

A report on

Ysgol Yr Hafod

**Bangor Road
Johnstown
Wrexham
LL14 2TB**

Date of inspection: September 2025

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Yr Hafod

Name of provider	Ysgol Yr Hafod
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	337
Pupils of statutory school age	246
Number in nursery classes	51
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%)	25.9%
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%)	6.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.8%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	
Date of headteacher appointment	06/11/2017

A report on Ysgol Yr Hafod
September 2025

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	08/11/2016
Start date of inspection	22/09/2025

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

At Ysgol yr Hafod Primary School, pupils feel safe, happy and ready to learn. The school nurtures curiosity and supports independence effectively, which creates a positive climate for learning. Well-designed environments and purposeful independent learning opportunities, such as 'over to you time' and 'amser sialens,' encourage pupils to explore, think creatively and work cooperatively. These experiences help pupils to become confident, resilient learners who behave well and show respect for others.

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership that promotes high expectations and positive partnerships among staff, parents and pupils. Leaders use what they learn about the school's strengths and areas for improvement to improve teaching and support pupils' progress. Governors know the school well and provide valuable support and challenge to help leaders improve provision and outcomes for pupils.

Teachers benefit from well-planned professional development that helps them improve their practice and promote pupils' well-being. They generally plan learning experiences that engage pupils well. Most teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding. This enables most pupils to build on what they know and make good progress. Occasionally, a few pupils do not make the progress they could, because tasks do not match their needs closely enough.

Most pupils speak clearly and listen carefully, and older pupils talk confidently about their learning. They enjoy reading and use a range of strategies to understand texts. As they move through the school, most become confident readers, speakers and writers.

The school is developing useful approaches to help pupils reflect thoughtfully on their progress, although this is not yet consistent across the school.

Most pupils develop secure mathematical skills and knowledge. They use practical resources well to support their understanding and apply their skills effectively to solve problems. This enables them to deepen their mathematical thinking.

The school provides strong support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). Staff identify their needs at an early stage and ensure that most make good progress with their learning and well-being. Pupils in the Resource Provision Unit (RPU) benefit from a caring ethos and feel valued, supported and fully included in school life.

Recommendations

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

- R1. Ensure that learning experiences provide the right level of challenge to meet the differing needs of pupils
- R2. Improve the quality and consistency of feedback to pupils so that they understand the next steps to move their learning forward

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

At Ysgol Yr Hafod Primary School, pupils feel safe and happy in an engaging environment that nurtures curiosity and confidence. Leaders and staff develop engaging learning environments that contribute well to pupils' development as independent learners.

The headteacher helps to ensure effective leadership. She uses her professional expertise to support staff to plan lessons and activities that nurture pupils' curiosity and encourage them to learn through independent exploration. Staff work effectively with pupils and parents to create a culture of ambition and high expectations. This supports most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) or those affected by poverty, to make good progress from their starting points.

Most pupils communicate effectively. They listen attentively and speak clearly, often using precise vocabulary that staff model well. Younger pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds successfully to read independently. As they move through the school, teachers provide purposeful opportunities for older pupils to read for research and to discuss the meaning of texts and make predictions. This enables most pupils across the school to read fluently and with a secure understanding of what they read.

Teachers use helpful strategies such as shared writing and 'hot seating' to develop pupils' confidence as writers. Most older pupils use the features of specific genres correctly and apply these in their wider learning effectively. However, opportunities for older pupils to write imaginatively and to use feedback from teachers to enhance their writing are less well developed.

Staff collaborate well to establish a shared understanding of progression in mathematics. Across the school, pupils use a wide range of practical and visual resources that support their learning. This helps most pupils to develop a secure grasp of key concepts, manipulate numbers confidently and calculate accurately. Most older pupils apply these skills effectively to solve problems linked to topic work and show good financial literacy. A few older pupils use self and peer assessment in mathematics effectively to explain their methods and identify errors. However, feedback is not consistent across year groups, which limits pupils' understanding of how to improve and reduces opportunities for challenge.

Most pupils use digital applications with confidence to support their learning. Staff plan worthwhile opportunities that develop a broad range of digital skills, and pupils apply these effectively across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of internet safety, which enables them to use technology safely.

