

A report on
Ysgol Brynaerau

**Pontllyfni
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL54 5EU**

Date of inspection: November 2025

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Brynaerau

Name of provider	Ysgol Brynaerau
Local authority	Gwynedd Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	57
Pupils of statutory school age	46
Number in nursery classes	*
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 the primary sector is 22.9%)	16.1%
Percentage of 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%)	*
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	60.9%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	January 2016

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	11/03/2019
Start date of inspection	17/11/2025

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 Talaerau federation, which includes Ysgol Talysarn and Ysgol Brynaerau, is a warm and caring community in which pupils' wellbeing and progress is at the core of its ethos. The headteacher provides clear and inspiring leadership, and staff share and implement her vision effectively. The relationship of respect and kindness between staff and pupils is strong, which contributes to a safe and stimulating environment in which pupils are ready to learn.

Through effective joint planning, teachers provide a broad and rich curriculum that engages pupils' interests and provides purposeful opportunities for almost all to apply their literacy, numeracy and digital skills in meaningful ways. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills to become independent learners and, as a result, almost all develop into confident learners who take responsibility for their learning.

Staff are robust language models and provide regular opportunities to nurture natural Welsh speakers. As a result, pupils show increasing confidence in their oral skills and develop pride in their Welsh identity.

Through class themes, reflection periods and worship sessions, pupils have opportunities to explore values such as kindness, respect and empathy, which contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in a beneficial way.

The pupil's voice is an established element of the life and work of the federation, with pupil groups contributing purposefully to important aspects of the school, including promoting regular attendance and punctuality. However, the rate of continuous absence of a few pupils remains above the national average.

Leaders ensure that professional learning opportunities are planned carefully, and this has a very positive effect on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Governors offer appropriate challenge and beneficial support in monitoring and evaluating the provision.

Recommendations

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

R1 Improve the attendance of a few pupils

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Teachers across the federation work together extremely effectively to plan and deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. Through well-organised joint planning, they provide a range of engaging and rich experiences that offer valuable opportunities for pupils to apply their skills, and deepen their knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning. Teachers listen carefully to pupils' aspirations and use their ideas to refine and enrich plans. As a result, the termly themes engage and maintain most pupils' interest successfully, by developing and deepening their knowledge and understanding over time. This contributes directly to successful development, including in the mathematics and digital skills of almost all pupils.

Spotlight: Effective cooperation across the federation to develop pupils' digital skills

Strong cooperation across the federation is a central element of the success of the digital provision. Teachers plan carefully jointly to provide rich opportunities for pupils to work together to develop their digital skills successfully. For example, as part of theme work, teachers organised online meetings to support pupils from both schools to work together to design and create a comprehensive website about the countries of the world. During this project, pupils undertook research to collect and collate information, inputted key information into a purposeful database and used the information to sort and analyse data effectively.

This cooperation method is extremely successful in developing a wide range of pupils' skills. As well as strengthening their digital skills, pupils receive rich opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, and foster their understanding of global citizenship. As a result, pupils appreciate that their learning is relevant to the real world and show high levels of enthusiasm and commitment.

Teachers offer purposeful opportunities for pupils to work together and take responsibility for their own learning. They plan tasks that encourage pupils to learn independently, in pairs and in small groups. Skilful questioning by staff encourages pupils to think more

deeply, to make meaningful connections and to use their thinking skills formally in order to solve problems in a rich range of learning experiences. As a result, from an early age, almost all pupils develop into confident independent learners.

Teachers have a supportive relationship with pupils. They are natural facilitators of learning that support pupils' understanding of making progress in their skills effectively. Teachers guide pupils skilfully to understand ways to improve their work, especially in extended writing in both languages. All staff are good language models and aim regularly to nurture pupils to become natural Welsh speakers. Through initiatives such as 'Clwb Clebran' and 'Tîm Taran', they give pupils purposeful responsibilities to encourage their peers to speak Welsh naturally during break times and in other informal contexts. This leads to clear improvement in the Welsh oral skills of almost all pupils and fosters pride in their Welsh identity.

Pupil's voice groups have been established strongly and have a positive influence on the life and work of the school. By participating in decisions and projects, pupils feel that their voice is valued and this strengthens their self-respect and commitment to the life and work of the school. The school's arrangements to promote regular attendance are robust. Pupils on the school council are prominent in encouraging pupils' regular attendance and punctuality to school. However, despite this work, the rate of continuous absence of a few pupils is higher than the national average.

Through classroom themes and purposeful joint worship periods, pupils have rich opportunities to consider ethical issues and values such as kindness and respect for others in society. Leaders promote a positive multicultural environment that celebrates diversity and fosters pupils' understanding of different backgrounds and traditions. This contributes directly to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. As a result, almost all pupils show empathy, kindness and respect towards each other and others.

The headteacher has succeeded in building and nurturing a cohesive team of staff who share her passion and determination to provide the best possible education for all pupils. High expectations of herself and staff, alongside providing them with sensitive support, creates a culture of continuous improvement. Through a variety of monitoring and evaluation methods, which include teaching and learning observations, scrutinising pupils' work and regular professional discussions, leaders and staff develop a clear understanding of the federation's main strengths and areas for development.

Professional learning that is provided to staff within the federation is a key element of its continuous success. The headteacher allocates responsibilities to staff in a sensible way. This offers beneficial opportunities for staff to develop their leadership role, by sharing their expertise and best practice with each other within the federation and with neighbouring schools.

Spotlight: The positive effect of professional learning on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress

Leaders ensure that high quality professional learning opportunities are available to staff that are planned carefully to reflect the schools' improvement priorities, as well as the developmental aspirations of individual staff. As a result, teachers benefit from deeper and more tailored training that builds their understanding of effective teaching methods, curriculum delivery and robust assessment practices.

This strong focus on developing staff leads to measurable improvements in the quality of teaching across the federation. Through these beneficial opportunities, teachers use their knowledge confidently and consistently to foster depth in learning which, in turn, contributes to strong progress in the skills of almost all pupils, including those that are eligible for free school meals and those from low-income households.

Governors share the commitment to foster an inclusive and ambitious learning community. They understand their responsibilities well, monitor progress carefully and offer purposeful challenge and support to leaders. Strong relationships with parents and the wider community enrich pupils' experiences and promote a strong sense of pride and belonging to the federation's schools.

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/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.

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Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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