

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Significant Improvement

Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen

**Bethel Road
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1HW**

Date of visit: January 2026

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve provision for pupils with additional learning needs and vulnerable pupils, along with strategic overview of that provision

Since the core inspection, the school has taken firm steps to strengthen provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and vulnerable pupils, along with improving the strategic overview of this area. A clear leadership structure has been established and leaders work together closely to meet the needs of these pupils. Leaders have established a suitable calendar for the ALN department's self-evaluation, which has begun to contribute to a better understanding of the quality of provision.

The school has developed a sensible method of identifying and tracking pupils' needs by collecting relevant data on literacy, numeracy and aspects of well-being and has produced a provision map of appropriate interventions. Although this has strengthened the understanding of pupils' needs, the work of evaluating the impact of interventions and adapting them is in its early stages. Data about pupils and the school's new teaching style are beginning to support staff to plan for pupils that need support.

Transition arrangements between the primary schools and the secondary school for pupils with ALN have been strengthened significantly to ensure a smooth transfer of information and more purposeful planning. The quality of one-page profiles and individual development plans (IDPs) has improved and progress against targets is evaluated appropriately.

By establishing 'Yr Hwb', which has a team of specialist staff, the school is beginning to provide suitable interventions and alternative curriculum provision to support the well-being and inclusion of vulnerable pupils. However, this work is in its early days. The school has placed a suitable emphasis on the professional development of teaching and assistants through regular opportunities, such as morning sessions, which are beginning

to strengthen the staff's confidence and understanding of teaching pupils with ALN and vulnerable pupils. As a result of these improvements, pupils with ALN and vulnerable pupils are beginning to benefit from the purposeful provision, which supports their engagement in learning and their well-being.

R2. Improve self-evaluation and planning for improvement

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has reviewed and strengthened its processes for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. There is a more comprehensive calendar of quality assurance activities for senior and middle leaders. Leaders at all levels now have a stronger understanding of their roles in this aspect of the school's work and their ability to identify areas for improvement in teaching has improved. Leaders provide useful professional learning to support teachers to develop their practice.

Middle leaders have benefitted from valuable professional learning opportunities to equip them to conduct quality assurance activities and use their findings to plan for improvement. For example, they have benefitted from beneficial opportunities to observe jointly with members of the senior management team and discuss findings when scrutinising pupils' work. Leaders now analyse a wide range of data carefully, including attendance data, to consider the school's performance. Leaders triangulate findings from the range of quality assurance activities purposefully. However, there is some variation in how well leaders evaluate provision according to its effect on pupils' learning. As a result, they do not always identify the exact aspects that are in need of improvement precisely enough. Departmental improvement plans are often based closely on the priorities in the school improvement plan and, as a result, the actions do not always address the exact aspects that have been highlighted from the department's self-evaluation work.

Across the school, leaders' ability to self-evaluate and plan for improvement is stronger than at the time of the core inspection. The effect of this can be seen in the initial improvements identified in the areas of ALN, teaching and attendance.

R3. Strengthen strategic leadership to cover all key aspects of the school's work

Senior leaders and the governing body have taken a number of purposeful steps to respond to this recommendation. The responsibilities of the senior management team have been restructured sensibly to create a teaching and learning team and an inclusion team. Roles have been adapted purposefully to ensure more robust strategic leadership for ALN, provision for vulnerable pupils and teaching. Lines of accountability are clearer

and there is less of an overlap in individual responsibilities. As a result, leaders have a more robust overview of the school's work, including teaching, attendance and ALN.

Since the core inspection, leaders have strengthened link meeting arrangements. Meetings are now more regular and focus specifically on the school's priorities. In addition to providing support, there is more challenge in these meetings to hold staff to account. As a result of this and the training provided for middle leaders, they have a clearer understanding of their roles and are more confident when discussing strengths and aspects for improvement within their areas of responsibility.

