strands of information and communication technology (ICT)
- R3 Increase attendance and improve punctuality
- R4 Improve governors' ability to contribute to the school's strategic direction, evaluate its work and hold leaders to account

## Main findings

### 1: Standards

### Adequate, needs improvement

A majority of pupils enter the school with literacy, personal and social skills that are below those expected for their age. Over time, many make suitable progress and, by Year 6, achieve at least expected standards from their starting points. This includes pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes and those in the resource provision classes, who achieve well in relation to their personal targets. Although pupils eligible for free school meals do not perform as well as others overall, the gap between the two groups has narrowed over the last few years. During lessons, most pupils recall previous learning well and this helps them to make sense of new concepts or topics.

Although a majority of pupils do not communicate well when they start school, their ability to listen, understand and speak quickly. Many nursery and reception pupils are inquisitive and ask questions with enthusiasm and increasing confidence. By the end of the Foundation Phase, most are keen to talk about their work and many adapt their language to suit the situation and the audience. Most key stage 2 pupils listen attentively and express themselves articulately, using an extensive range of relevant, lively vocabulary. Many pupils develop good phonic skills that help them to decode unfamiliar words confidently. Foundation Phase pupils take part enthusiastically in activities that encourage them to appreciate children's literature. For example, reception pupils use their knowledge of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' to present the life cycle of the butterfly in drama and dance. Most key stage 2 pupils use their reading skills well to access other areas of the curriculum. They skim an email to understand the gist of the message, and analyse a range of Michael Rosen's work to inspire their own poems about extreme weather conditions. Pupils' writing skills strengthen gradually as they move through the school. They gain confidence across a range of types of writing in many areas of the curriculum, express their feelings and opinions sensitively, and convey interesting ideas maturely and thoughtfully.

Many pupils across the school have a sound knowledge of mathematical concepts and they use specific methods and skills appropriately to carry out calculations or tasks. For example, key stage 2 pupils use a standard formula correctly to work out the area of compound shapes, and identify acute, obtuse and right angles. However, too many pupils do not have a secure enough understanding of place value or the relationships between numbers, and cannot carry out mental calculations quickly and confidently. This means that they do not always know how to approach an unfamiliar or more complex mathematical problem or challenge. Most pupils apply a limited range of numeracy skills appropriately across other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 2 pupils estimate and measure parts of the body and key stage 2 pupils collect data from the internet to create graphs about weather patterns in their geography topic.

Most pupils develop appropriate skills in several areas of ICT. Foundation Phase pupils use tablet devices to take photographs and to scan codes when finding out about the characteristics of mammals, for instance. In key stage 2, pupils search for

information on the internet and present their findings appropriately. They use suitable applications to communicate and share information in text and picture form with one another and with their parents. However, pupils are not competent across the full range of ICT skills, including the use of databases and spreadsheets to collect, store and manipulate data.

Many pupils make satisfactory progress in developing basic communication skills in Welsh. In the Foundation Phase, pupils learn vocabulary linked to their topics. Many key stage 2 pupils ask and answer simple questions and are beginning to give short reasons for their opinions. Most older pupils read familiar texts and their own writing aloud, using correct pronunciation. However, very few pupils recall the Welsh words and phrases they have learnt previously and very few are confident to engage in Welsh conversation outside their current area of study.

<b>2: Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
---	-------------

Nearly all pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are extremely polite and well mannered, always greeting people and holding doors open for others. They show respect for adults and for one another, listening carefully to what their friends and teachers say and responding to their ideas with consideration. Nearly all pupils engage confidently with new people and with new experiences, such as moving to the new school building.

Pupils are interested in their work and concentrate for sustained periods when completing tasks. They are motivated to learn and take huge pride in the work that challenges them and makes them think deeply. For example, Foundation Phase pupils talk excitedly about finding out the significance and traditions of Chinese New Year, while pupils in key stage 2 are proud of the compassionate letters that they have written to show that they understand the experiences of an evacuee in the Second World War.

Nearly all pupils work purposefully when they carry out tasks individually, in pairs or in groups. In Years 3 and 4, for instance, pupils collaborate well with their partners when carrying out the challenging task of calculating the area of rooms for a new school building. Most present their work neatly and attractively and speak with great delight about the success and satisfaction they gain from their learning and from the neat way they present their work.

Many pupils and parents have responded positively to the many creative approaches the school has taken to improving attendance and punctuality. A particularly good example is the notable increase in the attendance and punctuality of a specific group of pupils who use the school's walking buses to come to school early for breakfast club. These pupils enjoy walking to school in a group and understand why eating a healthy breakfast is an important start to their day that will help them to learn. Despite these successes with hard-to-reach groups and the school's continued strong stance in these matters, attendance and punctuality has not improved enough overall.

