



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

A report on
Ysgol Glan y Môr

**Cardiff Road
Pwllheli
Gwynedd
LL53 5NU**

Date of inspection: December 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Glan y Môr

Name of provider	Ysgol Glan y Môr
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	Bilingual (Category A)
Type of school	Secondary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	469
Pupils of statutory school age	468
Number in the sixth form	
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 secondary sector is 21.1%</i>)	13.4%
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 secondary sector is 11.2%</i>)	9.8%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	77.8%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	23/01/2017
Start date of inspection	02/12/2024

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

The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school

Summary

Ysgol Glan y Môr is a caring community that places an emphasis on fostering a sense of community and supporting the well-being of pupils and staff. In lessons, most teachers develop positive working relationships with pupils and there is a purposeful learning environment. As a result, during the week of the inspection, most pupils' behaviour was good.

A strong feature of the school's work is the way in which it promotes pride in the Welsh language and culture. The Welsh department and Welshness committee organise a variety of rich experiences to deepen pupils' understanding of their local area and encourage pride in the language. Many pupils also appreciate the opportunities provided to discuss contemporary topics and important issues through the personal and social education programme. They also value opportunities to take part in physical and cultural activities at events such as the Gŵyl Glan y Môr festival and various activities organised by the physical education department. Pupils are given beneficial opportunities to influence the school's work through the school Senedd.

The school has recently strengthened its procedures to improve pupils' attendance. However, this has not had enough impact and, as a result, the attendance of pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals, has not improved. During the inspection, the school's attention was drawn to a safeguarding issue relating to lunchtime arrangements.

A majority of pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make suitable progress in their lessons and over time. The school has clear and purposeful procedures for identifying and supporting these pupils. In the few lessons where teaching is at its best, pupils make strong progress. However, a minority of pupils make more limited progress. This is often as a result of shortcomings in teachers' planning. The expectations of a minority of teachers of what pupils are able to achieve in individual lessons and over time are not high enough. Although there are valuable opportunities for pupils to use their skills in subjects across the curriculum, provision is not coherent enough so that pupils develop their skills progressively.

The headteacher is supported purposefully by members of the senior leadership team. They work diligently to fulfil their duties, although some have too heavy a workload, which means that they are not always able to act strategically enough to drive improvements. The school has useful calendar of self-evaluation activities. However, leaders at all levels do not evaluate the effect of teaching and provision on pupils' standards and progress adequately. This means that they do not identify the exact areas that are in need of improvement incisively enough and do not always hold those that they lead to account sufficiently for the quality of their work.

Recommendations

We have made five recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Address the safeguarding issue that was raised during the inspection
- R2 Improve attendance
- R3 Ensure that teachers always plan teaching, including provision for skills, to challenge pupils to the best of their ability
- R4 Strengthen strategic leadership, including how responsibilities are distributed, to increase capacity in important areas for improvement and increase accountability
- R5 Ensure that self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes focus on the effect of provision on pupils' outcomes

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress about 12 months after the publication of this report.

Main findings

Teaching and learning

Most teachers foster a supportive and nurturing working relationship with pupils. They have managed the classroom well and established routines which support most pupils to settle to work promptly. These pupils listen politely and respectfully to teachers' instructions and the contributions of their peers. Many pupils work together happily when they are given an opportunity to work in pairs or small groups. In the few lessons where teaching is strong and energetic, pupils are curious and commit to their work enthusiastically. However, in a few lessons, the nature of the teaching and the tasks set means that pupils are too passive or reliant on the teacher.

In most lessons, teachers have sound subject knowledge and succeed in guiding learning suitably by providing clear instructions and explanations. Many teachers ask questions appropriately to help pupils recall their previous knowledge. They circulate the class purposefully to check that pupils are working. These teachers are effective language models who use terminology and vocabulary effectively to help pupils develop their linguistic skills. As a result, a majority of pupils make suitable progress in their learning.

Over time, a minority of pupils make less progress than they could. In these cases, the teacher's expectations are not high enough and provision does not challenge pupils, particularly those who are more able, to achieve to the best of their ability. These teachers do not consider the learning objectives carefully enough and, as a result, plan a series of repetitive or rudimentary tasks that keep pupils busy rather than expanding their knowledge and understanding. They often over-direct learning, which means that there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop their independence. Too often, teachers miss opportunities to share examples of good work and discuss success criteria to help pupils improve the quality of their work. A minority of teachers do not ask probing questions, are too willing to accept basic answers and do not challenge pupils to think about their answers in depth. In a few subjects, worksheets are not planned well enough and limit pupils' progress.

