

A report on

Ysgol Y Faenol

**John's Drive
Bodelwyddan
Nr. Rhyl
Sir Ddinbych
LL18 5TG**

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 Ysgol Y Faenol

Name of provider	Ysgol Y Faenol
Local authority	Denbighshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	English Medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	144
Pupils of statutory school age	111
Number in nursery classes	10
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 22.9%)	23.8%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 11.1%)	10.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	4.5%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	12.6%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2008

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	02/10/2017
Start date of inspection	23/06/2025

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to 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 has high expectations of staff and pupils and leads by example. Leaders have a clear vision that is shared by staff, pupils and governors that focuses on the well-being and progress of all pupils. Staff foster a nurturing, inclusive environment where pupils feel safe and valued. They maintain strong working relationships with pupils and their families, ensuring a supportive community that contributes successfully to pupils' confidence and eagerness to learn. Most pupils make good progress from their individual starting points, including those pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those from low-income households.

Most learning activities meet pupils' needs well. Over time, staff have developed a broad and stimulating curriculum centred around creativity and developing pupils' skills. They provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they acquire to their work across the curriculum. This includes valuable opportunities for the youngest pupils to develop a range of skills appropriately through play-based activities. Across the school, teachers use feedback effectively to support pupils to improve their work during lessons and to prepare them as they move to their next stage of learning. The school's provision for pupils with ALN is a strength. Staff consider the needs of pupils carefully and make any necessary changes to classrooms and learning to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.

Visitors provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about the world beyond the classroom. Pupils participate in beneficial enterprise projects, although links to the local community are less developed.

Leaders have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher places a strong emphasis on professional learning, which in turn assists staff to contribute effectively to the school improvement process. Leaders place a high priority on attendance and work with families to ensure their children attend school regularly.

Recommendations

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

R1. Further develop links with the local community

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Ysgol Y Faenol is a caring and friendly community, with a vibrant and exciting learning environment. Leaders set and communicate high expectations. Staff work together well as a team to promote the school's core values such as resilience, curiosity and creativity. As a result, most pupils are motivated and make good progress from their individual starting points.

The school's structured approach to teaching literacy supports pupils to develop literacy skills well. Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in work across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils make strong progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. Teachers plan exciting opportunities for pupils use books to stimulate discussions and provide interesting reading materials that inspires pupils to read. This strong reading culture supports nearly all pupils make good progress in reading. By Year 6, most pupils write confidently across a range of genres with increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and punctuation. Younger pupils use simple Welsh vocabulary appropriately, for example relating to food, numbers and dates. Many older pupils ask and answer simple questions with increasing confidence.

Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical understanding and vocabulary. Most pupils make good progress and confidently move from using practical resources and visual methods to working independently with numbers and symbols. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to use their understanding of mathematical concepts to solve problems and to apply their numeracy skills in their work across the curriculum.

Most pupils confidently use digital applications to support their learning suitably. They apply their skills appropriately to communicate, research, and present information. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of internet safety, which enables them to use technology responsibly.

The curriculum provides many valuable opportunities for pupils to engage enthusiastically with the arts and to make connections between Wales and other cultures. Visitors provide suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about the world beyond the classroom. Pupils participate in beneficial enterprise projects, although opportunities to learn about local businesses are limited.

Nearly all pupils feel inspired by the curriculum and connect well with their learning.

Spotlight: Fostering independence and curiosity through enquiry-led learning

The curriculum is thoughtfully designed. It has a strong focus on developing pupils' skills and places a strong emphasis on nurturing curiosity and a love of learning in all pupils. Learning activities provide ample opportunities for pupils to develop wider skills such as problem-solving, resilience, and emotional intelligence, ensuring that pupils are personally empowered. By engaging pupils in meaningful, enquiry-led learning experiences, the curriculum fosters independence, critical thinking, and adaptability. This approach equips learners with the tools they need to navigate an ever-changing world and supports their growth as confident, lifelong learners

The school promotes well-being effectively and nurtures positive attitudes to learning. Staff promote positive behaviour and equip pupils with the vocabulary and strategies to manage their emotions, ensuring that nearly all behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of justice and high levels of care for their school and each other. The school's provision for developing pupil spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills is effective. Class and school assembly provides valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on issues such as their own values and beliefs and how these might affect their daily lives. Positive working relationships lead to a respectful environment. Nearly all pupils collaborate well with each other.

The school provides tailored support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), strengthened by valuable links with external agencies. Staff plan effective activities for pupils in lessons, while teaching assistants deliver targeted programmes skilfully to accelerate progress in literacy and numeracy, and to support pupils' well-being. Because of this, most pupils with ALN, make good progress from their individual starting points.

In nearly all lessons, staff use effective questioning to check for understanding and to encourage pupils to extend their ideas. The pace of lessons is generally good, and this contributes to sustained pupil engagement and progress. In most cases, activities meet the needs of pupils well and they receive an appropriate level of support and challenge. Teachers use feedback effectively to support pupils to improve their work during lessons and to prepare them as they move to their next stage of learning. Teachers plan meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop independence in their learning. In the best examples, teachers carefully consider the resources and learning environment. For example, staff provide valuable opportunities for the youngest pupils to develop a range of skills through independent play. Staff observe learning skilfully and enhance opportunities for learning through highly effective intervention.

The headteacher's passionate and effective leadership helps drive continuous improvement. She is highly knowledgeable in educational research and actively instils this ethos in others.

Spotlight: Empowering leadership for a culture of continuous professional learning

The headteacher actively promotes adaptive leadership across the school, creating a culture where all staff feel empowered to take part in research-based, high-quality professional learning. By encouraging collaborative enquiry and reflective practice, the headteacher ensures that professional development opportunities are responsive to both staff needs and the learning needs of the pupils. This inclusive approach supports continuous improvement and innovation, fostering a learning community where all staff are equipped to deliver impactful teaching. As a result, all learners make good progress from their different starting points

The school's improvement priorities develop through ongoing self-evaluation and a clear focus on pupils' needs. Overall, leaders identify the most important areas for improvement and review progress effectively. Leaders address national priorities well, for example by working with the cluster to share and learn good practice in high-quality teaching and learning and implementing ALN reforms. There are many clear links over time between school priorities, tailored professional learning, and the positive impact on pupil progress.

Governors have a clear and insightful understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Their broad range of experience and skills strengthens decision-making and ensures they provide well-informed support and challenge to school leaders. Pupil voice groups actively support the school's work and help pupils develop useful leadership skills. This enables most older pupils to use their voice positively to promote issues that they care about.

Staff build strong partnerships with parents. Parents value regular updates and feel confident approaching the school with concerns. These supportive relationships enable parents to play an active role in their child's learning. The leaders place a high priority on attendance and work with families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. A notable success is the significant rise in the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals.

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 finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body 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 and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to 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 classes, including learning support groups 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 and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- 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 makes references 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 (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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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