

A report on

Ysgol Maes Y Felin

**Pen-Y-Maes
Holywell
Flintshire
CH8 7EN**

Date of inspection: March 2026

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Maes Y Felin

Name of provider	Ysgol Maes Y Felin
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	284
Pupils of statutory school age	244
Number in nursery classes	31
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 Primary is 21.7%)	54.3%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 9.2%)	19.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.4%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	9.92%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2025
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/11/2019
Start date of inspection	02/03/2026

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

Ysgol Maes Y Felin provides a caring and inclusive environment where pupils feel safe, valued and supported. Positive relationships between staff and pupils help create a calm atmosphere in which most pupils behave well and show kindness and respect to one another. Many pupils make good progress from their starting points, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who attend the resource base class.

Across the school, teachers create purposeful learning environments that encourage pupils to take part actively in their learning. In the younger classes, staff make effective use of the outdoor areas to provide interesting activities that promote teamwork and problem solving. Pupils enjoy opportunities to explore and create, such as building structures or developing imaginative play environments. The school's curriculum is broad and engaging, with younger pupils' interests often helping to shape what they learn. Overall, teachers' expectations for pupils are not consistently high enough, and learning activities do not always provide sufficient challenge for all pupils.

Most pupils develop their literacy skills well. They benefit from a language-rich environment and regular opportunities to discuss their ideas with others. Younger pupils build strong early reading skills and enjoy listening to and sharing stories, while older pupils read a wide range of texts with increasing confidence. Most pupils develop their writing skills well over time, although expectations for handwriting and presentation are not always high enough. In mathematics, many pupils build secure number skills and use different methods to solve problems, but older pupils do not always have enough opportunities to apply their numeracy skills across other areas of learning.

Leaders support pupils with additional learning needs effectively and monitor pupils' progress carefully. Staff provide targeted support and interventions where needed, helping pupils improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The school develops strong links with parents and the community, which strengthens pupils' sense of belonging and has helped improve attendance.

Although leaders regularly review the school's work and provide opportunities for staff development, school priorities are too broad, which slows the pace of improvement. Governors understand the school well and support its work. Their role in gathering first-hand evidence is developing suitably.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Sharpen improvement priorities to ensure that all staff and governors understand their role in bringing about improvement

- R2 Ensure that all teachers have consistently high expectations and challenge pupils appropriately

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Leaders and staff at Ysgol Maes Y Felin have established a welcoming and inclusive school community where pupils feel happy, safe and well supported. Strong relationships between staff and pupils create a calm and nurturing environment in which most pupils behave well and show kindness and respect towards each other. Staff place a high emphasis on pupils' well-being and they model teamwork effectively. During their time in school, many pupils make good progress from their different starting points, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), pupils in the resource base class, and those affected by poverty.

Staff create purposeful learning environments that support pupils' independence and stimulate their interest. In the younger classes, staff use the extensive outdoor areas well, planning learning activities that encourage pupils to investigate, collaborate and solve problems. For example, younger pupils work together to build imaginative play environments.

The school has developed a broad and balanced curriculum that engages and enthuses most pupils. Teachers ensure that younger pupils have regular opportunities to influence their learning, and their interests often help shape how topics or themes develop in class. Pupils of all ages develop valuable spiritual, moral, social, and cultural awareness and are engaged by a curriculum that reflects their local area well. Most pupils develop a strong understanding of Welsh heritage through projects such as the study of castles and exploring archaeological work in a local country park. Most staff model Welsh language patterns well and encourage pupils to reply using simple phrases. Younger pupils respond well to simple greetings and everyday language patterns. As they progress through the school, many pupils respond confidently to increasingly complex instructions in Welsh.

