

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gyfun Bro Edern**

**Llanedeyrn Road,  
Pen-y-lan  
Cardiff  
CF23 9DT**

**Date of inspection: March 2025**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh**

## About Ysgol Gyfun Bro Edern

Name of provider	Ysgol Gyfun Bro Edern
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	Welsh
Type of school	Secondary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	936
Pupils of statutory school age	809
Number in the sixth form	127
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>	20.2%
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>	2.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	24.7%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2012
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/11/2017
Start date of inspection	17/03/2025

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](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

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Edern fosters a strong sense of belonging and provides a close-knit family environment for its pupils. Provision for pupils' well-being is generally sound and there is a host of engaging extra-curricular activities available to them. In a majority of cases, pupils make suitable progress in their subject understanding, with strong progress in a few lessons. However, in a minority of cases, shortcomings in teaching hinder pupils' progress. Overall, pupils do not make enough progress in their oracy, reading and writing skills.

In a minority of cases, teachers promote pupils' use of the Welsh language effectively. However, a majority of teachers do not promote pupils' use of the Welsh language effectively enough. As a result, many pupils do not make enough progress in their ability or willingness to communicate in Welsh.

Teachers plan lessons appropriately in a majority of cases but, in a minority, activities are uninteresting and offer a low level of challenge. Many teachers ask questions to check pupils' recall appropriately; however, in a majority of cases, they do not use questions that prompt pupils to elaborate on their ideas sufficiently. Beneficial feedback is given in a majority of cases but, in a minority, it is too general. The curriculum provides a wide range of suitable experiences but the school's planning to ensure the development of pupils' skills is not coherent enough.

In a majority of lessons, pupils' attitudes are fairly positive and many concentrate appropriately. However, a few pupils arrive late for their lessons or wander the corridors. In a minority of lessons, pupils demonstrate a lack of perseverance and interest in their learning and, in a few lessons, there is poor behaviour that disrupts learning. Attendance has improved recently but remains lower than before the pandemic. With the support of the local authority, the school's safeguarding processes have strengthened recently.

In general, leadership has a positive effect on pupils' well-being. Leaders take part in appropriate self-evaluation activities but do not evaluate teaching in terms of its effect on learning closely enough. They are too generous in terms of their evaluation of these aspects. Over time, the school's leadership has not had enough of an effect on important elements such as the quality of teaching or the development of pupils' literacy skills. Leaders do not demonstrate the capacity to improve these aspects.

## **Recommendations**

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

- R1. Improve strategic leadership and accountability at all levels, including the quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement
- R2. Ensure that governors offer an appropriate challenge to leaders
- R3. Strengthen the quality of teaching
- R4. Strengthen pupils' literacy skills and their willingness to use the Welsh language
- R5. Improve attendance and punctuality to lessons

## **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, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress, usually every four to six months.

## Main findings

### Teaching and progress

In a majority of lessons, pupils recall previous learning appropriately and make suitable progress in their subject understanding and skills. In a few cases, pupils make strong progress as a result of skilful teaching. In a minority of cases, pupils do not make enough progress, mainly as a result of shortcomings in teaching.

Many teachers forge a close and supportive working relationship with pupils. Most demonstrate sound subject knowledge and are suitable language models. In a majority of cases, teachers provide appropriate explanations and model answers appropriately to support pupils to understand what they need to succeed. In a minority of lessons, teachers promote the use of the Welsh language by pupils effectively. However, too often, teachers are not successful enough in feeding language to pupils or ensuring that they use the language in their discussions. As a result, many pupils do not make enough progress in their ability to communicate through the medium of Welsh.

A majority of lessons are planned appropriately with activities that contribute to suitable progress in pupils' subject knowledge. In these lessons, teachers have appropriate expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. However, there are shortcomings in the planning of a minority of teachers, which leads to pupils being passive and completing low level activities, such as copying from the board.

In many lessons, teachers ask appropriate closed questions to check pupils' recall. In these lessons, teachers move around the classroom and support pupils appropriately. However, a majority of teachers do not use enough open-ended questions to probe pupils' understanding and prompt them to elaborate on their answers.