In the few cases where teaching is at its best, pupils make strong progress. They recall previous learning well and apply it skilfully to new contexts. In these lessons, teachers demonstrate infectious enthusiasm towards their subjects and plan skilfully. They set high expectations in terms of pupils' engagement, effort and achievement. They plan tasks that build gradually on each other so that pupils are given valuable opportunities to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to new and more unfamiliar contexts. These teachers ask questions skilfully and encourage pupils to think deeply and produce high quality oral contributions. They identify misconceptions and mistakes in learning in a timely manner and adjust the pace of lessons and the level of challenge to match pupils' learning. These teachers model learning extremely effectively by using examples of good work and success criteria skilfully.

Many teachers offer suitable oral and written feedback to help pupils improve their work. In the few best examples, teachers provide useful comments that support pupils well to understand what needs to be improved. In these cases, teachers have high expectations in terms of pupils' responses and, as a result, pupils make strong progress. However, there is no consistency in the quality of the feedback provided. Comments are not always specific enough, are too complimentary or do not provide opportunities for pupils to respond so that they can make improvements to the content and quality of their responses.

There are beneficial opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and digital competence skills in subjects across the curriculum. Provision to develop literacy in the Welsh department is a strength. However, there is too much variation in the quality of provision across the subjects and no consistent attention is given to help pupils improve and develop their skills progressively. Guidance for improving the quality of pupils' skills is not strategic enough to identify and act on the exact aspects that need to be developed.

In Welsh lessons, nearly all pupils contribute appropriately and sensibly orally and express themselves clearly and correctly. A majority of pupils make mature contributions when discussing in pairs or small groups and make valid points fluently and articulately when questioned. In English lessons, a majority of pupils contribute appropriately to class discussions. In other subjects across the curriculum, many pupils use subject vocabulary suitably and provide appropriate answers to the teacher's questions. In the few lessons where teaching is at its best, pupils give

sophisticated answers and explain their reasoning extremely maturely. However, a minority of pupils are reticent or give very short answers to teachers' questions.

Although there are valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills progressively in Welsh and English lessons, the quality of opportunities across the curriculum is too varied. In Welsh lessons, there are regular opportunities to read a wide range of comprehensive articles and most pupils are able to summarise information from sources successfully. Many pupils are able to compare and contrast information effectively and draw attention to similarities and differences in complex reading passages. In English lessons, many pupils synthesise information and analyse how an author portrays characters effectively, for example when analysing the character of the warden in the Louis Sachar novel, 'Holes'. In many subjects across the curriculum, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to progressively develop advanced reading skills and apply what they learn in their language lessons.

In their Welsh lessons, many pupils write well in a range of genres for a variety of audiences, for example when they present an article about the campaign of Eileen and Trefor Beasley. In English lessons, many pupils write suitably. Throughout the school, a few pupils make careless spelling and grammatical errors in their work. In a minority of subjects across the curriculum, there are not enough purposeful and regular opportunities for pupils to write at length. This has an effect on the progress they make in their writing skills.

A majority of pupils have a suitable grasp of number concepts. They are able to use the four rules to solve problems and they work confidently with numbers in different forms. They develop their understanding of shape and measurement work appropriately and analyse data effectively, for example when they calculate averages and draw graphs confidently. They analyse graphical information effectively, for example when producing and analysing climate graphs about Pwllheli and a tropical rainforest. A few pupils have strong number skills. For example, they apply their understanding of trigonometry to solve contextualised problems. They are also able to justify their ideas mathematically and are able to generalise patterns. However, a few pupils have weak number skills. They have difficulty with problems relating to the four rules and place value.

Across the curriculum, there are appropriate opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills and the level of challenge and appropriateness of tasks are suitable in many cases. However, in a minority of cases, these numeracy tasks are not challenging enough to meet the needs of all pupils. There are not enough opportunities to develop number concepts, for example percentages, in relevant subjects across the curriculum.

There are a number of beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their digital skills across the curriculum. This includes opportunities to create websites and podcasts and present information by using a wide range of software. In general, pupils make sound progress in developing their digital skills across the curriculum. For example, they are able to use software to interact and create animations and GIFs.

Many pupils use their physical skills well, for example when playing netball and basketball in their physical education lessons and when using their fine motor skills

when handling a fork and rake to work on the soil in outdoor learning lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic when contributing to physical activities and work together effectively and harmoniously.

The school has a clear vision for realising Curriculum for Wales, which is based firmly on promoting the school's values of fostering pupils' pride in their Welshness and their roots in the Pwllheli area. This curriculum offer for the school's younger pupils is broad and balanced. Departments work together appropriately to plan engaging learning experiences for pupils. In the best examples, this has a positive effect on pupils' skills and their commitment to their learning. For example, to increase the interest of a cohort of pupils in studying Welsh literature, the Welsh and physical education departments have used practical methods, designed jointly with pupils, to teach the novel 'Llinyn Trôns'.

