

This letter is also available in Welsh.



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

Ysgol Emrys Ap Iwan  
Faenol Avenue  
Abergele  
Conwy  
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06/01/2025

Dear Matthew Wildsmith,

**Interim visit:** December 2024

Thank you for your support with the interim visit to the school on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2024. We enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you, your staff and pupils and hear more about how the school has responded to recommendations made by Estyn during the core inspection in May 2022. It was pleasing to see the way in which your staff embraced the process, and the openness they showed during discussions.

During our visit, we had the opportunity to:

- Meet with senior leaders to discuss the work on developing leadership and improvement processes and your work to improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and Welsh skills.
- Speak with middle leaders about how they are evaluating their own work and planning for improvements.
- Talk with pupils and hear their feedback on the school.
- Talk with pupils' leadership groups and how they are influencing the work of the school.
- Visit lessons in a variety of subjects to see pupils and staff undertaking their work.
- Scrutinise a sample of pupils' work.
- Undertake work scrutiny and lesson observation activities with leaders and discuss the main findings from these activities.

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## **Focus of visit**

### **Strengthen provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills, including Welsh**

From our meetings with leaders, visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, it is clear that the school is in the process of strengthening its approaches to developing pupils' skills. For example, in some subjects, teachers are supporting pupils well to produce good quality pieces of extended writing. The school has also developed a helpful approach to developing pupils' oracy. However, we would agree with the school that there needs to be more consistency in how subjects across the curriculum support the development of pupils' literacy skills. The school has reviewed its approach to the development of numeracy and digital skills and has suitable plans to develop this aspect of its work, although this is at an early stage.

Leaders have introduced a number of supportive strategies to develop a stronger Welsh ethos across the school, including the creation of the 'Pencampwr Cymraeg' role. This is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' attitude to learning Welsh.

We think it would be helpful for you to consider:

- How well is the school strengthening its plans to improve the progressive development of pupils' skills across the curriculum?
- Do leaders evaluate the provision for skills robustly enough in terms of its impact on pupils' standards?
- Are all staff clear on the expectations for developing skills, and how well are these expectations communicated and monitored?
- How is the school developing pupils to be more independent when reading and writing in Welsh, and how are staff helping pupils to be more confident to use spoken Welsh?

### **Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve self-evaluation and improvement planning**

There have been a number of recent changes in the leadership of the school. Leaders are taking a variety of sensible approaches to increase the impact that their work has on pupil outcomes, although we recognise that some of these approaches are at an early stage of development. Through our meetings and joint activities with school leaders, it was clear that in general, they have a sound understanding of the school's most important strengths and areas for development. We would agree that the next stage of development is to help all leaders to evaluate the impact of their provision precisely.

The newly developed approach to evaluating learning and teaching ('Blinks') is helping to foster a beneficial culture of reflection and collaboration. We recognise that there is still work to do in order to achieve consistent effectiveness across leadership at all levels and greater accountability where required.

Pastoral leaders analyse a range of information regarding pupils' progress, attitudes to learning and attendance. The provision they put in place in light of their evaluations is having a positive impact on pupils' well-being.

We think it would be helpful for the school to consider:

- What impact are the recent changes to leadership having on important aspects of the school's work, for example the level of challenge in teaching, skills provision and pupils' attendance?
- How well are leaders developing a precise understanding of the specific aspects of provision that require development?
- Where support is not having sufficient impact, how robustly are leaders challenging ineffective practice?

Thank you again for all your help to plan and arrange our visit.

The school's latest core inspection report and further information on the process and purpose of interim visits can be found on our website:

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6625400>

Yours sincerely



**Catherine Evans**  
Assistant Director