



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

A report on

Ysgol Ysbyty Ifan

**Ysbyty Ifan
Betws y Coed
Conwy
LL24 0NY**

Date of inspection: November 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Ysbyty Ifan

Name of provider	Ysgol Ysbyty Ifan
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	3
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church in Wales
Number of pupils on roll	18
Pupils of statutory school age	14
Number in nursery classes	*
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 primary sector is 22.9%</i>)	0.0%
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>)	*
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	100.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/06/2017
Start date of inspection	25/11/2024

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

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

Summary

A friendly and warm ethos is a strong feature of Ysgol Ysbyty Ifan, where pupils, staff and parents take pride in the school's homely environment. Pupils' respect for each other and visitors is obvious. They play happily with each other and staff encourage them to be polite and friendly. As a result, nearly all pupils behave very well.

Leaders identify some of the school's strengths and are aware of the improvement priorities. However, they are not successful enough in addressing fundamental weaknesses in the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes. For example, the quality of teaching is not robust enough at the school and leaders do not address these weaknesses effectively enough.

In general, staff know the pupils and their families well and ensure that nearly all pupils feel that they belong to the school. However, teachers do not plan strategically enough to build adequately on pupils' knowledge and understanding and do not provide learning activities that are challenging enough for them across all areas of learning. As a result, most pupils make limited progress in their skills from their starting points, particularly their basic skills.

The governing body supports the school and knows its community well. Members are beginning to identify strengths and areas for improvement, but there are obvious gaps in their knowledge regarding the quality of teaching and learning. They do not challenge leaders effectively enough and hold them to account as a critical friend. In addition, the safeguarding policy and training arrangements are not robust enough.

The headteacher has created a clear vision to promote a caring community that prioritises respect, Welshness and local pride. The school has a strong relationship with parents and includes them in events and shares information effectively. Strong links with the local community promote pupils' pride in their heritage.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Address the safeguarding issue raised during the inspection
- R2 Ensure that teachers plan purposefully to develop pupils' skills in full
- R3 Improve teaching and give particular attention to raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and increasing the level of challenge for pupils of all abilities
- R4 Strengthen the school's strategic leadership and improve self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures to raise standards and strengthen provision

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. 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 usually every four to six months.

Main evaluation

The headteacher has established a purposeful vision to create a caring school community that prioritises respect, Welshness and pupils' pride in their local area. Staff know the pupils and their families well and, as a result, nearly all pupils feel that they belong to Ysgol Ysbyty Ifan.

Leaders have suitable processes to identify some strengths and areas for improvement at the school. However, over time, leaders have not been successful enough in implementing improvements. They have not used the findings of their self-evaluation processes effectively enough to plan and ensure sustainable improvements to improve important aspects of provision and pupils' outcomes. For example, a number of recommendations from the previous Estyn inspection continue to be important issues to be strengthened at the school, including improving pupils' numeracy and digital skills, teachers' assessment methods and strengthening the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement arrangements.

Members of the governing body are supportive of the school's work. They know the community it serves well. Governors are beginning to play a role in the school's life by conducting observations of teaching and learning to identify some strengths and areas for improvement. Members of the governing body receive information about the school in a timely manner; however, this information does not always reflect the situation at the school accurately and, as a result, governors are not sufficiently well-formed about a number of important aspects that the school needs to improve, such as elements of teaching. This means that they do not challenge leaders effectively enough or hold them to account for improving the quality of provision and pupils' standards. In addition, the safeguarding policy and training arrangements are not robust enough.

Leaders provide a suitable range of opportunities for staff to take part in professional learning activities and visit neighbouring schools, which links to some of the school's strategic priorities. For example, staff have attended training on how to develop numeracy across the school. However, the effect of these opportunities on the quality of teaching and learning is ineffective. Over time, leaders have not addressed teachers' underperformance successfully.

Leaders are mindful of staff's well-being and workload; for example, teachers are given purposeful opportunities to share planning, preparation and assessment sessions. However, teachers do not plan purposefully enough to support pupils to make sufficient progress over time. Teaching does not develop the full range of pupils' skills or challenge them purposefully enough across the range of ability. As a

result, there are clear gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding across the school and they do not make the expected progress.

Staff develop warm and homely relationships with pupils. This is a notable element of the school. They know each individual well and, as a result, nearly all pupils know who to turn to if they are concerned about anything and are confident that staff will deal with their concerns appropriately. Nearly all pupils have a clear understanding of the school's expectations in terms of behaviour and, as a result, behaviour across the school is very good. Nearly all pupils respond kindly and politely to staff and visitors.

On the whole, many pupils' oral and reading skills develop appropriately in Welsh and English and they gain a basic understanding of number from an early age. However, as a result of a lack of purposeful planning, pupils are not given regular enough opportunities to write at length or to develop a wide enough range of mathematical concepts purposefully. There are also few opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills. As a result, the extent to which pupils acquire these skills is limited.

Staff create an inclusive learning environment and foster a caring atmosphere, which promotes a positive attitude to learning among pupils. They know the pupils well and, within learning sessions, they provide them with appropriate support and ensure that learning activities have an appropriate pace. Staff question pupils skilfully to recall previous learning and confirm understanding. In general, staff provide suitable oral feedback to support pupils to know what they are achieving well, although there are few opportunities for pupils to improve and refine the content and quality of their work following feedback. Staff model the Welsh language purposefully, which is a strong feature of the school. As a result, most pupils' oral and reading skills develop appropriately.

Although there are a few positive aspects in the teaching, a high proportion of it is ineffective. Staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils should achieve and they do not plan effectively enough to develop the full range of pupils' skills. As a result, pupils do not make sufficient progress in terms of acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers also tend to over-direct learning and they do not always allow pupils to make choices about the way in which they would like to present their work. This limits pupils' ability to make decisions, take responsibility for their learning and develop as independent learners.

The school has a strong relationship with parents. Parents feel comfortable that they can discuss their children's well-being and education. Relevant information is shared effectively with parents through a variety of communication methods. Members of the parent teacher association work diligently to raise money to improve the school's facilities, such as holding a bingo night and a raffle to purchase football equipment for pupils to use during break times.

The school is a core part of the community of Ysbyty Ifan. Pupils play a prominent role in the village, for example by working together to create a new logo for Hafan Ifan church. This promotes the pride of nearly all pupils in their local community.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are a cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for management 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.

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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This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).