The school's younger pupils benefit from purposeful personal and social education (PSE) lessons to help them develop their personal and social skills. The school has considered and revised these lessons carefully to respond to analyses of well-being questionnaires, key issues identified through the work of the pastoral staff and national priorities. In these lessons, pupils are given valuable opportunities to develop an understanding of topics such as substance misuse, equality and anxiety. These lessons are planned skilfully with the presence of the soft toy, Largo the elephant, in Year 7 lessons to facilitate the initiation of discussions about sensitive topics. However, PSE sessions for key stage 4 pupils are not currently held regularly enough.

The school provides purposeful intervention programmes to develop the reading and numeracy skills of pupils with weaker skills. The school provides some valuable experiences for more able pupils in partnership with the SEREN scheme. However, there is not a clear enough strategy across the school to develop provision for the most able and talented pupils.

In key stage 4, the school provides a wide range of academic and vocational courses that meet the needs of most pupils, including those with additional learning needs. There is beneficial support to help pupils consider their next steps and various careers, including valuable work experience opportunities. The school provides a wide range of options, including vocational courses such as outdoor learning and health and social care. It has also expanded its curriculum offer through beneficial partnerships with local colleges to meet pupils' aspirations. For example, agriculture, creative media and engineering are offered.

A variety of extra-curricular activities provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their wider skills, including their social skills. These opportunities include a games club, various sports activities and a chess club.

The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually and morally by learning about diversity, human rights, ethics and citizenship. For example, the school Senedd has raised awareness of the importance of tolerance by leading the school's 'Prosiect Parch' (Respect Project). There are rich and numerous opportunities for pupils to celebrate their Welshness and develop their understanding of their culture. For example, pupils are given valuable opportunities to work with local poets and writers as part of the 'Hen Alawon Newydd' project.

Well-being, care, support and guidance

Ysgol Glan y Môr is a caring and supportive community that gives a prominent place to the importance of developing an environment of respect and fairness. This is promoted purposefully by the work of the school Senedd in the 'Prosiect Parch' respect project, which emphasises qualities such as patience, listening, co-operation and kindness. In general, pupils are extremely welcoming and polite when talking to visitors and most treat their teachers and peers with respect in lessons and around the school site.

Most pupils behave well in their lessons and around the school site and treat their teachers and fellow pupils with respect. The school has an appropriate behaviour policy for dealing with any instances of misbehaviour. However, this policy is complicated for pupils and staff, which means that there is some inconsistency in the way in which staff respond to instances of misbehaviour. This means that the school has not always been able to implement provision to support pupils to avoid repeating instances of misbehaviour. There are no arrangements in place to reward pupils for good behaviour and attendance.

Many pupils respond positively to opportunities to discuss important and contemporary topics, such as mental health and healthy eating. There are effective campaigns as part of the PSE scheme of work to increase pupils' awareness of being free from physical, emotional and verbal abuse. The school is beginning to develop beneficial opportunities for pupils to influence the life and work of the school by undertaking leadership roles in the school Senedd. They have had a positive influence on a few aspects such as changes to the school uniform policy and identifying values for 'Prosiect Parch'. Pupils are given beneficial opportunities to have a positive influence on teaching in a few departments.

Between the 2018-2019 and 2023-2024 academic years, the school's attendance rate fell annually by more than that seen nationally. Again, last year, it was significantly lower than in similar schools. The rate of persistent absences is higher than that of similar schools. The attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is significantly lower than the average for similar schools. The cohort of pupils who rarely attend school has an effect on the school's attendance rate.

Leaders analyse attendance data appropriately to identify patterns and reasons for pupils' absences. They are taking suitable action to strengthen provision. For example, an attendance officer has been appointed recently to support this work. Leaders work closely with the local authority's attendance team to provide appropriate support to help pupils re-engage with the learning. However, it is too early to see the effect of this work and processes for tackling persistent absences are not effective enough.

Many pupils take advantage of valuable extra-curricular and curricular opportunities to develop their physical skills and cultural awareness, such as the school sports day, the Gŵyl Glan y Môr festival and the school Eisteddfod. The range of excursions has been enriched this year, for example by offering a trip abroad to France and trips to the theatre.

The school has robust processes for implementing the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act. Individual development plans (IDPs) provide detailed information about pupils' needs and also include specific targets. The ALN team has a good knowledge of the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties. There are effective procedures in place to identify pupils' needs at an early stage through the strong transition process. The ALN team discuss pupils' needs with primary schools and revise their IDPs accordingly. By developing a good understanding of pupils' needs, the school provides them with a suitable and purposeful curriculum. The ALN team monitors pupils' progress from their starting points regularly. Leaders analyse literacy and numeracy data carefully and there are purposeful interventions for pupils' needs. This includes short morning sessions and a specific weekly lesson to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The ALN team provides specific well-being interventions in the 'Hafan' to support pupils to develop their social skills.