In a few lessons, pupils make strong progress in their skills and subject understanding. In these lessons, teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can do, along with their use of the Welsh language. There is imaginative planning that engages pupils' interest, offers a high level of challenge and stimulating resources to support independent learning. Teachers ask pupils probing questions which encourage them to elaborate further on their ideas.

A majority of teachers provide useful written feedback on pupils' work. They present useful success criteria to ensure that pupils understand the requirements of specific tasks and provide subsequent opportunities for them to improve their work. A majority of pupils respond beneficially to these. In a minority of cases, feedback is too general or overly complimentary.

In a majority of lessons, pupils demonstrate fairly positive attitudes to learning. Many listen respectfully to their teachers, follow instructions and work well with others in groups or pairs. In a minority of cases, mainly as a result of shortcomings in teaching, a lack of perseverance and interest is evident. In a few lessons, there is poor behaviour that disrupts learning. A few pupils also arrive late for their lessons or wander the corridors. In a few lessons, teachers' high expectations and positive encouragement mean that nearly all pupils use the Welsh language during discussions. However, in many lessons, pupils do not use the language when talking and discussing.

In the sixth form, pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They are mature and discuss complex ideas with each other beneficially while also working independently successfully. In many cases, they make good progress. In a few lessons, however, activities are too simple and do not provide enough of a challenge for pupils.

## **Curriculum**

The school has worked appropriately with its partner primary schools to create a vision for their curriculum. This is based on pride in being a Cardiff citizen. In the departments where planning is at its best, there are engaging learning experiences that give pupils an opportunity to develop as informed citizens. However, curriculum planning is not always coherent enough to ensure that pupils are given opportunities to foster their independence and apply their understanding.

The school provides a wide range of courses in Year 10 and 11, including a variety of opportunities to study vocational courses such as construction, engineering and hairdressing. The school also has purposeful alternative provision for pupils who need it, including childcare and cooking. In the sixth form, the school works effectively with the city's Welsh-medium schools to ensure a comprehensive offer of general and vocational courses.

Leaders make good use of pupil questionnaires to plan a suitable programme of activities to develop healthy attitudes towards health and well-being. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on their personal, emotional and social development, for example through the 'Llun Llafar' scheme. However, provision for personal and social development in Year 10 and Year 11 is not coherent enough.

Many pupils make good progress when using their physical skills in physical education lessons and others such as hairdressing and gardening. The school's extra-curricular sports provision is rich and provides valuable opportunities, and a good number of pupils taking advantage. The school's sports teams have experienced national success in several areas.

The school provides a host of valuable extra-curricular opportunities. There are engaging opportunities to develop creative and leadership skills, for example by taking part in a production of 'Swyn y Gân' and inspiring opportunities to enter international competitions. There are also useful opportunities for foreign and local trips, for example a trip for Year 7 and Year 6 from the catchment area to Llangrannog as part of the transition scheme.

The school provides valuable experiences to develop pupils' understanding of diversity and prejudice. As a result, many pupils treat each other and adults with fairness and respect. There are suitable opportunities, such as the Year 9 work programme relating to 'Tafwyl' within the curriculum, to promote Welshness.

### **Literacy**

In general, pupils do not make strong enough progress in their literacy skills.

### **Oracy**

A few pupils have a very good grasp of the Welsh language and express themselves sophisticatedly. They convey their ideas clearly and provide extended answers with suitable syntax. Many pupils listen suitably and a majority answer simple questions appropriately. A majority of pupils have a suitable grasp of subject-specific vocabulary. A few pupils do not listen carefully enough during lessons and a few pupils are reluctant to contribute orally. Many pupils' vocabulary is not extensive enough and they struggle to convey ideas in Welsh and respond to teachers and assistants in English.

Recently, the school has prioritised developing pupils' oral skills. They have introduced a few appropriate strategies to develop pupils' oracy, such as the weekly 'Llun Llafar' activity during the morning periods. However, these strategies have not had enough of an effect on pupils' oracy.

### **Reading**

Recently, leaders have introduced an appropriate whole-school strategy to strengthen provision to develop reading skills. Time is invested on a weekly basis for younger pupils to read individually or read a class novel together during the morning sessions to create a culture of reading for pleasure.