The warmth and strength of working relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils feel safe in school and know what to do if they are worried or anxious. A strong example of this is the way in which pupils in the resource provision classes respond so positively to the nurturing environment created for them by their teachers and support staff. They develop high levels of confidence and independence that enable them to make good progress and achieve well. Most pupils throughout the school have a positive attitude to health and fitness and understand the importance of eating healthy meals and taking regular physical exercise.

<b>3: Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Adequate, needs improvement</b>
---	------------------------------------

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. However, there are shortcomings in the quality of provision and assessment in a few areas.

Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and many respond sensitively to the needs and interests of individuals. Teachers' calm, consistent approach to managing their classes ensures that all pupils know what they expect of them. This motivates all pupils to do their best and encourages them to contribute creatively to lessons, without fear of making mistakes.

Teachers are developing a whole-school, thematic approach to learning that aims to engage pupils well by making learning relevant and interesting for them. Most plan lessons and activities carefully to extend pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding and provide appropriate levels of challenge for those of differing abilities. The school has considered the development of Foundation Phase provision in the new building particularly carefully. Staff and pupils have shaped the learning environment and the planning of topics successfully, to provide learners with a wealth of adult and child-led indoor and outdoor learning opportunities in a range of contexts across the curriculum. Staff manage these arrangements skilfully to ensure good access to all areas of learning and to promote a love of learning in their young pupils.

In key stage 2, the school's approach to developing the curriculum focuses on creating exciting opportunities to improve pupils' application of skills. Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of experiences that enhances their learning successfully. Pupils carry out enjoyable and interesting science experiments to find out if putting a coat on a snowman prevents it from melting, and to discover which parachute design will help Jack descend quickest from the beanstalk. Opportunities for pupils to make regular visits to local places of interest, such as St Giles' Church and Techniquet, and residential trips to London and Glan Llyn support the curriculum well and enrich pupils' learning experiences effectively. The focused way that staff place an emphasis on improving pupils' ability to apply their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills during these activities ensures that they develop these skills progressively in meaningful contexts. Strategies to improve the planning and provision for mathematics, numeracy and ICT, however, are at an earlier stage of development.

The quality of teachers' questioning and verbal feedback to pupils as they carry out tasks in formal and informal situations is purposeful. It helps pupils to know how well they are doing and encourages them to think about what they can do to improve their

work. The 'Look and Learn' approach to observing pupils at play and work in Foundation Phase classes is proving successful in helping staff to assess pupils' skill development and plan for the next steps in their learning. There are occasional opportunities for pupils in the majority of key stage 2 classes to evaluate their own work and that of their peers. In these instances, pupils benefit from thinking about what makes a piece of work successful and from providing feedback to one another. However, these activities are not a regular part of teaching and assessment across key stage 2.

Opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in designated lessons is appropriate. However, the school does not ensure that pupils practise the Welsh they have learnt often enough in informal situations around the school.

<b>4: Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
--------------------------------------	-------------

The school has effective arrangements to support pupils' wellbeing. Pupils benefit greatly from caring and encouraging working relationships with staff, which help to meet their needs in a wide range of areas. Consistent expectations and effective behaviour management ensure high standards of politeness, mutual respect and pupil conduct. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern. For example, arrangements to ensure pupils' safety during the completion of the construction of the new outside areas are effective. Planning to transfer to the new school building was seamless, with no disruption to pupils' learning.

Provision to encourage pupils to be physically and mentally healthy is effective. Key stage 2 pupils receive regular opportunities to engage in physical activities, including gymnastics at a local gymnasium. An interesting range of extra-curricular activities, including a debating club, encourages participation in activities that are different from pupils' day-to-day experiences. Pupils in the Foundation Phase take part in the daily 'dental bus' teeth clean to raise their awareness of the importance of dental hygiene.

Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the organisation of the school. In many classes, teachers encourage pupils to offer their opinions about what they are learning and respond positively to their suggestions, where appropriate. The head boy, head girl and prefects carry out their roles conscientiously. They are very good ambassadors for the school and contribute well to its smooth running. However, the role of other pupil groups, such as the school council, is not successful enough in giving all pupils an active voice.

The school makes every effort to improve attendance. Initiatives such as the 'walking buses', the daily 'meet and mingle' session and termly attendance letters help to improve pupils' and parents' understanding of the importance of regular attendance. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the annual prize draw for good attendance, with the possibility, last year, of winning a bicycle. However, strategies to encourage punctuality are less effective.

Over the last 18 months, middle leaders have visited other schools with good practice in monitoring pupil progress. This has contributed to the development of effective systems to track pupil performance and to identify individuals who need additional support. Individual education plans for pupils with additional learning needs identify clear targets. Provision for these pupils and for those who need short-term support in the classroom or in intervention groups helps most pupils to meet their targets, particularly in literacy. However, provision to support the development of pupils' numeracy skills is limited. The school provides good support for vulnerable pupils with specific needs. For example, a counsellor spends time with individuals who need help to manage their feelings and behaviour, and this enables them to cope more easily in class.

