

A report on
Ysgol David Hughes

Pentraeth Road
Menai Bridge
Anglesey
LL59 5SS

Date of inspection: February 2025

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol David Hughes

Name of provider	Ysgol David Hughes
Local authority	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Language of the provider	Bilingual
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Secondary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	1132
Pupils of statutory school age	925
Number in the sixth form	156
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 secondary sector is 21.1%)</i>	11.0%
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 secondary sector is 11.2%)</i>	22.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	54.4%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.5%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2024

A report on Ysgol David Hughes
February 2025

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	13/03/2017
Start date of inspection	03/02/2025

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

Ysgol David Hughes is an inclusive community where many pupils have a supportive and stimulating learning experience. Many pupils treat their teachers and peers with respect and participate actively in pair or group discussions. Many teachers encourage pupils to work purposefully and manage their classes effectively, ensuring a positive learning environment. In a minority of lessons, teaching is not effective enough to ensure that pupils are challenged in full. For example, in some cases, activities are not challenging enough and too much guidance from the teacher can limit opportunities for pupils to develop their independence.

The headteacher has a clear vision based on providing the best education for all the school's pupils. The school's leadership is sound. Although the senior leadership team are supportive of each other, roles and responsibilities within the team have not been distributed equitably and, as a result, they do not work strategically enough. Self-evaluation systems provide a useful insight into strengths and areas for improvement, but these need to be refined further to ensure that all areas that require improvement are targeted effectively.

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' well-being, with a dedicated pastoral team that provides individual support to those who need it. Pupils' well-being support centres provide a safe environment for pupils who face challenges and help them re-engage with their learning. By working with the local authority and external organisations, the school ensures that pupils have access to specialist support, when necessary.

Attendance is a concern, with rates below the national average. Although suitable tracking systems are in place, more effective methods are needed to identify and address the challenges that affect attendance.

Pupils' views have a strong influence on school life, with an active school council that works with senior leaders to address issues such as bullying. A digital reporting system has increased pupils' confidence in reporting problems and the school council's website provides useful information for parents and the community. Thematic groups contribute positively to the school's ethos. These include the UNICEF group which promotes equality, and the Welshness group which celebrates Welsh culture through activities in the local community.

The school offers a balanced curriculum that provides pupils with rich learning opportunities, including vocational courses and partnerships with post-16 education providers. A comprehensive health and well-being programme helps pupils to develop resilience and an awareness of issues such as mental health and stress. Pupil

questionnaires and parents' contributions influence the development of the curriculum, ensuring that it is relevant to their needs.

Recommendations

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

- R1. Improve teaching by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and increase the level of challenge for pupils of all abilities
- R2. Improve attendance
- R3. Adapt the responsibilities of the senior leadership team so that everyone works strategically
- R4. Sharpen planning for improvement processes to address the areas for improvement in the report in full

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the work of the school council and its work in the local community, to be shared on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and attitudes to learning

Most teachers foster a supportive and nurturing working relationship with pupils at Ysgol David Hughes. Many teachers have appropriate expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour. They manage their classes firmly and have established routines that support pupils to settle down to work promptly and effectively. Many pupils listen politely and respond positively to their teachers' instructions. They work together purposefully in pairs or small groups and share ideas respectfully. In a few lessons, where classroom management is not effective, a minority of pupils talk excessively or show a lack of respect towards their peers and teachers.

Most teachers have sound subject knowledge. Many are effective language models and use specific terminology purposefully. Many teachers plan lessons with appropriate progression and ensure that activities build systemically on previous work. They explain and give pupils clear instructions and use suitable questions to check understanding. Many teachers monitor pupils' engagement effectively by walking around the classroom and provide timely feedback which helps pupils to improve their work. As a result, many pupils make appropriate progress in their learning.

In a minority of cases, where teaching is not strong, pupils make limited progress. In these lessons, planning and the order of lessons do not focus enough on pupils' learning.

Shortcomings include:

- teachers with too low expectations of what pupils can achieve
- a lack of challenge in tasks
- a relaxed culture of teaching and learning
- too much guidance from the teacher which limits opportunities for pupils to work independently
- a lack of questioning to probe pupils' understanding

In the few lessons where teaching is at its best, pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to their work and make strong progress. They recall previous knowledge confidently and apply it skilfully to new contexts. Teachers set high expectations and plan activities that offer a high level of challenge and encourage pupils to think deeply. These teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils to think independently and discuss their answers in detail. In a few lessons, teachers plan skilfully to provide an appropriate challenge for pupils of different abilities and assistants provide them with effective support.

