



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Craig y Deryn**

**Llanegryn  
Tywyn  
LL36 9SG**

**Date of inspection: July 2024**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Craig y Deryn

Name of provider	Ysgol Craig y Deryn
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	98
Pupils of statutory school age	79
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	7
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>	5.9%
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>	8.9%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	39.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2013
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	07/03/2016
Start date of inspection	01/07/2024

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](https://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

Ysgol Craig y Deryn is a happy and hard-working community where most pupils make sound progress. They feel safe at school and are given valuable opportunities to learn and play with their friends across the school, which contributes firmly to the strong sense of belonging. During activities and break and lunch times, pupils behave excellently.

Leaders, teachers and support staff work together effectively to maintain and support the well-being of learners and their colleagues. Staff give good consideration to pupils' ideas when developing activities and ensure effective support for pupils who need an additional boost with their learning. Staff provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop inclusive attitudes towards others, for example by learning about the experiences of athletes who face physical challenges. Staff use the outdoor environment effectively to promote pupils' well-being and learning.

On entry to the school, pupils develop independence well and persevere consistently when completing different tasks. Overall, teachers plan rich activities that support most pupils to develop many of their skills successfully, particularly their digital skills. Many pupils understand the importance of selecting tasks that correspond to their stage of development and respond effectively to staff feedback to develop their learning further. At times, teachers overuse worksheets, which limits opportunities for pupils to complete and present their work with increasing independence.

The headteacher, leaders and staff know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. This contributes firmly to ensuring that staff develop provision purposefully to support pupils to achieve consistently in their learning.

## Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop all their skills in a rich and wide range of learning experiences
- R2 Develop opportunities for pupils to complete and present their work with increasing independence by reducing the use of worksheets

## 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' skills are around what is expected for their age and stage of development. Their oral Welsh skills are lower than expected as most are new to the Welsh language. Most make sound progress in their skills during their time at the school. Most pupils who have been identified as having additional learning needs (ALN), and those who are entitled to free school meals, also make sound progress.

Across the school, most pupils' listening skills develop well. They listen maturely to each other and adults and develop the confidence to use the Welsh language. As pupils mature, they speak with good accuracy and respond successfully to the expectations of different tasks, for example as Year 3 and 4 pupils discuss the best headline for a newspaper article. Most of the oldest pupils discuss thoughtfully and express an opinion effectively, such as discussing which Olympic sport appeals most to them.

Many pupils read confidently in line with their age and stage of development. The youngest pupils recognise letters and familiar monosyllabic words and read simple sentences well. By Year 2, many use a variety of strategies to interpret increasingly challenging texts. They give appropriate attention to a variety of punctuation and develop fluency when reading different texts. The reading skills of many of the oldest pupils continue to develop soundly in both languages, for example by gathering information from different non-fiction texts confidently. By the top of the school, many Year 5 and 6 pupils read an extended range of texts. They talk confidently about their favourite authors and explain why they appeal to them.

Most pupils' writing skills develop well. Many of the youngest pupils recognise letters and the associated sounds and build familiar monosyllabic words confidently. They work with a partner to put words together to create simple sentences and read them to their friends in the group. By the top of the foundation learning phase, many pupils write with increasing confidence in different contexts. They demonstrate a sound understanding of punctuation and spell familiar words correctly. By the top of the school, many pupils write confidently in a good variety of creative and factual contexts. For example, they create effective persuasive pieces that compare the lives of the citizens of Wales and India. Many express themselves thoughtfully when debating whether men and women should compete against each other in the Olympic Games.

Most pupils' number, shape and data skills develop well. They respond purposefully to opportunities to apply their skills in local contexts. For example, pupils in the nursery and reception classes create graphs highlighting how many pupils in the class live in the neighbouring villages. In Year 1 and 2, most pupils show a secure knowledge of musical notation, creating sentences and interpreting them while recognising beats of different lengths. The oldest pupils continue to develop sound number skills, with pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, learning the meaning of the decimal point when scrutinising the times of 100m race runners. Many pupils in

Years 5 and 6 apply their skills successfully, which includes scrutinising the recycling rates of the waste material of local authorities in Wales.