The school places a high priority on pupils' social, moral and spiritual development and all staff promote this well. For example, in an assembly on happiness, pupils consider whether it is possessions, or families and friends that make them happier. Provision to develop pupils' attitudes to fairness, respect and understanding of others is very effective. A good example is the sensitive way in which pupils encourage their peers who have additional learning needs to participate in school life. There is a wealth of opportunities to develop pupils' cultural understanding and appreciation. A visit by a local author, for example, inspired Year 1 and 2 pupils to create and describe monsters based on the book 'Shout Out Boo 2' and key stage 2 pupils can develop their musical skills further by choosing to play woodwind, brass or stringed instruments. Annual visits to Liverpool University and close connections with Wrexham Glyndŵr University provide older pupils with useful opportunities to reflect on their aspirations for the future.

<b>5: Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>
-------------------------------------	-------------

The acting headteacher, who was seconded to the school in January 2016, quickly established clear lines of communication and accountability across the school. She is an exceptional role model and mentor to the senior leadership team. Working together with the then deputy headteacher, who later became the second acting headteacher, they identified quickly the areas in the school in need of most improvement.

The acting headteachers share a vision for the school. They communicate this and their self-evaluation findings clearly to staff and governors and provide them with strong strategic direction. Leaders prioritise successfully and concentrate staff efforts on the key strategic priorities, for example, raising pupils' standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and improving pupils' attendance. Leaders are careful not to overload staff with too many changes and initiatives. This means that staff have embedded new practices in their teaching of literacy and the improvements in pupils' communication skills, as a result, is notable. Although suitable plans are in place to improve provision and standards in mathematics, numeracy and ICT, progress in these areas is understandably slower.

The acting headteachers allocate staff carefully to provide a good balance of experience and skills across the age ranges. Staff who teach the same age range have many opportunities to share practice and learn from one another. A good range

of professional development activities link well to the responsibilities of staff and their specific performance management targets. Their visits to other schools to learn about different approaches to the Foundation Phase and to pupil tracking have been of particular benefit to them. These experiences have enabled them to choose and adapt the strategies that they felt would work best for their pupils. Relevant support also enables senior and middle leaders to carry out their roles effectively. Training for middle leaders has strengthened the skills of the literacy and numeracy leaders, and two other senior members of staff have received suitable support to lead their phases, monitor pupil progress and share performance management responsibilities.

The school uses a wide range of first-hand evidence to evaluate its standards and provision. Learning walks, classroom observations and book scrutiny activities provide leaders with useful information about the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders track the outcomes of monitoring activities effectively and ensure that teachers and support staff make the necessary changes to their practice. Many members of staff are involved in the self-evaluation process, so understand where the school needs to focus its energies and why.

The school improvement plan has clear targets for improvement and leaders measure progress against them regularly. The plan allocates funding suitably to each priority and leaders divide responsibilities equitably across the leadership team. Focused staff meetings provide leaders and teachers with appropriate opportunities to evaluate the school's progress towards achieving its improvement priorities. They result in clear action points so that everyone on the staff team knows what leaders expect of them.

Resources are generally appropriate to meet pupils' needs and the targets in the improvement plan. However, a lack of suitable ICT equipment has contributed to relatively weak standards in certain aspects of ICT. Plans to use the pupil deprivation grant to improve outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals focus appropriately on meeting their needs.

Members of the governing body are supportive and are involved in decisions about staffing and finance. They have recently set up committees to learn more about the standards pupils achieve and the school's curriculum provision. However, the role of the governing body in determining the school's strategic direction, evaluating its work and holding leaders to account is in the early stages of development.



## About the school

Gwenfro Community Primary School is on the Caia Park Estate in Wrexham, a designated Communities First area. There are 356 pupils on roll, including 57 part-time nursery pupils. Pupils are taught in 12 mixed-age classes. In addition, there are two mixed-age resource provision classes, providing education for 21 pupils with a wide range of additional learning needs.

Since the last inspection, the school building has been rebuilt and the new site opened in January 2017. Most pupils are local, but a few come from other areas of the town to the resource provision classes.

Around 44% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is much higher than the Wales average of 19%. The school states that around 37% of pupils are on the additional learning needs register which is higher than the Wales average of 25%. A very few pupils have a statement of special education needs. Nearly all pupils are white British. No pupils speak Welsh at home and 9% have English as an additional language. The local authority looks after a very few pupils. There have been two fixed-term exclusions during the past 12 months.

The head teacher, who took up his post in April 2015, was absent at the time of the inspection. The school currently has two acting headteachers who work closely in partnership. One is the school's substantive deputy head, while the other is another local headteacher, who has been supporting the school since January 2016. The school was last inspected in March 2010.