Purposeful training is organised for the school's staff on methods of supporting pupils who need additional support. To ensure an understanding of the needs of individual pupils, a useful summary of pupils' learning needs is shared with staff. This information is supported by useful guides on specific needs to support staff when planning lessons. This means that pupils with additional learning needs make appropriate progress against their targets and starting points.

Many pupils feel safe at school and free from bullying or harassment. There are robust processes for tackling the few instances of bullying that arise, including a clear action plan and a detailed record of follow-up. Leaders provide regular statutory training on safeguarding issues and this ensures that staff and governors are clear about their responsibilities. However, the arrangements in relation to allowing pupils to leave the school at midday are not appropriate.

Leading and improving

The headteacher is a supportive leader who upholds the values of kindness and respect. He has a clear vision based on providing rich experiences for pupils at Ysgol Glan y Môr to prepare them to contribute fully to the local community when they leave the school. The vision, namely 'Root every pupil in our area, language, culture, and surroundings', is core to realising this and has been shared successfully with all staff and pupils. However, over time, the leadership has not had enough impact on important aspects of the school's work, such as improving attendance and planning teaching, including provision for skills, to challenge pupils to the best of their ability.

The headteacher is supported enthusiastically by members of the senior leadership team. They undertake their roles diligently and work together purposefully. Lines of accountability are clear in most cases. However, there is not an appropriate balance in responsibilities, which means that some members have a heavy workload. This means that leaders are not always given enough opportunities to act strategically and drive improvements effectively in their areas of responsibility.

A few middle leaders are very effective in their roles and have been successful in ensuring strong provision and good outcomes over time. However, there is inconsistency in the effectiveness of middle leaders. Overall, leaders at all levels have an appropriate understanding of the main strengths and the broad areas that

are in need of improvement, but they do not prioritise the aspects that need to be addressed incisively enough. As a result, the school has not addressed some important aspects in a timely enough manner.

Middle leaders value the beneficial support provided by members of the senior leadership team in line management meetings. In these meetings with departmental heads, leaders focus suitably on developing aspects such as working on departmental development plans and analysing results. However, meetings do not focus incisively enough or often enough on teaching and learning. Leaders also do not always hold those they lead to account sufficiently for the quality of their work.

Leaders give appropriate attention to some national priorities, such as developing the Welsh language, responding fully to the changes in the additional learning needs code successfully and developing Curriculum for Wales with a strong focus on the local area. However, leaders have not had enough of an effect on improving pupils' attendance.

Leaders have robust arrangements for reducing the effect of poverty on pupils' commitment and attainment. The family support officer provides children and their families with beneficial support to engage with their education. The school ensures that pupils have an equal opportunity to receive enriching and extra-curricular experiences, for example by paying for trips and music lessons. The pupil development grant is used appropriately to support the well-being and progress of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those from low-income households. However, leaders have not had enough of an effect on the attendance of these pupils and do not evaluate the use of this funding sufficiently.

The school has a useful calendar of self-evaluation activities. These activities include beneficial opportunities to visit lessons, scrutinise pupils' work and seek their opinions. However, leaders at all levels do not evaluate provision sufficiently according to the effect it has on pupils' progress and how well they develop their skills. As a result, in some cases, leaders have an overly generous opinion of the quality of provision. Leaders analyse data appropriately by identifying strengths and areas for improvement in the outcomes of groups of pupils and attitudes within their areas. In the best practices, they plan in detail how they will improve provision based on this.

Staff value the extensive opportunities to undertake professional learning and developing pedagogy has been an integral part of Curriculum for Wales developments. There is a beneficial programme of professional learning activities, which includes internal and external training. The programme includes suitable activities to support development in staff's professional knowledge, teaching skills and leadership. The school has appropriate arrangements for managing staff performance. There is a suitable link between the findings of self-evaluation activities, performance management objectives and the professional learning programme. Staff are given beneficial opportunities to discuss their development aspirations as part of the performance management process. However, leaders do not always identify the exact areas that are priorities for development or they do not evaluate the impact of professional learning sufficiently and, therefore, the programme does not always focus on the most important aspects that are in need of

improvement. As a result, professional learning has not had enough of an effect on improving the quality of teaching or staff leadership skills.

Governors are supportive of the school and receive useful information about the school's work from the headteacher, other leaders and pupils. There is a sensible structure of sub-committees where governors challenge leaders appropriately on issues such as attendance, the curriculum, subject results and financial decisions. The headteacher, business manager and governors monitor the school's funding carefully to ensure that expenditure aligns closely with what has been planned. As a result, the school manages its budget appropriately.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are 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 manage the school's funding appropriately. However, they do not evaluate the use of the pupil development grant well enough.

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 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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