Most pupils' digital skills develop soundly from a young age. They use equipment effectively to reinforce their skills purposefully in different contexts. The youngest pupils gain confidence by using apps confidently to record themselves making presentations in the role-play area. Year 3 and 4 pupils use specific software extremely successfully to create an animation that shows the effect of pollution on sea life. By the top of the school, pupils use spreadsheets successfully, for example when including formulae to find different amounts of money over a series of years. Pupils' digital skills are an obvious strength within the school.

The youngest pupils develop independent learning skills extremely effectively and make decisions for themselves regularly. For example, they enjoy playing with materials and equipment located across the areas of provision. This builds their confidence successfully and they work happily with their peers when considering how to build a person out of recycled material.

Most pupils develop their physical skills well, for example when entwining pieces of material through gaps in wood to create a tent. They develop their balancing skills effectively by controlling bicycles in the school's extensive outdoor areas.

Many pupils enjoy singing, particularly in the foundation learning classes. This encourages their creative development and their oral skills successfully. Across the school, pupils produce an attractive range of artwork by demonstrating a good awareness of colour, form and texture, for example when emulating contemporary Welsh artists.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Nearly all pupils feel safe and appreciate that they are respected. They have a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe online. The school has a caring and inclusive ethos and most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their peers when completing their tasks and when playing during break times. They take pride in their work and progress and enjoy a constructive and supportive relationship with staff and their friends across the classes. This is highlighted particularly well during regular shared reading sessions, where the oldest pupils read with the youngest pupils. Many of the oldest pupils note that this work promotes their well-being effectively and increases their confidence when reading. Many foundation learning pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and build a close and supportive relationship while enjoying working together.

Many pupils develop robust physical skills on entry to the nursery and reception class. Many pupils respond enthusiastically to opportunities to spend time in the learning areas and develop independence and confidence, and this contributes firmly to promoting their well-being successfully. They have a good understanding of the importance of keeping healthy by taking part in physical activities during tasks and break times. Many also gain satisfaction from participating in extra-curricular activities and in teams that represent the school in local and regional sports.

Nearly all pupils concentrate extremely well during learning activities and persevere consistently in their learning. They work together maturely, for example as the youngest pupils roll tyres across the outdoor area and as Year 3 and 4 pupils search for clues for the Olympic Games quiz. When tasks are challenging for them, pupils maintain a positive mindset and persevere diligently to succeed.

Most pupils speak maturely about the opportunities they are given to share ideas about different themes. They take pride in their contributions and feel that teachers consider their suggestions and include them in plans for class activities. Pupils respect the contributions of their peers in activities and respond maturely to feedback they receive from a friend or an adult.

Many pupils demonstrate leadership skills during activities while working and sharing ideas with their peers. They make wise choices about the challenge during tasks and many explain maturely why they are choosing that particular challenge. Pupils also represent their classes on councils such as the school council, the eco council and the well-being council. These councils fulfil an important role; for example, the eco council maintains the school's arrangements for recycling different materials and the school council has held a show to raise money for good causes.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are a notable strength. Most maintain interest and concentrate well for extended periods. They apply themselves fully to their tasks and work together maturely. When they face challenges in their learning, most respond constructively and share their concerns with a friend or adult, when necessary. Pupils are motivated by the reward arrangements and staff's encouragement and are proud of their achievements. In all aspects of school life, their behaviour is excellent.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Teachers provide a curriculum that offers a wide range of rich experiences and meets pupils' needs effectively. They pay attention to pupils' interests when planning themes and ensure a good balance of experiences that motivate pupils to learn successfully. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils received a letter written in French asking for their help in developing a snack for athletes at the Olympic Games. This developed their curiosity and understanding of the relationship between Welsh, English and French vocabulary successfully. Teachers undertake leadership roles when responding to the requirements of the curriculum's areas of learning and experiences, working together conscientiously to ensure a rich range of learning experiences for pupils. However, teachers do not always plan purposefully enough to ensure that all pupils' skills are developed fully.

Teachers respond beneficially to most pupils' needs and provide them with engaging learning experiences. They develop pupils' knowledge and skills effectively, for example by developing an understanding of costs and profit through an entrepreneurial project selling apple products with the oldest pupils. Teachers use resources skilfully to promote the youngest pupils' early literacy skills. For example, they display pupils' names in turn on the large whiteboard so that pupils can read their name and give an answer or a comment.