Most pupils' literacy skills develop well. Staff provide a language-rich environment and act as positive language role models. They plan regular opportunities for pupils to develop their oracy skills through collaborative activities and purposeful discussion. This enables many pupils to communicate confidently and collaborate well with their peers when completing tasks. Younger pupils develop their early reading skills successfully through structured learning activities that develops their knowledge of letter sounds well. They listen attentively to stories and enjoy joining in with familiar parts of texts. Across the school, staff promote a strong culture of reading and pupils benefit from regular visits to the local library. As they move through the school, older pupils read a broad range of texts with increasing fluency.

Teachers provide a range of purposeful activities that support most pupils to develop their writing skills appropriately. Younger pupils record their learning informally in a variety of

contexts, and older pupils write for a suitable range of purposes. However, teachers' expectations for handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work are not consistently high enough.

The school's approach to teaching mathematics is systematic and progressive. This ensures that pupils develop these skills well as they move through the school. The youngest pupils use their early number and measuring skills well through exploration, story and play. As pupils progress through school, they use a range of mental and written methods successfully. There are fewer opportunities for older pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Overall, teachers provide a range of beneficial activities that supports pupils to develop their digital skills progressively. Younger pupils use digital devices purposefully, for example when programming devices to navigate a maze or when practising number skills. Older pupils develop their digital skills well through their topics, for instance, Year 4 pupils successfully use three-dimensional modelling software to recreate World War II trenches.

The school's approach to supporting pupils with ALN is strategic and effective. Leaders identify pupil's needs appropriately and monitor their progress effectively. They work collaboratively with staff to construct individual plans, ensuring that support is tailored well to pupils' specific needs.

Staff in the resource base class know pupils well and provide a nurturing and supportive environment that meets their needs well. Throughout the school, skilled support staff deliver targeted interventions to support pupils' literacy and mathematical skills. They monitor progress carefully and adapt provision accordingly. The school has developed an effective nurture class that helps a few pupils to regulate their emotions successfully and re-engage with their learning.

Generally, teachers provide pupils with appropriate levels of support and challenge during lessons. They use clear learning objectives and success criteria effectively, which helps pupils understand what they are learning and how to improve their work. Teachers are also starting to provide beneficial feedback that supports pupils in the next steps of their learning. However, expectations for pupils are not consistently high, and tasks that teachers provide do not always sufficiently challenge and extend pupils' learning. In the older classes, there is a tendency for teaching to be overly directed, which limits opportunities for pupils to work independently.

The school has effective arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress. Teachers gather assessment information regularly and leaders hold review meetings to evaluate this information. This systematic approach supports improvements in pupils' early reading skills effectively.

Leaders monitor pupil attendance carefully and work closely with parents and the local authority to promote regular attendance. Attendance has improved steadily over the last three years.

Effective links with families and the community

The school develops effective links with families and the wider community. Parents benefit from opportunities to attend adult learning classes and visit the school regularly to view their child's work. Strong links with parents has been integral to improving pupil's attendance. Pupils take part in a range of beneficial community projects, such as intergenerational activities with a local hospital, which enriches their learning and further strengthens their sense of belonging in the community.

Many pupils in Year 5 and 6 participate in pupil leadership groups and take their roles seriously. They feel that their views are listened to and are confident that leaders act on them. Younger pupils and those in the resource base class have limited opportunities to undertake leadership roles.

Leaders use a suitable range of activities to review the work of the school, including learning walks and listening to pupils. These processes help leaders identify areas for development, such as improving challenge for more able pupils and raising expectations for the presentation of pupils' work. However, the school's priorities are often broad and do not always identify clearly enough the aspects most in need of improvement. This results in leaders being slow to implement changes and they do not always communicate priorities clearly enough to staff. Professional learning has a high profile in the school, and staff appreciate regular opportunities to develop their practice, particularly in supporting pupils with ALN. Nevertheless, because improvement priorities are wide-ranging, professional learning is not always sufficiently focused or shared effectively with staff.

Governors know the school well through regular visits and information provided by leaders. Their role in gathering first-hand evidence to evaluate the school's work is at an early stage.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern

A site management concern was raised during the inspection, and the local authority has been notified

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances 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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Publications Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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