

A report on

Ysgol Dolbadarn

**Llanberis
Gwynedd
LL55 4SH**

Date of inspection: February 2026

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Dolbadarn

Name of provider	Ysgol Dolbadarn
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	132
Pupils of statutory school age	104
Number in nursery classes	12
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%)	6.9%
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%)	20.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	70.2%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2024

A report on Ysgol Dolbadarn
February 2026

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	15/10/2018
Start date of inspection	23/02/2026

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

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Summary

The headteacher is a strong leader who inspires others successfully. She has a clear vision for creating a caring and welcoming learning environment where all pupils are encouraged to aim high. This vision is shared effectively with the school community and a strong sense of belonging permeates the life of the school. Pupils' wellbeing and happiness are at the heart of provision, and respectful relationships between staff and pupils help to ensure a safe and supportive atmosphere for learning.

Most pupils show positive attitudes to their work, which supports good attendance and behaviour. They make good progress in their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. From an early age, many develop confident speaking skills in Welsh, and by the end of their time at the school, most communicate skilfully in Welsh and English. Pupils' reading and writing skills develop robustly over time, enabling them to write for different purposes and discuss texts maturely. They also apply their problem-solving skills across a range of activities successfully.

Strong emphasis is placed on promoting the Welsh language and Welsh culture, fostering a strong sense of identity and pride among pupils. Effective arrangements are in place to support pupils with additional learning needs, and the caring provision helps most pupils to make sound progress from their starting points. On the whole, purposeful teaching supports pupils to develop their independent learning skills well and to recall previous learning skilfully. Stimulating experiences encourage pupils to reflect on their learning successfully and meet most pupils' needs purposefully. However, the most effective teaching practices are not always consistent enough across the school.

Leaders evaluate the provision purposefully and have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors undertake their roles conscientiously, and strong partnerships with parents and the community enrich pupils' experiences and support their well-being and development effectively.

Recommendations

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

R1 Ensure that the most effective teaching practices are consistent across the school

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The headteacher is an inspirational and strong leader. She has a clear vision for the school which is based on providing a stimulating, caring and welcoming learning environment that supports pupils to 'reach the summit of Yr Wyddfa'. She has shared this vision successfully with pupils, staff, parents and the school community and there is a strong sense of belonging to a supportive and close family.

Spotlight: Strategic leadership promotes robust attitudes to learning

The headteacher's vision and aspirations help to ensure that fostering pupils' well-being and happiness permeates all aspects of the school's work. Staff forge highly effective working relationships with pupils which emphasise respect, trust and high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Staff know pupils well and respond purposefully and sensitively to their needs. This fosters a sense of safety, contentment and happiness among pupils and supports an inclusive and lively learning environment which encourages pupils to engage successfully with their learning. Most pupils' attitudes to their learning are positive which, in turn, supports regular attendance and good behaviour. In addition, this lays a strong foundation that encourages most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) or those from low-income households, to make sound progress in their skills.

The headteacher has high expectations of herself and others. She is supported by a team of conscientious staff who work diligently to support pupils' wellbeing and progress. They provide a wide range of engaging experiences in the indoor and outdoor learning areas that engage pupils' interest and build on their natural curiosity successfully. Staff ensure that promoting Welsh identity and the language and culture of Wales is a consistent element of school life. They provide a wide range of beneficial activities such as trips in the local area and opportunities to compete in eisteddfodau which support a strong sense of Welshness and belonging among pupils.

In the best practices, teaching supports pupils to develop their independent learning skills well along with their ability to persevere for extended periods. Probing questioning by staff recalls previous learning skilfully and encourages pupils to think more deeply about their learning. Stimulating learning experiences ignite pupils' imaginations successfully and, in these cases, pupils become immersed in their learning and enjoy their activities. In a few sessions, tasks challenge the more able pupils successfully. However, there is not always enough consistency in the most effective teaching practices across the school.

Staff are effective language models who support many pupils to acquire sound speaking skills from an early age. The youngest pupils join in with songs, rhymes and simple

conversations with enthusiasm and enjoyment. By Year 2 and 3, pupils begin to use more complex sentences and link ideas purposefully. The oldest pupils respond thoughtfully to the opinions of others, by using appropriate expression and vocabulary. Over time, most develop into confident speakers, and at the top of the school, most pupils communicate skilfully in Welsh and English.

Most pupils make good progress in their reading skills. The youngest pupils connect sounds confidently and develop into skilful readers at an early age. As they move through the school, pupils read with purposeful and increasing expression and discuss the content of their books maturely. By the top of the school, pupils consider authors' writing styles intelligently.

Most pupils' writing skills develop well. Pupils in the nursery class acquire important early writing skills by experimenting confidently by making marks with a range of equipment. They build on these skills successfully over time, and by the time pupils reach Year 6, they write for a good range of purposes and audiences and demonstrate a strong awareness of form and language. For example, they write a formal letter to the Welsh Government to urge them to establish a law requiring every child in Wales to learn how to cook healthy food.

Over time, most pupils make good progress in their mathematics skills. Many use mathematical language correctly when explaining and discussing their work and most apply their numeracy skills confidently across a good range of contexts. Most pupils have good problem-solving skills and they apply these skills purposefully across a range of contexts. For example, pupils in the reception class and Year 1 select and choose which objects would be best to build a shelter for 'Dewi Dyfrgi'. During their time at the school, most pupils' digital skills develop robustly. From an early age, they use various digital apps and tools confidently which supports their wider learning successfully.

The arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN are robust. Staff identify quickly the pupils who would benefit from further support. They consider pupils' specific needs and preferences and cooperate effectively with parents and external agencies. Where appropriate, they organise purposeful support programmes that meet pupils' needs skilfully. The meaningful and caring provision offered in the Y Garn class supports most pupils with ALN to make sound progress in their wellbeing and literacy and numeracy skills from their starting points.

Leaders ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for evaluating the effect of the provision on pupils' well-being and progress. They consider a useful range of direct evidence carefully. This, in turn, supports them to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders address these areas purposefully, including national priorities such as developing pupils' numeracy skills. Governors have a sound understanding of their

roles and responsibilities and they fulfil them diligently and conscientiously. They offer purposeful support to leaders and hold them to account appropriately.

Pupils take pride in the opportunities they have to undertake leadership roles. They take the responsibilities seriously and foster important skills such as showing empathy and cooperation. They contribute successfully to the school's work, for example as they promote their peers' awareness of children's mental health week. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their feelings and consider their beliefs and morals purposefully.

An integral part of the school's work is the way in which leaders ensure that the school establishes and maintains effective partnerships with parents and the local community. For example, a significant investment by a well-known company has supported the installation of fitness equipment on the school's playground. This, in turn, boosts pupils' motivation to engage in physical activity and make meaningful decisions about how to stay healthy.

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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

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

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

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

© Crown Copyright 2026: This report may be re used free of charge: (a) in any format or medium; and (b) may be translated by or on behalf of an education and/or training provider in respect of which this report relates into any language, in each case provided that it is re used and/or translated accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must, in each case (including in the case of a translation) be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 29/04/2026