Teachers' use of traditional nursery rhymes and contemporary songs in the foundation learning phase reinforce pupils' oral skills effectively. Teachers provide

beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop digital skills and apply them effectively across the areas of learning and experience. The use of digital resources to promote pupils' wider skills is a strength across the school. For example, the youngest pupils develop their understanding of time when coding cars to follow a route on a map.

Staff make effective use of the learning areas both inside and outside the school building. In foundation learning, they enrich provision by adding resources that develop pupils' curiosity and independence successfully. Most pupils engage fully with their learning and make good progress. Teachers have high expectations and, as a result, most pupils concentrate for extended periods and work together maturely. Teachers model polished language effectively and support pupils to use spoken Welsh regularly. Learning assistants work purposefully with teachers to support pupils with their work.

Teachers' presentations are lively and engage pupils' interest beneficially. They use a range of probing questioning methods which are effective in encouraging pupils to recall their previous learning. Staff ensure that their classes are stimulating and engaging places where pupils can enjoy learning. Beneficial opportunities for pupils to select the appropriate challenge in activities promote their learning and independence successfully. As a result, many persevere well with their activities. However, the overuse of worksheets by teachers at times limits opportunities for pupils to complete and present their learning with increasing independence.

Staff plan interesting learning activities that reflect the cultural, linguistic and diverse nature of Wales and the wider world. This includes rich opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. For example, pupils are aware of Black History Month and have studied the history of the first black women in space from the United States. Staff raise pupils' awareness of diversity within families appropriately and support their understanding of the importance of appreciating differences of all kinds.

Staff use information about pupils' progress and learning outcomes appropriately to identify strengths and appropriate areas to support them in developing their learning further. This leads to the introduction of additional support, where appropriate. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' progress when providing purposeful learning tasks. They provide pupils with effective feedback and constructive comments that refer to success steps in their learning.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school is a homely and inclusive haven that promotes the well-being of pupils and staff effectively. The supportive and friendly working relationship between staff and pupils is an obvious strength. This is reflected in the natural courtesy of pupils and the positive attitudes of most pupils towards their learning. Staff ensure that pupils with ALN receive good support, which supports them to engage successfully with their learning and enjoy the school's life and work.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively and work purposefully with pupils to develop self-regulation methods that enable them to identify and control their emotions. Arrangements such as developing pupils' understanding of how to

maintain positive relationships and respect others ensure that pupils' behaviour is excellent.

The school has effective processes for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress and well-being, including those with ALN. Staff identify pupils' specific needs at an early stage and provide them with suitable support. Under the purposeful guidance of the ALN co-ordinator, assistants support pupils successfully. They use a range of suitable support methods and programmes to improve pupils' well-being and develop their basic learning skills purposefully. Staff maintain a close working relationship with pupils' families and work effectively with specialist external agencies, where appropriate, to support them. As a result of the support and arrangements to evaluate provision regularly, most pupils with ALN make good progress against their targets.

Provision for promoting pupils' health and fitness has a positive effect on their well-being and progress. This includes opportunities to discuss the importance of a balanced diet and share their feelings and worries at the beginning of the school day. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and works effectively with partners in the public sector, such as the police and the school nurse, to support pupils' learning and well-being.

The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn about the local community and the wider world. This includes valuable opportunities for them to develop their understanding of being conscientious and considerate citizens. Staff and pupils discuss children's rights and the importance of treating everyone with respect. As a result, pupils develop into wise citizens who are keen to take part in events to raise money for local and national charities.

Staff reinforce positive spiritual and social values for pupils effectively in learning activities and collective reflection sessions. Moral aspects and equality permeate all aspects of the school's life and work effectively, reinforcing the inclusive culture well. Learning activities raise pupils' awareness of the physical needs of others effectively. A good example of this is the opportunities for pupils in Years 3 and 4 to take part in Paralympic activities which develop their understanding of the experiences of people who face different physical challenges.

The school supports pupils to take responsibility and contribute to ideas to improve aspects of school life. There are regular opportunities for pupils to make important decisions about their school life, for example when discussing with the parents' committee which resources they would like to see in the outdoor area. The oldest pupils develop leadership skills when organising events in the community, including a St David's Day celebration and the summer fair.