Many teachers offer appropriate written feedback in books. In the best examples, feedback is effective and provides:

- opportunities to re-draft work
- specific advice on how to improve work
- feedback through a video link on specific improvements

However, written feedback does not always refer to specific improvements or it is not clear how pupils should improve their work. Correcting pupils' language and expectations in terms of pupils' response to feedback are inconsistent across departments.

Nearly all pupils in the sixth form participate fully in their learning and demonstrate independence when working. They are enthusiastic and mature pupils with positive attitudes towards their work. Many pupils are able to explain their work clearly and make links with their previous learning.

Provision and pupils' standards in literacy

In lessons, many pupils listen attentively to the teacher and their peers. The positive effect of the 'Ein Llais Ni' ('Our Voice') work, which is a whole-school strategy based on a regional programme to raise pupils' confidence and enrich their oracy skills, has begun to bear fruit. A majority of pupils contribute purposefully to class discussions, offering constructive comments and using subject vocabulary correctly. Many pupils use subject terminology purposefully when responding to their teachers' questions, and a few pupils provide more complex and extended oral responses which deepen their understanding. A majority speak Welsh confidently and naturally, using a natural accent. However, most pupils are too willing to turn to English in pair or group discussions. The Welsh responses of a minority of pupils are littered with English when they respond orally. Overall, teachers do not demand language accuracy in terms of subject terminology consistently enough. Nearly all pupils who learn Welsh as a second language have a healthy and positive attitude towards the language and develop their proficiency in the language soundly in lessons. For example, Year 7 pupils discuss the flavours of a local ice-cream company in a lively manner in their lessons.

The school has provided training for staff on reciprocal reading strategies to equip pupils to improve their understanding of new and unfamiliar texts. Strategies have also been shared with the partner primary schools to try to ensure consistency. As a result, pupils benefit from beneficial opportunities to develop their reading skills across the curriculum. Many pupils develop useful skills when finding facts and summarising evidence to reach sensible conclusions. They are able to predict developments in texts effectively. For example, Year 7 pupils anticipate the tales of the witches of Llanddona in their Welsh lessons. Many are able to analyse historical sources, for example when exploring the

importance of the Suffragettes in gaining the vote in their history lessons. More able pupils succeed in drawing intelligent conclusions based on reading passages, such as when analysing Jewish responses to the Shoah crisis in religious education. However, the reading skills of a few pupils are limited, which prevents them from accessing texts. They have a limited vocabulary and their answers are often superficial when analysing texts.

When writing, many produce short written explanations by using suitable and purposeful subject vocabulary. For example, they write about scientific concepts when describing how a plant responds to light in their science lessons. Many pupils use suitable vocabulary and language in structured paragraphs due to the careful construction and purposeful planning that leads to tasks. A majority of pupils write at length in a range of genres for different audiences. For example, they write a letter to persuade the school's headteacher to close the school on the day of the Menai Bridge fair effectively in their Welsh lessons or write a descriptive and interesting travel guide in their English lessons. A majority of pupils write correctly, on the whole, but, in Welsh and English, a minority make frequent spelling and grammatical errors. The need to improve pupils' linguistic accuracy has been identified as a priority by the school and staff have agreed on a literacy marking code to address this. However, the use and effectiveness of this code among the staff is inconsistent.

Provision and pupils' standards in numeracy and digital competence

Many pupils develop their basic number skills appropriately. They use the 4 rules fluently. For example, in their science lessons, they calculate the potential energy of a fairground ride. A few pupils have strong number skills. Many pupils have appropriate measuring skills and convert fluently between metric units. Many pupils demonstrate a good understanding of shape and measurement. For example, they apply their understanding of trigonometry and the Pythagorean theorem to calculate the length of a line or the height of a triangle that does not have a 90-degree angle. Many pupils use data-handling skills appropriately. They draw graphs correctly and many older pupils analyse graphs. For example, in geography lessons, they identify the correlation between deforestation and the price of beef.

In mathematics lessons, there are useful opportunities for younger pupils to apply their skills in context and solve problems. However, planning for provision to develop numeracy skills in other relevant subjects is not strategic enough and these plans are in their early stages.

In their computer science and computing lessons, many pupils use their digital skills effectively. They apply their skills by using HTML coding language to design a website and use spreadsheets to enter and analyse data. Overall, outside of digital lessons, there are

only a few opportunities for pupils to use basic skills. Planning to develop these opportunities is in its early stages.