When they are given an opportunity to do so, many pupils extract facts and information from basic texts suitably across the subjects. Most pupils succeed in identifying style features correctly. A majority of pupils read aloud appropriately, but a significant number of pupils stumble over unfamiliar words. When they are given an opportunity to do so, many pupils respond appropriately to tasks summarising information, for example summarising facts about the life of E. Jenner or the poet Dylan Thomas. However, there are few opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop their higher-order reading skills.

A few pupils write with a high level of accuracy and use sophisticated vocabulary and very accurate syntax. For example, in their English lessons, they write very engaging informal letters about their aspirations for the future. A majority of pupils write fairly fluently and accurately. However, a minority of pupils write with awkward syntax. They make frequent grammatical and spelling errors in their work and mutate incorrectly. In subjects across the curriculum, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop extended writing skills.

Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with weak literacy skills are appropriate. In many cases, these pupils make suitable progress from their starting points following relevant interventions.

In relevant subjects, the school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills. Leaders have worked together productively to ensure that many opportunities enrich learning in the subject and develop pupils' numeracy skills. They have identified pupils' lack of numerical fluency as an obstacle to their development and have put a beneficial plan in place to address this aspect.

A few pupils have strong numeracy skills. For example, they solve more complex problems such as creating quadratic equations from situations and then solving them successfully. However, a few pupils have weak number skills. In addition, provision does not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving skills and their mathematical reasoning.

A majority of pupils demonstrate a firm grasp of number concepts. For example, they have a suitable understanding of the concept of ratio and apply it successfully to calculate distances on a map and to divide money into a specific ratio. More able pupils apply their understanding of standard form confidently.

Many pupils analyse data suitably. They calculate measures of average for sets of data and consider the effect of adding data on the different measures. They draw a variety of graphs correctly and, when there are opportunities to do so, they are able to analyse their graphs to draw sensible conclusions.

Across the curriculum, there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their digital production skills. As a result, in general, pupils make suitable progress in developing these skills. For example, pupils use a variety of software to present information. However, the school's work to provide opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to apply their advanced digital skills is underdeveloped.

### **Well-being, care, support and guidance**

Ysgol Gyfun Bro Edern is a welcoming, supportive and close-knit learning community that prides itself on promoting the well-being and happiness of all pupils. Staff know the pupils well. They are extremely dedicated and work diligently to meet the needs of many of the pupils. Pupils take pride in the support they receive and appreciate that the adults at the school take care of them. Most pupils feel safe when working and socialising.

The school supports pupils' well-being successfully through the intelligent provision and caring staff in 'Y Porth', 'Yr Hafan' and the 'Cwtsh'. They provide purposeful programmes that are tailored skilfully to pupils' specific needs. Timely co-operation with families and other agencies reinforces support and, over time, encourages pupils to re-engage with their learning successfully.

A successful feature of the school's work is the provision to support pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). Leaders have established robust arrangements for monitoring and tracking pupils' well-being and progress. As a result, they identify pupils who need further support at an early stage and provide purposeful support programmes that meet their needs well. The school works appropriately with external agencies, such as the educational psychology service and specialist teachers, as necessary. The school has established a close working relationship with the parents of these pupils. Parents and pupils are an important part of the arrangements for reviewing progress and agreeing on the next steps in learning. Over time, many pupils with ALN make appropriate progress from their starting points in their literacy and numeracy skills, with most making sound progress in their well-being.

Leaders have established appropriate arrangements for promoting pupils' behaviour. This includes 'Cadwyn a Chamau Ymddygiad Bro Edern', which focuses on positive behaviour rather than punishment. Many of the staff implement the guidelines clearly and consistently and, as a result, many pupils behave well in their lessons and around the school. However, a few teachers do not follow the procedures firmly enough and, in these cases, the negative attitudes of a few pupils limit the progress they make in the classroom.

The school has robust arrangements to promote attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance, including those who are eligible for free school meals and those who are

persistently absent, has improved steadily. However, the school's attendance rates remain significantly lower than before the pandemic.

