

A report on

Ysgol Pen-y-bryn

**Bethesda
Gwynedd
LL57 3BE**

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 Pen-y-bryn

Name of provider	Ysgol Pen-y-bryn
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	117
Pupils of statutory school age	117
Number in nursery classes	
Percentage of statutory school age 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 the primary sector is 22.9%)	19.6%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 11.1%)	18.8%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	65.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/02/2018

Start date of inspection	16/06/2025
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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

Ysgol Pen-y-bryn provides a broad and stimulating curriculum that deepens pupils' understanding and promotes their appreciation of their heritage successfully and encourages them to look to the future confidently. Staff share a clear vision to foster principled and enterprising citizens who are proud of their community and the Welsh language. Teachers plan meaningful activities that foster cross-curricular skills and reflect history, culture and the Welsh language successfully. They make the most of resources in the local area to enrich pupils' education, such as inviting experts to the school and visiting relevant educational sites. Through this, pupils develop a thorough understanding of their local area as a means of having a wider influence on their lives.

Most pupils make sound progress in literacy, numeracy and digital skills. By the end of their time at the school, they communicate confidently in Welsh and English, read texts independently and write creatively. Teachers incorporate purposeful entrepreneurship opportunities into the curriculum as a means of developing pupils' skills meaningfully and creating further practical links with the local community.

Teachers use effective teaching methods that encourage pupils to think and work together successfully. They question pupils skilfully and offer them constructive feedback which, in turn, leads to continuous progress for most pupils. The pace of teaching is suitable, on the whole, but at times staff over-direct pupils which slows the learning and limits opportunities for them to work independently and achieve to the best of their ability.

Staff promote pupils' care and well-being extremely effectively. They forge a positive working relationships with pupils, which supports learning successfully. This contributes effectively to the positive behaviour of most pupils and fosters healthy attitudes to learning.

The governing body provides relevant support and challenge to leaders in a constructive manner. The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are robust, but leaders do not always ensure that self-evaluation procedures are as thorough across the whole federation.

Recommendations

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

- R1. Ensure a suitable pace in all learning sessions to strengthen pupils' independent learning skills further
- R2. Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning procedures across the federation

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Staff work together successfully to develop a broad and stimulating curriculum for pupils, which celebrates the area's unique heritage, in addition to providing purposeful opportunities for them to aim for their future aspirations. Staff share the headteacher's passionate vision to develop pupils to become principled citizens who are proud of their community and the Welsh language. Through this, valuable opportunities are provided for pupils to try initiatives in their local area and beyond. As a result, pupils uphold the school's motto: 'Gorau addysg, cael gwreiddiau', successfully.

In nearly all learning sessions, staff provide valuable opportunities and experiences for pupils to develop their skills purposefully in interesting learning activities. Teachers plan provision skilfully to ensure that the activities are current and relevant, while reflecting the historical, cultural and linguistic roots of the local area. They make the most of inviting visitors, such as local bards and historians, to the school to support pupils' learning and provide regular visits for them in the local area. As a result, pupils appreciate the history and culture of their community and its wider global influence successfully, which contributes purposefully to their understanding of belonging to their community, of which the Welsh language is a key part.

Most pupils make sound progress in their literacy, numeracy and digital skills, including pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are affected by poverty. As they move through the school, they listen to the views of others respectfully and respond appropriately to the contributions of their peers. At the top of the school, most pupils communicate effectively in Welsh and English and discuss their learning enthusiastically. Many pupils' reading skills develop well, which enables them to research information and concepts skilfully across the areas of learning. Many develop their reading skills successfully, which motivates them to become confident readers and to enjoy a variety of texts independently. Many pupils have sound writing skills and the oldest pupils choose to present their work in a variety of interesting genres by using mature language.

Most pupils' mathematics and numeracy skills develop successfully. Teachers develop pupils' skills skilfully through regular entrepreneurship activities.

Spotlight: Developing pupils' skills, confidence and aspirations through an entrepreneurship project

Teachers plan a range of beneficial and rich activities to support pupils in developing their financial literacy skills, as well as wider skills such as literacy and digital skills. They provide opportunities for pupils to work together in an enterprising manner and to develop their own enterprise during the year by developing an awareness of the basics of running a business, for example profit and loss. Throughout the year, pupils discuss how to improve their enterprise further, develop their product and create an effective marketing campaign. They do their best to increase the profit through a cycle of continuous investment, improvement and reinvesting the profit. They invite local businesses to the school to set a real, local context for them in developing their ideas further. As a result, pupils apply their skills successfully and develop a sound awareness of the local economy and how it is possible to live, work and succeed in their local community.

Teachers use a range of purposeful teaching methods that support pupils to identify what they do well and what needs to be improved in their learning. Pupils across the school set their own learning objectives confidently and, as a result, they are aware of how to check their work before presenting it as complete. Teachers question pupils skilfully and ask questions that encourage pupils to think deeply and work with their peers to succeed. Many pupils respond positively to teachers' feedback and move to the next step in their learning effectively. Overall, the pace of teaching is suitable. However, on a few occasions, adults over-direct pupils which, in turn, slows the learning and limits opportunities for them to work independently and achieve to the best of their ability.

Teachers and assistants promote pupils' well-being extremely effectively, which contributes purposefully to supporting pupils to enjoy their learning. They foster a positive and supportive working relationships with pupils which contributes purposefully to their ability to know the pupils and their families well to support them to develop positive attitudes to learning and make progress in their skills. As a result, nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave exceptionally well in their learning and play.

The ALN co-ordinators work effectively across the federation to identify and act on pupils' needs promptly. They have a successful relationship with a wide range of external professional partners. These help to strengthen provision and provide valuable advice and guidance to staff and parents. Teachers and co-ordinators show a sound understanding of pupils' needs, interests and progress. This contributes beneficially to provision and pupils with ALN benefit from purposeful support. This, in turn, supports most pupils to make good progress. Leaders have effective arrangements across the federation to support pupils to transfer from one class to another, as well as to the secondary school.

Pupil's voice groups enable pupils to represent their peers and work together diligently to influence the life and work of the school. Members of the groups fulfil their responsibilities skilfully and develop leadership skills by managing and leading whole-school projects.

The headteacher is supported by a dedicated and enthusiastic team of staff who share his passion for pupils' well-being and the need to support all pupils to succeed. Staff at both schools within the federation work together successfully on many aspects to promote pupils' skills and provide them with an exciting and stimulating curriculum. Leaders ensure that staff take advantage of valuable professional learning opportunities which contribute successfully to raising pupils' standards across the federation.

The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are robust. Leaders and staff conduct an appropriate range of monitoring and quality assurance activities which identify strengths and areas for improvement accurately. However, leaders do not always ensure that self-evaluation procedures are robust enough across the federation to identify the improvement priorities effectively enough. As a result, provision does not always support pupils to make consistent progress in their skills.

Governors have a sound understanding of their responsibilities in supporting leaders to lead and ensuring the consistent running of the federation. They visit the schools regularly and organise beneficial monitoring activities to improve their knowledge of the schools. They scrutinise work and talk to pupils, concentrating on a specific focus of the curriculum and supporting leaders consistently. They have a good awareness of aspects of pupils' learning, for example the progress in their oral skills.

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 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 (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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