In physical education lessons, most pupils develop beneficial physical skills. They develop relevant techniques in rugby and pickleball and strength and flexibility in yoga sessions. Across the school, most pupils make sound development in their creative skills. For example, they cook a chicken goujon meal in technology lessons and perform 'Y Bwli' ('The Bully') in drama lessons.

Curriculum

The school has a clear vision to realise Curriculum for Wales. It is based on encouraging pride and celebrating Welshness, Welsh identity and culture within the context of the local area and the community in Anglesey. Strong co-operation between departments to create purposeful projects provides opportunities for pupils to deepen their learning experiences, their understanding of their *cynefin*, or local area, and their links with the community. The school also works with its partner primary schools on various projects. For example, the humanities department has used the views of Year 6 pupils to inform provision for when they are in Year 7 and, as a result, the department has introduced a unit of work on refugees. Planning within the expressive arts to celebrate identity has made a valuable contribution to the school's inclusive ethos.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of its pupils well. There is inclusive provision and a wide range of courses in key stage 4, which include hair and beauty, food and nutrition, childcare, and business. The school is also part of the island's sixth-form partnership to expand the range of courses available.

The programme for health and well-being in Years 7, 8 and 9 is comprehensive and is a strength. The health and well-being lessons, 'Llun Lles' morning sessions and assemblies support and enrich pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They include important themes such as how to build resilience, mental health awareness, stress and sex education. There are a few suitable opportunities for Year 10 and 11 pupils to discuss some important issues, but there are not consistent enough opportunities for them. The school listens and responds to pupil questionnaires, parents' views and the local community to plan a curriculum that responds to pupils' experiences. The work of the pupil's voice groups is also beneficial. For example, they work with a local artist on the history and experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in Wales and representation for women.

There is a wide range of valuable extra-curricular experiences that enrich pupils' learning experiences and pupils' well-being. There are a variety of clubs, including a Mandarin club, a wide range of physical education clubs, an art club and after-school support with revision skills and homework.

Well-being, care, support and guidance

Pupils and staff work together successfully to realise the school's vision, which is to create an open and inclusive society that respects the views, aspirations and hopes of everyone who is part of the Ysgol David Hughes community. Staff promote positive behaviour and encourage pupils to foster the school's values. As a result, many pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and respect towards adults and their peers. They are welcoming and polite when greeting visitors and behave well around the school.

The pastoral team is passionate about its work in supporting all pupils to succeed and works purposefully to achieve this. Its recognition of the needs of individual pupils is a strength and it makes effective use of the various resources to support them, such as the 'Porth', 'C4', 'Y Gorad', 'Yr Harbwr' and 'Yr Hafan'.

The pastoral unit, 'Y Porth', is a key resource for many pupils. Specific interventions are conducted for individual pupils so that they can self-regulate and resume their learning. Staff identify pupils who need support and provide diverse and beneficial intervention programmes for them. Strong links with external agencies enable staff to provide targeted support, which helps pupils to thrive. The school works purposefully with the local authority through the 'Yr Hafan' resource to provide an alternative curriculum for any older pupils who are at risk of being excluded.

The school has a robust culture of safeguarding. Staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and how to keep pupils safe, and the school has suitable safeguarding processes.

The school uses attendance data appropriately to track absences in order to intervene in a timely manner. Target groups are identified at an early stage and heads of year and tutors track the attendance of these groups regularly. They work closely with the welfare officer and various other agencies to support learners with high levels of absence. However, arrangements to evaluate and identify the strategies that have the greatest impact on attendance are not incisive enough. Between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 academic years, the school's attendance rate decreased much more than that seen nationally. Last year, it was significantly lower than the rate in similar schools. The attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below the national average and the high rate of persistent absences is a cause for concern.

The school complies with the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act and provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is suitable. Appropriate intervention sessions for individuals support them to practise their reading and number skills. However, interventions are not monitored closely enough to ensure that they meet the needs of individuals purposefully. Individual learning plans include detailed and comprehensive information on how to support individuals effectively. However, the information is not manageable enough for teachers to use all of it to identify how they could support pupils purposefully at all times. Pupils with ALN benefit from opportunities to develop their real-life practical skills, for example when they work in the school garden or receive additional cooking lessons. This supports them to gain confidence and engages their enthusiasm in their learning experiences.