Staff provide a good range of appropriate opportunities for pupils to undertake responsibilities and lead on important aspects of the school's work. They take their roles seriously and develop valuable skills, such as co-operation, planning and persistence. For example, pupils who are on the 'Tafodiaid Tanbaid' group work with the local primary schools and promote the oral Welsh skills of Year 2 pupils through an art project that includes the context of the history of St Dwynwen. Overall, the school promotes moral, social and spiritual development appropriately.

Purposeful co-operation with partner primary schools ensures that robust transition processes support pupils as they transfer to the school and this helps them to feel at home and settle well. Through a range of means, including open evenings and the support of learning coaches, the school provides pupils with appropriate guidance and support to choose subjects and the next steps in their development.

Recently, with the support of the local authority, the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils have been strengthened considerably. Leaders and staff now promote a culture of safeguarding purposefully.

### **Leading and improving**

The headteacher is a thoughtful leader and the inclusion and well-being of pupils and staff are at the heart of his vision. The vision includes providing extensive opportunities for pupils to learn and enjoy through the medium of Welsh. This vision is embraced by the governors, the senior leadership team and staff. Although leadership has had a positive effect on care and guidance for pupils, it has not had enough of an effect on important areas of the school's work, such as the quality of teaching and provision for skills, including pupils' Welsh language skills.

The headteacher and governors have planned carefully to avoid a deficit in the budget. They have been creative in terms of solutions to staffing challenges and have revised staffing arrangements appropriately. In general, the temporary responsibilities of the senior leadership team have been allocated sensibly. Most middle leaders appreciate the support they receive from a link member of the senior leadership team and their open-door policy. Overall, they understand many aspects of their roles appropriately.

The school has a useful calendar of self-evaluation and planning for improvement activities. Leaders at all levels participate fully in a wide range of self-evaluation activities, including lesson observations and learning walks, scrutinising pupils' work and seeking pupils' views. The main findings from these activities are shared with staff and they are given suitable feedback on how they could improve their practice.

Pastoral leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas that are in need of improvement. Curriculum leaders at all levels have a suitable understanding of the main strengths and areas for improvement within their areas of responsibility. However, leaders at all levels do not give enough consideration to the effect of provision on pupils' progress and skills. The evaluations of a majority of these leaders are too generous and do not identify specifically enough the exact elements of teaching and learning that need to be improved.

Leaders make some use of data in planning improvement. However, not all leaders make full use of all of the data sources available to them. They do not prioritise the main issues that would have the greatest effect on pupils' progress incisively enough. As a result, improvement processes do not focus sufficiently on improving important aspects of teaching.

There is an appropriate link between the school's priorities and performance management processes. These processes include beneficial opportunities for staff to discuss their development aspirations and the professional learning necessary to achieve the aims. The school has a comprehensive programme of professional learning activities which link appropriately with the development aims of the school and individual staff. This includes beneficial opportunities to share good practices in the morning 'Pain au Chocolat' sessions. However, as leaders do not identify the exact aspects of provision that need to be improved, the professional learning programme does not target these aspects specifically enough. Professional learning has also not had enough of an effect on leaders' skills in evaluating teaching and learning.

Line management meetings provide appropriate opportunities to discuss issues which include pupils' outcomes, findings from self-evaluation activities and departmental priorities. These meetings, in addition to those with the mentor for new heads of department, provide suitable support for middle managers. However, they are not equipped sufficiently to understand how to evaluate the work of their departments.

Leaders respond to some national priorities appropriately, such as mitigating the effect of poverty, developing Curriculum for Wales and supporting pupils with ALN. However, there has not been enough emphasis on strategic planning to develop literacy skills or the use of the Welsh language by pupils.

Well-being provision at 'Y Porth' is a particular strength and leaders' sound knowledge of the pupils and their families ensures timely support in terms of providing school uniform and support with the cost of extra-curricular activities, where necessary.

In general, leaders spend the school's funding sensibly. The pupil development grant is spent suitably, but leaders do not evaluate the effect of this expenditure on pupils' progress in sufficient detail.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They provide a high level of support and appropriate challenge on some important issues, including avoiding a budget deficit.

Governors understand their responsibilities in terms of promoting healthy eating and drinking at the school. However, over time, governors have not challenged sufficiently on some important issues, such as the quality of teaching and pupils' use of the Welsh language.

### **Additional information**

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for site management do not give any 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:

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