## Appendix 1: Summary table of inspection areas

<b>Standards</b>	<b>Adequate, needs improvement</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Adequate, needs improvement</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

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

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

## Appendix 2: Performance data

### 6652270 - Gwenfro Community Primary

Number of pupils on roll	345
Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) - 3 year average	46.5
FSM band	5 (32%<FSM)

#### Foundation Phase

	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Number of pupils in Year 2 cohort</b>	40	38	43	42
<b>Achieving the Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) (%)</b>	72.5	71.1	74.4	78.6
Benchmark quartile	3	4	3	3
<b>Language, literacy and communication skills - English (LCE)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	40	38	43	42
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	75.0	73.7	74.4	81.0
Benchmark quartile	3	4	4	3
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	22.5	21.1	18.6	26.2
Benchmark quartile	2	3	3	3
<b>Language, literacy and communication skills - Welsh (LCW)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	*	*	*	*
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	*	*	*	*
Benchmark quartile	*	*	*	*
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	*	*	*	*
Benchmark quartile	*	*	*	*
<b>Mathematical development (MDT)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	40	38	43	42
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	80.0	73.7	76.7	85.7
Benchmark quartile	3	4	4	3
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	17.5	21.1	16.3	28.6
Benchmark quartile	3	2	4	2
<b>Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity (PSD)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	40	38	43	42
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	87.5	89.5	86.0	88.1
Benchmark quartile	3	3	4	4
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	20.0	34.2	18.6	23.8
Benchmark quartile	4	3	4	4

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) represents the percentage of pupils achieving outcome 5 or above in PSD, LCE/LCW, and MDT in combination.

\* This item may disclose information on individuals, or it is not sufficiently robust for publication, not applicable or is otherwise unavailable.

The benchmark quartile compares the performance of one school against others who have similar levels of pupils with free school meals (FSM). FSM is used as a proxy of social deprivation in schools. This allows a comparison of the performance of a school against others who are in the same FSM category, and who might therefore have a similar intake of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

A school in benchmark quartile 1 is in the highest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are higher than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds. A school in benchmark quartile 4 is in the lowest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are lower than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

A report on Gwenfro Community Primary School  
March 2017

**6652270 - Gwenfro Community Primary**

Number of pupils on roll	345
Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) - 3 year average	46.5
FSM band	5 (32%<FSM)

**Key stage 2**

	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Number of pupils in Year 6 cohort</b>	26	31	36	32
<b>Achieving the core subject indicator (CSI) (%)</b>	80.8	77.4	75.0	68.8
Benchmark quartile	2	3	3	4
<b>English</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	26	31	36	32
Achieving level 4+ (%)	80.8	87.1	77.8	71.9
Benchmark quartile	3	2	3	4
Achieving level 5+ (%)	38.5	16.1	25.0	25.0
Benchmark quartile	1	4	3	3
<b>Welsh first language</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	*	*	*	*
Achieving level 4+ (%)	*	*	*	*
Benchmark quartile	*	*	*	*
Achieving level 5+ (%)	*	*	*	*
Benchmark quartile	*	*	*	*
<b>Mathematics</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	26	31	36	32
Achieving level 4+ (%)	84.6	83.9	77.8	78.1
Benchmark quartile	2	3	3	4
Achieving level 5+ (%)	23.1	12.9	19.4	31.3
Benchmark quartile	3	4	4	3
<b>Science</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	26	31	36	32
Achieving level 4+ (%)	88.5	83.9	75.0	71.9
Benchmark quartile	2	3	4	4
Achieving level 5+ (%)	34.6	12.9	16.7	21.9
Benchmark quartile	1	4	4	4

The core subject indicator (CSI) represents the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

\* This item may disclose information on individuals, or it is not sufficiently robust for publication, not applicable or is otherwise unavailable.

The benchmark quartile compares the performance of one school against others who have similar levels of pupils with free school meals (FSM). FSM is used as a proxy of social deprivation in schools. This allows a comparison of the performance of a school against others who are in the same FSM category, and who might therefore have a similar intake of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

A school in benchmark quartile 1 is in the highest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are higher than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds. A school in benchmark quartile 4 is in the lowest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are lower than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.

<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/index.html?lang=eng>

## 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))

Defnyddiom yr arolygiad hwn i roi datblygiadau i'r fframwaith arolygu cyffredin, y broses arolygu a fformat yr adroddiad arolygu ar brawf. Byddwn yn adolygu'r trefniadau hyn ac yn gwneud unrhyw newidiadau sy'n ofynnol cyn eu cyflwyno'n genedlaethol ym Medi 2017.

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](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

**© Crown Copyright 2017: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.**

**Publication date: 26/05/2017**