

# Report summary for parents and carers on Ysgol Friars

Date of inspection: 23/02/2026

This report is also available in Welsh

# Summary

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Following an extremely difficult period, Ysgol Friars has seen significant changes in leadership and governance. Since her appointment in April 2025, the headteacher has focused on strengthening safeguarding and pastoral systems, re-establishing quality assurance processes and placing a strong emphasis on rebuilding trust and fostering an inclusive culture. This well considered programme of change is securing improvements in teaching and middle leaders' ability to evaluate provision and learning within their areas of responsibility. Leadership is increasingly cohesive and collaborative. Staff and governors are committed and supportive of the headteacher's vision and the changes implemented by the senior leadership team.

In most lessons, teachers establish clear classroom routines. As a result, many pupils behave well, show respectful attitudes towards the teacher and other pupils and apply themselves suitably to their work. Many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress over time. A few pupils make exceptionally strong progress due to highly effective teaching. In these cases, teachers have notably high expectations and challenge pupils to think deeply to develop their understanding in new and more complex contexts. In a minority of lessons, weaknesses in planning limit pupils' progress. In these lessons, teachers do not always plan carefully enough to ensure consistent progress and do not match the pace of learning to the needs of pupils well enough. Overall, the quality and impact of written feedback is variable. Planning for the progressive development of pupils' skills, including planning opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills across the curriculum, is at an early stage of development.

The school provides a caring environment. The pastoral team works effectively with a wide range of external agencies to support pupils' well-being. Provisions such as the Wellbeing Centre, 'Hafan', 'Hwb Dysgu' and 'Harbwr', offer nurturing spaces and tailored, specialist support for pupils' emotional and learning needs. Safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and well understood by staff. There is a continuous focus on training for leaders, staff and governors on a range of safeguarding matters. Leaders have taken suitable steps to enable pupils to express their views and undertake leadership roles. Leaders' strategic oversight and monitoring of attendance is at an early stage and has not secured enough improvement in this important aspect. Rates of attendance have declined over time and remain below that of similar schools.

# Recommendations and next steps

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

- R1 Strengthen the strategic leadership and coordination of approaches to improve pupils' attendance
- R2 Improve the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills across the curriculum
- R3 Ensure that teaching consistently challenges pupils to make strong progress
- R4 Strengthen the planning for the provision of Welsh, including opportunities for pupils to use the language across the curriculum

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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