Beneficial and careful opportunities and provision are organised to support pupils to consider subject and career options. Pupils work closely with learning coaches to plan their future. This supports their learning and well-being. Purposeful support is provided to help pupils move to the next steps on their learning pathways.

There is a clear structure of regular activities to ensure that pupils are included in all aspects of the school's work, for example when making appointments, when self-evaluating and when updating policies. The school council and the five pupil groups are effective in driving positive changes, for example through their current anti-bullying campaign to create a digital form for pupils to report bullying confidentially through the school council website and the school's communication app. The school council's new website is a useful resource to promote its work more widely among learners and parents.

The UNICEF group is passionate about promoting diversity and equality within the school, as seen in its work on anti-racism. To promote the Welsh language in the local community, the Welshness group holds activities with local businesses, for example decorating shop windows and a baking competition.

Departments also promote pupils' opinions and respond to their comments effectively when adapting teaching and learning methods. For example, the religious studies department has changed its methods of checking understanding to use small whiteboards as a result of feedback from pupils. There are also appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills, for example as sixth-form pupils support younger pupils with their numeracy skills in intervention sessions. This fosters a good relationship between the school's older and younger pupils.

Leading and improving

The appointment of a new headteacher in September 2024 has marked a new chapter in the school's improvement journey. The headteacher is an enthusiastic and wise leader and she has an excellent awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. She has a clear vision which is based on ensuring that all pupils receive the best possible education and opportunities. The well-being of staff and pupils are also important priorities for her. In a short period as headteacher, she has gained the respect of staff, pupils and the school's wider community and they trust her to lead Ysgol David Hughes.

There is a strong sense of belonging among the Ysgol David Hughes community. Many staff and pupils are happy at the school and enjoy their time there. There is an active staff well-being committee that meets regularly to discuss issues that arise and evaluate the effect of day-to-day arrangements on staff well-being.

The roles and responsibilities of senior leaders are clear. However, there is not a fair distribution of strategic responsibilities across all members of the senior leadership team. There are appropriate arrangements to ensure that members of the senior team meet with curriculum and pastoral leaders regularly to discuss aspects of their work. Middle leaders value the support and challenge they receive from link members of the senior team. However, there is some inconsistency in the level of challenge offered to middle leaders.

The governing body is very supportive of the school. Members have a good awareness of the school's main strengths and areas for improvement. There is an appropriate structure of sub-committees to support the work of the full body. Although they have an appropriate overview of a majority of aspects of the school's work, they are not completely aware of their role in promoting healthy eating and drinking. The school's budget is monitored carefully by the senior administrative officer, the headteacher and the finance sub-committee.

Overall, the school has appropriate plans to respond to national priorities. There is good progress in response to some aspects, for example Curriculum for Wales and literacy. Recently, a strategy has been introduced to support vulnerable pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals. However, it is too early to see the effect of this work on attendance and outcomes.

There is a clear calendar of activities for leaders to evaluate the school's work. Leaders at all levels work together effectively to gather evidence by observing lessons, scrutinising work and seeking the views of pupils and staff. To enrich and validate their work, they also work beneficially with the Anglesey secondary schools alliance. Leaders analyse performance data and internal data appropriately to plan improvements to provision in their areas of responsibility. However, leaders tend to be over-reliant on data to evaluate

learning and they do not combine data with detailed findings from first-hand evidence well enough. As a result of evaluation work, leaders provide a variety of reviews on different aspects of the school's work, such as pupils' engagement, standards of oracy and ensuring a challenge for all pupils. However, these overviews are not always incisive enough to identify the exact aspects that they need to focus on. This makes it difficult for them to monitor the effect of their work on pupils' attainment in full.

There is a suitable link between the findings of the school's self-evaluation processes and the main improvement priorities. These priorities reflect the needs of the school and the local community, along with national priorities. However, actions are not always comprehensive enough to enable leaders to focus on specific aspects that are in need of improvement.

Since September, the school has reintroduced professional learning communities. Many staff have responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to research and work with others to address the school's priorities. The school supports individual staff with a variety of experiences to develop professionally, for example opportunities to develop as external examiners and opportunities to work with other schools. Although staff praise the offer that is available to them, there is not a strong enough link between the professional development programme and the specific areas that need to be improved in terms of teaching and learning. The school is a lead partner in a local initial teacher education partnership. The school has benefitted from an opportunity to work with other schools and the department mentors are given beneficial opportunities to develop professionally and mentor trainees.

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 manage the school's funding appropriately, including the 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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

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

© Crown Copyright 2025: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 07/04/2025