Departmental meetings now have an increased focus on strategic issues, with purposeful opportunities to respond to the areas for improvement that were identified during the quality assurance activities. Although there is some variation in the quality of these meetings, in the best examples, there is a strong focus on driving improvements in provision for pupils. The school has also strengthened the arrangements for seeking the views of staff through the meetings' structure and purposeful questionnaires. This means that there is a greater sense of teamwork within the school.

Governors now have a better knowledge and understanding of the school's work. A sensible system of sub-committees places a purposeful focus on teaching and learning, leadership and well-being. Governors are given useful training and guidance to support them to question and challenge the school. The information provided to them by the school's leaders is also clearer and more manageable than at the time of the core inspection. Governors play an increasingly important role in holding leaders to account for their work. The school's arrangements for seeking parents' views through questionnaires and meetings are in their early stages.

R4. Improve pupils' attendance, including that of groups of pupils, and the strategic work to do so

Since the core inspection, leaders have strengthened the way in which they prioritise and promote attendance significantly. As a result, arrangements for monitoring, analysing and responding to attendance patterns have improved.

Leaders have strengthened the school's pastoral work by developing a range of proactive arrangements to support pupils and their families. For example, they have increased staffing capacity to focus on well-being and attendance, which enables the school to engage with families regularly and constructively. As a result, leaders have a detailed understanding of the needs of individual pupils and the barriers that affect their attendance. This has led to more purposeful planning to support specific pupils, for

example by adapting elements of the curriculum and providing additional tailored support.

Leaders now analyse attendance data in great detail, including data on specific groups of learners, such as pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those with ALN. As a result, they have a very clear awareness of trends, emerging problems and the effect of specific interventions over time.

The school has strengthened the culture of promoting good attendance. Staff convey the importance of regular attendance through school assemblies and morning periods and set ambitious targets for pupils. Initiatives such as competitions between registration groups and reward systems have increased pupils' motivation and contributed positively to attitudes towards attendance.

Leaders have also improved their methods of communication. They send letters to all families to emphasise the importance of high attendance and hold purposeful meetings with individual parents to discuss and overcome specific barriers. This method of communication has strengthened trust and increased the willingness of families to work with the school.

Between the academic years of 2022-23 and 2024-25, the school's attendance had improved well. However, the school's attendance percentage was slightly below the national average in 2024-25 and the school's attendance continues to be much lower than before the pandemic. On the whole, the school's attendance is not improving quickly enough. Attendance in the autumn term of 2025 has fallen slightly compared to attendance in the autumn term of 2024 and the attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals remains lower than that of their peers.

R5. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment

Since the core inspection, leaders have introduced a range of appropriate methods to improve the effect of teaching on pupils' progress. There is a specific focus on improving planning to ensure that all pupils have access to the curriculum. As a result of this focus on improving planning, staff have a shared understanding of expectations, which helps them to improve the quality of teaching.

In most cases, teachers have sound subject knowledge and are suitable language models. They develop a good working relationship with their pupils. In many lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and establish clear routines to promote positive attitudes to learning. They plan activities that enable pupils to develop their

knowledge and understanding appropriately and offer them clear explanations and instructions. In many cases, teachers ask useful questions to encourage pupils to recall information. In these lessons, many pupils make at least the expected progress, in line with their age and ability.

In the very few lessons where there is best practice, teachers plan skilfully with a clear focus on what they want pupils to learn. They model and exemplify work effectively and use questions to challenge pupils and deepen their understanding. These teachers monitor pupils' progress closely and adapt tasks sensibly to ensure that as many pupils as possible make strong progress.

In a minority of cases, teachers plan low challenge activities that do not always follow each other logically. In these lessons, there is an over-reliance on scaffolds and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop independence in their learning. These teachers do not always adapt the pace or structure of their lessons appropriately to align with pupils' needs and, as a result, a minority of pupils make limited progress.

Many teachers monitor pupils' progress in lessons appropriately, offering useful oral feedback, where appropriate. In general, teachers provide useful feedback that helps pupils to understand what they are doing well and offers clear advice on how to improve further. However, the quality of feedback varies and, at times, guidance for pupils on how to improve is not clear enough.