

A report on
Valley Community School

Valley
Anglesey
LL65 3EU

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Valley Community School

Name of provider	Valley Community School
Local authority	Anglesey County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	114
Pupils of statutory school age	92
Number in nursery classes	11
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>)	22.1%
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>)	14.1%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	45.7%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2018

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	16/10/2017
Start date of inspection	09/06/2025

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

The headteacher provides robust leadership which sets an effective direction for the school's development. The headteacher's vision is supported by a team of dedicated staff who are an integral part of an inclusive and supportive learning community. The governing body demonstrates a firm commitment to the school's activity, and contributes skilfully to informing its work by offering constructive support and challenge. Leaders have an understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need to be developed further. However, self-evaluation processes are not sharp enough to focus in sufficient detail on the effect of teaching on learning.

Staff provide a curriculum that is rooted effectively in the school's local context which fosters its close relationship with the local community. Pupils show real pride in their local area. The school is committed fully to the community council's support initiatives, which play a key role in fostering pupils' strong pride in their community.

Staff plan rich and inspiring learning activities. Across the school, most pupils make sound progress in their skills, particularly in their numeracy and digital skills. However, staff's feedback does not always provide enough of a challenge to support pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.

Staff build positive relationships with pupils, prioritising their wellbeing on a daily basis. They respond sensitively to individual needs, by building on sound knowledge of pupils' backgrounds and needs. Teachers and assistants provide a stimulating and engaging learning environment that promotes pupils' personal and social development beneficially. As a result, almost all pupils show enthusiastic attitudes towards their learning. Pupils feel safe, happy and confident that staff listen to them. Through this, the behaviour of almost all pupils across the school is excellent.

Recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve

- R1. Refine self-evaluation processes to focus in detail on the effect of teaching on pupils' progress and standards
- R2. Ensure that feedback provides a challenge for pupils to achieve to the best of their ability consistently

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Valley Community School is a caring, inclusive and happy community that supports the emotional, health and social needs of almost all pupils effectively. The headteacher provides robust and balanced leadership and demonstrates a strong commitment to the wellbeing of pupils and staff. The headteacher is supported by a team of dedicated staff who work together diligently to ensure stimulating experiences that encourage pupils to learn and foster their innate curiosity successfully. As a result of the supportive working relationship that exists between staff and pupils, almost all pupils behave politely and respectfully and participate positively in activities, showing consistent interest in their learning.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths as well as the priorities for improvement. They offer an effective combination of support and accountability to staff, by contributing to purposeful self-evaluation processes through scrutiny activities and regular visits, and identify the strengths and opportunities for improvement purposefully. However, the self-evaluation processes are not sharp enough to focus in sufficient detail on the effect of teaching on pupils' progress and standards.

Teachers plan an engaging and stimulating curriculum that covers the areas of learning successfully. They offer purposeful opportunities for pupils to share their ideas and contribute to what they would like to learn within their themes. Teachers interweave the 'small projects' skilfully, which link with pupils' experiences within their community and beyond purposefully. In doing so, pupils develop into responsible and ethical citizens who demonstrate care and respect for their community and their environment.

Spotlight 1: A relevant curriculum that reflects the area

The school has taken clear steps to ensure that the curriculum embeds learning experiences in the pupils' local context. Through purposeful planning by staff, pupils participate in creative activities to learn more about the community in which they live. Following a tour of the island, pupils plan, write and send correspondence to local politicians expressing concern about public facilities on Anglesey. This has resulted in a visit by the local Member of Parliament to the school, a visit by pupils to the local council chamber and to the Westminster Parliament.

As a result, this method of learning gives purposeful meaning to pupils' learning, fostering their links with the community and raising awareness of their place within wider society. Through these opportunities, pupils respond enthusiastically and curiously to their learning, by developing their skills robustly, particularly their oral, numeracy, and personal and social skills. This provision lays a solid foundation that supports pupils to enjoy their learning and make progress.

Across the school, teachers create a learning environment that is planned purposefully to support stimulating learning and teaching. They use attractive and purposeful resources, and offer relevant learning experiences that are linked to real experiences, making the learning more meaningful for pupils.

Teachers design purposeful learning activities that encourage most pupils to participate enthusiastically in their learning. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop and improve their literacy, numeracy, digital and creative skills in a comprehensive and effective manner. This contributes consistently to positive progress in their skills, including pupils who receive free school meals and those affected by poverty. Most of the older pupils develop their numeracy skills effectively in a variety of contexts across the curriculum.

Staff offer support that is tailored carefully to promote the development of pupils' literacy skills. Pupils listen attentively to adults' instructions and each other's contributions, and many of the older pupils discuss and converse confidently with their peers and adults. Through this, most pupils develop their oral and listening skills well. In general, they begin to show improvement by reviewing and resubmitting their texts, and this contributes to appropriate progress in their Welsh and English writing skills.

Teachers use purposeful questioning and timely encouragement to promote pupils' understanding and support their progress. They give oral feedback promptly which helps pupils identify their strengths. In the most effective practices, the feedback that is offered to pupils leads them to identify the next steps in their learning effectively. However, staff's feedback does not always support pupils to improve certain aspects of their work. As a result, pupils do not always achieve to the best of their ability at all times.

One of the school's strongest features is the opportunities that staff provide to pupils to use a range of digital tools confidently, while enriching their learning. Through this, almost all pupils' digital skills develop robustly. Where teaching is at its best, staff provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills, in pairs and in small groups. As a result, pupils use and apply their skills skilfully in a good range of activities across the areas of learning.

Dedicated assistants contribute fully to the life and work of the school and make effective use of their expertise to enrich the breadth of pupils' experiences. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to take part in catering sessions which include cooking a roast lunch by using ingredients from the school's garden. As a result, this provides valuable opportunities for pupils to develop key life skills and be self-sufficient.

Most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make strong progress from their starting points. The emphasis placed on discussions with parents, as well as monitoring pupils'

progress, contributes successfully to ensuring a consistent and up-to-date picture of their needs.

Leaders offer staff relevant professional learning opportunities to support their development which links to the school's improvement priorities purposefully. This has a positive effect on curricular developments and on teaching.

Staff provide effective wellbeing support to pupils, which includes a 'chat sofa', to provide purposeful support for pupils' personal and social development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is promoted effectively. In addition, they learn and appreciate different beliefs, and show tolerance and fair consideration for other people's views beneficially.

The school fosters strong links with parents in order to share information between the home and the school regularly.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are not a cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for the 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, 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, listen to them read 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).