

**A report on**

**Ysgol Pencae**

**Ffordd Graiglwyd  
Penmaenmawr  
Conwy  
LL34 6YG**

**Date of inspection: January 2026**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh**

## About Ysgol Pencae

Name of provider	Ysgol Pencae
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	Welsh medium school
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church School
Number of pupils on roll	155
Pupils of statutory school age	108
Number in nursery classes	19
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%)	22.1%
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%)	16.7%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	33.3%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2026

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	23/04/2018
Start date of inspection	19/01/2026

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](http://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

Ysgol Pencae is an inclusive and well-organised community that supports pupils to thrive in a hard-working and happy atmosphere. Leaders work together effectively to support learning and maintain the wellbeing of pupils in their care.

Pupils concentrate well and most make sound progress in their skills. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) receive effective support from dedicated staff. Despite the suitable range of procedures to promote it, the attendance of groups of pupils remains too low.

The provision for the school's youngest pupils allows them to develop confidence and independence from an early age. They make meaningful choices about their activities, which boost their confidence successfully. Their understanding of Welsh develops well although they tend to respond in their first language, at times. Most older pupils develop increasing confidence in Welsh and speak easily and naturally. Staff promote a strong culture of reading and provide pupils with valuable experiences that promote their enjoyment of reading across a range of genres. Most pupils' writing skills develop appropriately and they respond to feedback beneficially while improving their work. Most pupils' mathematics and digital skills develop well. They apply them in different real-world contexts and benefit from interesting learning experiences. Most feel safe at school and understand the importance of keeping themselves safe online.

Teachers provide a rich range of activities and learning experiences that meet most pupils' needs well. They question pupils skilfully and provide useful feedback which encourages pupils to develop their work further. However, in a few activities, there is a tendency to overuse ready-made frameworks that hinder the development of pupils' independent skills.

## **Recommendations**

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

- R1      Ensure consistency in, and share, the strongest teaching practices across the school
  
- R2      Improve the attendance of specific groups of pupils

## **What happens next**

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

## Main evaluation

Ysgol Pencae is a happy and inclusive community. The headteacher leads the school passionately and aims to ensure that all pupils succeed. He is supported by a team of skilful staff who work together successfully. Most pupils across the school, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those from low-income households, make sound progress in their skills. Pupils who attend the additional learning needs unit are included fully in the school's activities.

A strong culture of safeguarding pupils is evident in the school. Staff are aware of policies and procedures to keep pupils safe and act appropriately when there is any concern about a child. The behaviour of almost all pupils is good in all aspects of the school's work, and they are respectful towards visitors and each other.

Leaders maintain appropriate procedures to promote pupils' attendance. They ensure that the importance of high attendance is shared with parents regularly. Leaders work closely with a number of external agencies to improve pupils' attendance. However, the attendance of specific groups of pupils remains too low.

A notable example of the school's work is the way in which staff support the youngest pupils to develop robust independent learning skills. Through purposeful planning, pupils use a wide range of resources by building confidence to make choices. This promotes their learning successfully.

Governors' role as a critical friend of the school is developing well. They participate regularly in self-evaluation activities with leaders. This supports their understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for improvement. The findings of these activities are used to set sensible improvement priorities. Leaders evaluate progress purposefully against the priorities. Staff are provided with beneficial professional learning opportunities such as sharing effective practices with other schools.

Across the school, most pupils listen well. Although Welsh is new to most pupils when they start at the school, their understanding of the language develops quickly. However, as they move through the school, there is a tendency for a minority to respond to questions and instructions in English, even though they understood them properly. By the time they reach the top of the school, pupils' oral Welsh skills are good. Most develop sound reading skills. The youngest pupils acquire early reading skills by recognising letters and linking them with the relevant sound. Over time, they develop increasing confidence and read simple words and sentences. By the time they reach the top of the school, most pupils read fluently in both languages and demonstrate a sound understanding of the text. Staff promote and maintain a strong culture of enjoying books of all kinds.

Most pupils develop their writing skills effectively. The youngest pupils use a range of useful media to explore and make marks, which supports the development of their fine motor skills and co-ordination skills. They build on these early skills and, by Year 2, many pupils write maturely and their spelling and punctuation develop appropriately. At the top of the school, teachers provide rich opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills well in both languages. For example, the oldest pupils write purposeful rules about how to be responsible digital citizens.

Teachers provide purposeful learning experiences in the learning areas which support the youngest pupils to develop early mathematics and numeracy skills effectively. By Year 2, many apply their skills confidently and identify the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. The older pupils apply their data-handling skills confidently, for example when creating a graph to show the mean temperature over time. Beneficial use is made of the local area to support learning, for example by examining how busy traffic is at different times of the day in Penmaenmawr.

A strong sense of Welsh identity is a prominent feature of the curriculum which permeates all aspects of the school's life and work skilfully. This is supported by a beneficial range of visits such as a trip to Conwy by train and a double decker bus tour of Llandudno.

Across the school, a beneficial range of experiences boosts pupils' digital skills well. In the foundation learning classes, pupils acquire useful coding skills through a range of tools such as the programmable robot. Most older pupils handle a variety of digital tools maturely. They create comprehensive presentations, and select elements that are most suitable for the audience. They have a sound awareness of the importance of staying safe online.

Staff ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to develop their creativity such as using a range of tools to compose music. Pupils in the foundation learning classes are provided with beneficial opportunities to develop their confidence as they make decisions about how they would like to accomplish a task. Many Year 1 and 2 pupils persevere well in experimenting with different tools to create a Santes Dwynwen card, before writing a greeting independently.

Teachers adapt their teaching methods purposefully in order to meet pupils' needs appropriately. They provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to influence what they learn. However, with the older pupils, there is sometimes a tendency to overuse ready-made frameworks that limit opportunities for pupils to develop their skills fully. Staff question pupils effectively and provide useful oral feedback during activities. Many of the older pupils understand and appreciate the importance of staff and peer feedback as they develop their work. This promotes pupils' progress successfully.

The school offers beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop strong values while learning about spiritual and moral beliefs. Pupils learn about important values, including equality, rights, fairness, and respect. As a result, they develop a good understanding of the importance of treating everyone in society with respect.

Staff address pupils' individual needs extremely effectively and sensitively. Teachers and support staff provide highly effective care, wellbeing and provision for pupils which has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and willingness to learn. As a result, pupils feel safe and make sound progress from their starting points. ALN provision is co-ordinated effectively. Leaders support teachers and support staff well and there is a good range of interventions that support pupils' learning successfully.

### **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](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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**This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).**

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