Teachers develop pupils' knowledge of their local environment and Welsh identity well. They use local history and geography to strengthen pupils' understanding of Cynefin and how their area and Wales have changed over time. Staff use incidental Welsh effectively, which supports pupils to develop their language skills. Nearly all younger pupils use simple Welsh phrases appropriately, and most older pupils use a widening vocabulary and a wide variety of sentence patterns.

Spotlight: Purposeful learning opportunities that foster independence and creativity

Across the school, pupils are highly motivated by regular opportunities to follow their interests. During 'over to you time' and 'amser sialens' sessions, they explore, question and create with enthusiasm. Younger pupils use Block Play independently to design a tram and cable car for the Great Orme, while older pupils act out story characters using props to explore how actions and expressions show feelings. Staff observe carefully and intervene skilfully through questioning, modelling and adapting the environment to extend learning. These experiences help most pupils develop confidence, independence and the ability to reflect thoughtfully on their learning.

Teachers plan purposefully to help pupils explore social and moral issues and to develop values such as empathy, honesty and fairness. This enables many pupils to show an awareness of diversity in beliefs and to feel a secure sense of belonging within the school community.

Most teachers make effective use of clear learning intentions and success criteria to guide pupils in their learning. In the best instances, they use questioning and timely check-ins to assess pupils' understanding and to monitor their progress closely. This enables them to address misconceptions quickly. Teachers generally plan learning experiences that build on pupils' previous learning appropriately. However, they do not always provide the right level of support or challenge to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. This means that a few pupils either struggle to engage with tasks successfully or complete work that does not stretch them sufficiently.

The school's inclusive ethos, clear communication and well-managed processes help to remove barriers to learning and promote pupils' well-being. Nearly all pupils feel listened to and valued, and pupil leadership groups promote pride in their school. Teachers and teaching assistants build warm and supportive relationships with pupils. These features create a positive and purposeful atmosphere across the school, where nearly all pupils behave well and cooperate effectively.

Leaders build effective partnerships with parents and the wider community, which fosters open communication and trust. They prioritise safeguarding, and staff, visitors and pupils

promote a strong safeguarding culture across the school. The school provides effective transition with local secondary schools, including on-going support for former pupils. This ensures continuity in learning and supports pupils' emotional well-being during the transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

Leaders monitor attendance closely and use their positive relationships with families to promote regular attendance. Although many aspects of attendance are improving, rates of persistent absence remain too high.

The school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is a notable strength. A well-embedded graduated response identifies pupils' needs early and helps most pupils with ALN to make effective progress in their learning and well-being. The Resource Provision Unit (RPU) provides a supportive environment where staff use pupils' interests to engage them purposefully. Pupils learn and play alongside other classes, which helps them feel fully involved in school life.

Leaders distribute roles and responsibilities sensibly to meet pupils' needs and bring about improvements in the school's provision. They use the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) well to ensure equitable experiences and worthwhile intervention for pupils from low-income households. However, governors' understanding of the grant's purpose, use and impact on pupils eligible for free school meals is still developing, which limits their ability to evaluate its effectiveness fully.

The governing body is experienced and knows the school and its community well. This enables governors to provide support and challenge that strengthen the school's work in many aspects of school life.

Leaders draw on a broad range of evidence and use effective processes to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Overall, they accurately identify the most important priorities, plan purposeful actions to address these and review progress successfully. They address key national priorities effectively and continue to strengthen pupils' Welsh language skills.

Spotlight: Effective and innovative performance development procedures

The school's performance development processes are robust, innovative and adaptable. Staff value personalised goals that give them ownership of improving their professional practice. Leaders encourage staff to self-reflect. This helps to remove constraints and enables open, frank discussions that link clearly to the Professional Standards and school priorities. Leaders use professional learning time creatively. This enables teachers to collaborate effectively in teams, while also giving them opportunities to carry out individual research. These approaches foster teamwork and improve teaching, learning and pupils' well-being.

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:

Publications 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 (English to Welsh).

© Crown Copyright 2025: This report may be re used free of charge: (a) in any format or medium; and (b) may be translated by or on behalf of an education and/or training provider in respect of which this report relates into any language, in each case provided that it is re used and/or translated accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must, in each case (including in the case of a translation) be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 24/11/2025