

A report on

Ysgol Plascrug

**Plascrug Avenue
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 1HL**

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 Plascrug

Name of provider	Ysgol Plascrug
Local authority	Ceredigion County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	Transitional
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	441
Pupils of statutory school age	329
Number in nursery classes	62
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%)	14.0%
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%)	7.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	2.1%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	8.8%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2025

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/02/2018
Start date of inspection	10/11/2025

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 school's leaders foster a harmonious vision of a happy, caring and multilingual learning community where all pupils are valued and supported to thrive. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff are an effective and passionate team that offers rich experiences in a safe and supportive environment. The close relationship between staff, pupils and parents, along with strong links with the community and local organisations, are key elements of the school's success. Community activities such as 'Cawl a Chân' and an 'International Evening', celebrate cultural diversity and foster a strong sense for pupils of belonging to their local community, Wales and the wider world.

The school's leadership is effective, inclusive and ambitious which places the wellbeing of pupils and staff at the heart of all decisions. Self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes are robust, and leaders respond effectively to national priorities. The school now provides more Welsh as part of the teaching and learning, and staff place due emphasis on developing and influencing pupils' positive attitudes to the language strongly. The culture of professional learning supports staff to research and innovate continuously.

Governors are committed and knowledgeable, and contribute constructively to monitoring, evaluating and developing the school further. Pupils' behaviour is robust and most show respect, empathy and commitment to their learning. However, the opportunities that teachers provide for pupils to make decisions about their learning and to develop into independent learners are inconsistent.

Leaders plan wide-ranging, creative and balanced provision that supports most pupils' well-being, literacy skills, numeracy skills and emotional development skills purposefully. Teaching assistants play an essential role in providing effective support programmes, especially for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those learning English as an additional language (EAL). Well-established strategies such as the Family Support Officer and the nurture unit, 'Y Plas', provide inclusive provision for pupils who need further support with their learning.

Recommendations

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

R1. Provide regular opportunities for pupils to make decisions about their learning, and to work more independently.

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Leaders work successfully with partners to create a harmonious vision of a happy, caring and multilingual learning community where pupils have opportunities to thrive. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff are an effective and passionate team that offers rich experiences in an inclusive and supportive environment for pupils. The caring environment, which permeates all aspects of the school's life, as well as a strong working relationship between staff and pupils, creates a familial and safe community. The headteacher sets high expectations and places the wellbeing of pupils and staff at the heart of everything that is done.

Spotlight: Fostering strong and close community links to support pupils' wellbeing and learning

One of the school's strongest qualities is the way in which leaders and staff have established extremely strong and productive relationships with parents and the wider community. The school offers regular opportunities for parents to participate in the school's activities and support their children's learning. Events such as 'Cawl a Chân' and an 'International Evening' promote a strong sense of belonging and celebrate the cultural diversity of the local community skilfully.

Leaders and staff take advantage of the skills and specialisms of parents and community partners in real-life learning contexts that engage and raise pupils' aspirations. The parent and teacher association is active and innovative in raising money to support projects, such as transforming unused land on the school's site into an attractive outdoor learning space that supports pupils' wellbeing and skills. Through strong partnerships with the local university, the school offers valuable opportunities for parents to learn Welsh and to enhance the use of the language at home. Effective and regular links with local organisations such as the National Library and neighbouring schools enrich pupils' learning experiences and strengthen their links with the local community extremely effectively.

Teaching assistants are an integral part of the school team, making a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and to promoting their emotional wellbeing through purposeful and meaningful support programmes. Through this, pupils develop both their curiosity and a strong sense of respect which supports them to take pride in the diverse nature of their community well. Through activities, services and celebrations, they celebrate the school's cultural and linguistic heritage and foster pride in their Welsh and multicultural identity extremely successfully. The broad and balanced provision promotes strong spiritual, moral and social awareness which underpins this inclusive community.

The school's leaders and staff demonstrate strong values and high quality professional behaviour, by creating a safe, warm and inclusive environment where pupils feel valued. High expectations for pupils' behaviour are communicated clearly and constructively, fostering a community based on respect, empathy and fairness. As a result, most pupils show robust behaviour and strong commitment to their learning, by demonstrating perseverance in individual and group work. However, the opportunities that teachers provide for pupils to make decisions about their learning and to develop into independent learners are inconsistent.

