



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni**

**St David's Road  
Abergavenny  
NP7 6EL**

**Date of inspection: September 2024**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni

Name of provider	Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni
Local authority	Monmouthshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	Category 3 – Welsh-medium school
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	N/A
Number of pupils on roll	270
Pupils of statutory school age	207
Number in nursery classes	34
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 22.9%)</i>	11.1%
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>	12.1%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	24.6%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	February 2017
Start date of inspection	24/09/2024

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

## Summary

The school is a caring community where pupils are polite and behave well. Nearly all enjoy coming to school and attend regularly.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher focus effectively on improving pupils' progress, well-being and learning, in a Welsh environment. The school motto: 'Learning as a family, growing as a community', is alive in its day-to-day life and ensures that pupils are happy, learn, take care of each other and are proud to be Welsh speakers. They ensure that pupils' well-being is sound, secure and that they are curious and confident learners who feel that they belong to the school's familial community.

The school has an interesting curriculum that supports pupils to be well-rounded learners who are well acquainted with their local area, Wales and the world. By following this curriculum, staff ensure that most pupils enjoy learning and make progress that is at least good in their various skills, including literacy, numeracy and digital learning. One of the school's strengths is the way it encourages nearly all pupils, whatever their linguistic background, to speak Welsh confidently and with increasing accuracy. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils. However, they do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and to do things for themselves.

The headteacher and governors have managed the school's resources appropriately over a number of years. However, they are currently facing a situation of significant overspend. They have now begun to work with the local authority to address this.

Leaders communicate regularly with parents but their communication methods are not always clear or consistent enough. As a result, not all parents have an appropriate understanding of what happens at the school from day to day.

## Recommendations

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve.

- R1 Respond immediately to the school's financial deficit
- R2 Adapt teaching methods to improve pupils' independent learning skills
- R3 Ensure consistency in leaders' communication methods with parents

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

The headteacher, with the firm support of the deputy headteacher, provides a firm strategic direction for the school which focuses effectively on improving pupils' progress, well-being and learning in a Welsh environment. The vision for the school, namely 'Learning as a family, growing as a community' is clear, and permeates all of its work. This ensures that the school is a successful learning community where pupils and staff take pride in being Welsh speakers. It ensures that most pupils develop their knowledge and understanding and make progress that is at least good in their literacy, numeracy and digital skills, in addition to a range of other skills in various areas of learning. This includes pupils who are affected by poverty and those with additional learning needs (ALN). Leaders ensure that pupils' well-being is sound, that they are safe and that they are curious and confident learners who feel that they belong to the school's familial community. By embedding robust procedures, the school maintains an effective culture of safeguarding.

Leaders consider current national priorities, such as improving attendance, ensuring pupils' well-being, adapting teaching methods and tracking progress successfully. This influences pupils' well-being, teaching and learning regularly.

The school has an interesting curriculum that meets pupils' needs. They are given beneficial opportunities to learn about their local area, their identity as Welsh speakers and the wider world. This, in turn, prepares them to be conscientious and informed citizens.

Most teachers have high expectations of pupils. They provide an appropriate challenge and beneficial support for many pupils, including those with ALN. However, they do not always plan tasks purposefully enough or use specific teaching methods than enable pupils to develop fully their independent learning skills. Classroom assistants support pupils' learning successfully, particularly where the school has identified individuals with ALN.

Very few pupils are able to speak Welsh on entry to the school. However, as a result of the wide range of beneficial learning methods and experiences the school uses to promote oracy, most develop confidence to use the Welsh language confidently and with increasing accuracy and take pride in their Welshness.

### **Spotlight: Develop pupils' oracy skills**

The school's methods for immersing and improving the accuracy of pupils' vocabulary and language patterns are extremely successful. Staff use a detailed combination of methods to drill language patterns regularly, along with implementing fun oral exercises with pupils to bring learning to life for them. Hand in hand with the school's Welsh ethos, pupils develop to become skilled speakers who take pride in their ability to speak Welsh.

Nearly all members of staff support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness successfully. By following themes such as equity, rights and using a positive mindset towards their learning, pupils consider the views and values of others and develop a sound understanding of individuals who are different from them.

Teachers and other adults support pupils effectively to develop extremely positive attitudes towards their learning. The regular use of the 'bee' method devised by the school, for example, in addition to unique stories based on them, develops pupils' understanding of qualities such as resilience and self-confidence successfully. Many persevere or seek new solutions when facing difficulties with tasks and respond beneficially to teachers' comments on their work. The school's range of robust procedures to enable teachers to identify the next steps for pupils enables most to move forward with their learning consistently and make progress that is at least good.

The school co-ordinates beneficial support for pupils with ALN, and works with external agencies, where necessary. The school provides staff with a wide and purposeful range of training to enable them to support these pupils effectively and to respond appropriately to their needs. As a result, pupils with ALN make good progress within the school's inclusive environment.

Pupils influence the life and work of the school successfully. They develop effective leadership skills by taking part in a wide range of groups that are organised for them to voice their opinions. Members of these groups take their roles seriously and act fairly independently, planning a variety of activities and events, in addition to recording issues discussed in meetings without support from adults.

The school is a caring community that promotes good behaviour continuously. As a result, most pupils are polite, behave respectfully and are very caring towards each other. For example, through the 'butties' scheme, the older pupils take good care of their youngest peers.

The school's procedures to ensure that pupils attend regularly are effective. As a result, attendance rates over the last two years have risen significantly and are above the national average.

The school's transition arrangements with the secondary schools are successful. They ensure that pupils transfer smoothly to their next school when the time comes.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which leaders develop staff. They plan and deliver broad and purposeful professional learning opportunities for them which have a positive effect on pupils' learning and well-being. The recent priority on developing pupils' oracy skills has ensured that most make good progress.

Leaders have an effective procedure for evaluating provision, and identifying its strengths and areas for improvement. The current procedures, although relatively new, are comprehensive and based on first-hand evidence. The outcomes of the procedure help leaders to set priorities for improvement that are clear and focus on purposeful issues.

Governors support the school appropriately. They visit the school occasionally and are given opportunities by the headteacher to discuss and challenge how effective provision is and the progress pupils are making. However, governors do not contribute to the self-evaluation process in a purposeful or timely enough manner. Governors have managed the school's resources appropriately over a long period. However, recently, as a result of a number of factors, the school is facing a situation of significant overspend. Governors have now begun to work with the local authority to address this.

The school has an appropriate partnership with parents, but leaders' methods of communicating with them are not always clear or consistent enough. As a result, not all parents have an appropriate understanding of what happens at the school from day to day.

### **Additional information**

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

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

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

Leaders and governors do not manage the school's general finances appropriately, but they do make effective use of the pupil development grant.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer 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 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).**