Purposeful opportunities are provided for pupils to develop strong values and learn about other beliefs. Good examples of this are the opportunities teachers provide for pupils to study the difference between the religious holidays of Diwali and Easter, learn about the history of St David and the significance of the five pillars of Islam. As a result, pupils treat other traditions and religions with respect.

Most pupils benefit from valuable opportunities to develop a variety of creative skills which include singing, dancing and performing in public and competing in the Urdd



art and craft competitions. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to take part in local performances and events. This nurtures their self-confidence and expressive ability, in addition to their ability to work as part of a team by taking part in shows and concerts in the community and competing in the Urdd Eisteddfod. Links with the local community provide valuable opportunities for pupils to perform and take part in services, for example in harvest thanksgiving services at the school and the Plygain service at Llwyngwrl church.

The school's culture of safeguarding is sound and staff understand their roles and responsibilities, which contribute to pupils' safety and well-being. The school has purposeful arrangements to promote good attendance and the importance of punctuality among pupils, which includes monitoring rates on a daily basis. Staff communicate with parents regularly and organise follow-up activity supported by the local authority, where necessary. As a result, pupils' attendance rates have increased recently.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has a clear vision based on a caring and supportive ethos where most pupils make strong progress and develop into conscientious members of the area's community. They realise the school motto, '*Dysgu heddiw er mwyn yfory*' ('Learning today for tomorrow'), and foster values that motivate pupils to be confident and healthy learners who take pride in their local community and their national culture.

The headteacher sets high expectations for herself, staff and pupils. This contributes firmly to developing an active and supportive team and promotes staff well-being in a practical manner. Staff uphold professional values and conduct which contribute directly to improving provision and ensuring that effective co-operation is a key part of the school's arrangements.

Leadership procedures, which are led appropriately by the headteacher, have a positive effect on pupils' progress and well-being, in addition to provision in the classrooms and the wider learning areas. Leaders and staff plan appropriately to meet local and national priorities, for example in introducing the principles of the curriculum and implementing key elements of the Additional Learning Needs Act. Teachers are responsible for specific areas of learning and experience, which is beginning to deepen their understanding of the requirements and enrich pupils' learning experiences. Assistants are key members of the school team who contribute purposefully to improving progress in pupils' learning, well-being and social skills. Staff promote the Welsh language and Welshness purposefully and promote pupils' pride in their language and heritage.

The school's priorities for improvement are based on an appropriate range of first-hand evidence and staff's understanding of them is sound. Procedures have been established to review progress, identify areas for improvement and identify steps to implement them. These include an analysis of pupils' progress and outcomes and sensible opportunities to scrutinise work and observe learning sessions. As a result, the headteacher and staff know their school well and address many of the improvements purposefully.

Members of the governing body receive and consider useful information about the effect of the school's improvement procedures on provision and about pupils' progress and well-being. There are appropriate opportunities for them to play an active part in the self-evaluation process, including visiting classes, discussing with pupils and scrutinising their work. They question the school about suitable issues, including aspects of teaching and learning that need to be developed further. They work with staff and pupils to ensure that the school has suitable arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. They take pride in the active partnership that is developing across the local schools in the catchment area.

Expenditure links purposefully with the school's objectives and improvement plans. The headteacher and governors use the school's budget effectively to enrich the curriculum and support and raise pupils' standards. They link expenditure appropriately with the priorities in the development plan and monitor funding carefully to ensure its best use. Leaders plan the expenditure of the pupil development grant sensibly, which includes providing support programmes tailored to the learning and emotional needs of individuals. Leaders have purposeful plans to use grants to reduce the impact of poverty on pupils and their families. A good example of this is supporting families with the cost of trips and residential visits.

There are valuable opportunities for staff to develop professionally. These include opportunities for valuable training on areas of learning and experience, to learn about the principles of staff and pupil well-being and training on specific aspects of assessment for learning methods. Teachers' performance management arrangements are appropriate.

The school has an active relationship with the local secondary school and the local schools in the catchment area, which includes providing valuable opportunities for teachers to work together to share good practice about the curriculum's learning areas. As a result, pupils benefit from extensive experiences across the areas of learning.

The relationship between the school and parents is strong. Staff communicate with them appropriately to ensure they are aware of day-to-day events and to share their children's achievements and successes. Parents are very proud that their children attend such a supportive school, which is completely central to this rural community.

## 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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