Leaders have clear self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes that have a positive effect on pupils' well-being and progress over time. Leaders respond effectively to national and local priorities, such as ensuring a higher proportion of their provision is through the medium Welsh. Strong emphasis is placed on developing the Welsh language among staff and pupils, and on establishing a Welsh language and Welsh ethos. They foster a culture of professional learning where staff are encouraged to research and lead on key developments, such as strengthening pupils' mathematics and reading skills.

Staff know the community thoroughly and are dedicated to ensure that all families, including those who are disadvantaged, receive appropriate support.

Spotlight: Supporting the development of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), vulnerable pupils and those learning English as an additional language (EAL)

Teaching staff have a detailed understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with ALN. They use a wide range of comprehensive information to plan learning experiences that have been tailored carefully. Regular professional discussions among staff deliver consistent, high quality provision. Teams of skilful assistants lead effective support programmes that promote pupils' wellbeing and the development of their literacy and numeracy skills, including EAL learners, extremely successfully.

Promoting pupils' wellbeing is a central priority, with well-established strategies such as the Family Support Officer and 'Y Plas' nurture unit, which supports vulnerable pupils and young carers sensitively and effectively. In addition, schemes such as 'Bwyd a Hwyl' (Food and Fun) support families over the school holidays, and the language immersion provision in the 'Pod' strengthens the skills of EAL pupils while boosting their confidence and ability to integrate into the school successfully. Strong partnerships with parents and external organisations contribute significantly to the success of the provision. As a result, almost all pupils that receive support make very strong progress.

Governors are supportive and committed to the life and work of the school, and they know the community it serves well. They are knowledgeable and use their wide-ranging professional expertise to contribute constructively to continuous improvements. Their

robust support for the headteacher and deputy headteacher has further strengthened the school's leadership further, while their monitoring and evaluation activities, such as teaching and learning observations and discussions with staff, aim for high standards. Leaders place a clear emphasis on providing equal opportunities for all pupils to participate in rich learning experiences, including various clubs and trips abroad. In addition, pupils from all backgrounds and learning needs have regular opportunities to voice their opinions through the activity of councils such as the eco council and the Criw Cymraeg. This contributes to promoting responsibility and a sense of ownership among pupils successfully.

The school staff work together effectively to plan rich learning experiences that develop pupils' skills successfully and aim for consistency across classes. The stimulating learning environments celebrate pupils' work and provide accessible resources that support their development. Teachers track pupils' progress thoroughly and guide the planning of activities that are tailored carefully to meet their individual needs effectively. Pupils respond purposefully to teachers' feedback which supports them to know what they have done well and to identify the next steps in their learning.

Many pupils begin at the school with low communication skills or are from homes where Welsh or English is not spoken as their first language. As they move through the school, most develop sound communication skills, and by the top of the school, they communicate confidently and clearly, by using mature vocabulary and increasingly accurate syntax. During the linguistic transitional period, with strong support from the local authority and enthusiastic school staff, many of the youngest pupils begin to speak Welsh with increasing confidence. Positive attitudes to the Welsh language are evident among pupils and staff across the school.

In their reading, most make good progress, demonstrating an understanding of texts, predicting accurately and expressing purposeful opinions about the content of the texts. Most pupils' English writing skills develop robustly, and they use simple language patterns more confidently in their Welsh writing. The older pupils write maturely in a variety of creative genres, such as adventure stories, raps and blogs.

The mathematical skills development of most pupils is strong. Teachers offer pupils challenging and meaningful mathematics activities that support an understanding of different concepts skilfully. Through joint projects with secondary schools, effective provision is delivered to support the mathematics development of pupils who demonstrate strong skills in this area of learning. Most pupils' digital skills develop extremely effectively, from early coding to using devices confidently to create purposeful projects.

Staff develop pupils' physical and creative skills successfully through art, music and sport activities. Through these activities, most pupils develop pride in their local area and Wales, as well as an understanding of the world's diverse cultures, preparing them to be intelligent and ambitious citizens.

Leaders act proactively to recruit multilingual staff, which facilitates effective transition between the home and school. Through beneficial cooperation with local secondary schools, pupils have valuable transfer opportunities that build their confidence and support smooth transition to the next stages in their learning.

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/carer 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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