

Report summary for parents and carers on Ysgol Aberconwy

Date of inspection: October 2025

This report is also available in Welsh.

Summary

Leaders and staff in Ysgol Aberconwy prioritise support and care for their pupils. They have established a caring community where diversity is celebrated, and mutual respect is encouraged. There is a positive safeguarding culture where most pupils feel safe when at school. Overall, there are positive relationships between staff and pupils, and many pupils behave well around school.

The quality of teaching is too variable, meaning that pupils make suitable progress in only around half of lessons. In these lessons, teachers have appropriate expectations, plan a range of engaging tasks and have helpful routines that support them to manage pupils' behaviour. However, in around half of lessons, teachers often plan undemanding tasks, have too low expectations of what pupils can achieve and do not challenge off task behaviour well enough. As a result, these pupils make limited progress. In addition, the impact of written and verbal feedback is too variable, particularly in improving pupils' literacy skills.

The school has changed its approach to curriculum in Years 7 to 9 and has worked to create meaningful links between subject areas. Although there are a few examples of effective learning experiences, overall subjects do not plan well enough for pupils to develop their subject knowledge and understanding. In addition, the school's provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is not planned or coordinated strategically enough. As a result, opportunities for pupils to apply or develop their skills alongside their subject understanding are frequently not challenging enough and do not support them to improve their skills, particularly their technical accuracy when writing.

At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum and provides pupils with beneficial support and guidance to help them to make informed choices about their future. Pupils in the sixth form enjoy being part of the school community. In general, they engage positively in lessons and work productively with one another. Overall, the school provides suitable support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).

The school's two learning resource bases provide a caring environment where pupils feel valued and safe. Social and emotional support for pupils in the Tegfan base are strong and the ABCD base provides helpful targeted support for its pupils to improve their literacy skills. However, the progress pupils make in the Tegfan base is too variable.

Although leaders have secured suitable improvements in the care, support and guidance for pupils, leadership at all levels has not had enough impact on a number of important areas, in particular the quality of teaching and learning, the progressive development of pupils' skills, and pupils' attendance. This is mostly due to the variation in leaders' ability to evaluate and plan for improvement and because senior leaders do not ensure that middle leaders are consistently effective in the way they carry out their roles. Despite the headteacher recently strengthening the senior leadership team, processes for accountability are not effective enough in driving improvements. Leaders have recently refined their processes for

improving pupils' attendance, but these are at an early stage. Rates of attendance, particularly for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals, remain an important area for improvement.

Recommendations and next steps

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

- R1. Ensure that leaders at all levels are held to account fully for securing improvement
- R2. Ensure that self-evaluation and improvement processes focus precisely on pupils' progress and skills development
- R3. Improve the quality and impact of teaching and feedback so that it supports all pupils to make strong progress
- R4. Improve pupils' attendance, in particular that of those eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs
- R5. Strengthen the co-ordination of the provision to support the progressive development of pupils' skills, and ensure a consistently robust approach to improving the technical accuracy of pupils' writing
- R6. Ensure that the curriculum consistently supports the development of pupils' subject knowledge and understanding

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 to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress usually every four to six months.

Full Report

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#)

© 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: 15/12/2025