

Report summary for parents and carers on Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones

Date of inspection: November 2025

Summary

Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones is a warm and caring community. Comprehensive well-being provision is available to pupils, including 'Grisiau 6', which provides a range of effective interventions. There are robust safeguarding arrangements in place and pupils feel safe. Strong links with external agencies add to the quality of welfare provision. Effective transition arrangements from primary to secondary support pupils to feel at home quickly. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is robust and sensitive. The ALN team identifies pupils' needs promptly and uses a comprehensive range of data to inform effective interventions to support pupils.

Most pupils demonstrate polite and respectful behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils recall previous learning appropriately and develop their subject knowledge consistently. A very few pupils make very strong progress, often due to teachers' high expectations and their conscientious attitudes towards work. Sixth-form pupils are mature, eloquent and contribute beneficially to school life. During the last three years, pupils who are eligible for free school meals have achieved lower results at the end of Year 11 than their peers in similar schools.

There is a clear vision for Curriculum for Wales and the curriculum is broad, including vocational opportunities that are suitable for the local area. The school offers a variety of extra-curricular activities that enrich pupils' experiences and promote their well-being and personal development. Most teachers foster a constructive working relationship with pupils and give clear instructions. Many teachers model language well and introduce vocabulary and subject terminology in Welsh and English. In general, they plan suitable activities that build gradually to support pupils' progress. Many ask appropriate questions and adjust the pace of lessons to suit the pace of pupils' learning. In the few best cases, teaching is lively with high expectations, deeper questioning and effective use of bilingualism. These teachers plan a series of challenging lessons, explain concepts clearly and use relevant examples to help pupils make links. As a result, pupils apply their knowledge to new contexts confidently. However, in a few lessons, expectations are not high enough and activities are too simple, limiting pupils' progress. Differentiation and questioning are not effective enough to challenge the range of ability. Throughout, there is a lack of consistent opportunities across the curriculum to develop pupils' higher-order reading skills, particularly in Welsh.

The headteacher and senior leadership team share an agreed vision and work together closely. Comprehensive self-evaluation processes are in place, by using a range of evidence to inform improvement. Purposeful professional learning opportunities are available to staff and governors provide suitable challenge and support the school effectively. However, there is variation in the effectiveness of middle leaders and they do not always evaluate the effect of provision on pupils' standards in sufficient detail.

The school has acted proactively to improve pupils' attendance. There are suitable monitoring and accountability processes, which enables leaders to analyse attendance patterns appropriately. However, pupils' attendance at the school is in need of further improvement.

Recommendations and next steps

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

R1 Improve attendance.

R2 Address the specific areas for improvement in teaching identified in the report.

R3 Strengthen provision for developing pupils' literacy skills, particularly their higher-order reading skills.

R4 Ensure that middle leaders evaluate the quality of provision according to its effect in order to identify to exact areas that are in need of improvement.

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

Full Report

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

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