

A report on
Ysgol Bro Elwern

Gwyddelwern
Corwen
LL21 9DF

Date of inspection: May 2026

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Bro Elwern

Name of provider	Ysgol Bro Elwern
Local authority	Denbighshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	68
Pupils of statutory school age	50
Number in nursery classes	7
Percentage of statutory school age 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 21.7%)	7.0%
Percentage of statutory school age 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 9.2%)	*
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	56.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	11/05/2026

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 Bro Elwern provides an inclusive and Welsh learning community where pupils feel safe, happy and valued. The shared vision of being 'one family' permeates the life and work of the school successfully, together with Ysgol Betws Gwerful Goch, which are the federation's schools.

The effective and considerate leadership of the headteacher in charge, the dedicated work of the assistant headteachers and the caring support of the staff and governors promote diligent and productive co-operation between the communities of both schools.

Over time, most pupils make consistent progress in a wide range of skills across the areas of learning, including in their mathematics and writing, which develop soundly. On the whole, staff provide timely opportunities for pupils to consider the quality of their own work. However, teachers' written feedback does not always provide specific enough guidance to help pupils to improve their work or deepen their understanding effectively.

Provision to support pupils' well-being and supportive working relationships between staff and pupils are notable strengths. Staff are valuable language models and this contributes firmly to the development of most pupils' Welsh language skills by the end of their time at the school.

Most pupils develop as curious, independent learners who display positive attitudes and engage well with their learning. Leaders provide valuable opportunities for pupils to contribute enthusiastically to the school's life and work through a range of pupil's voice groups. This equips them to contribute to decision-making with increasing confidence and nurtures their leadership skills successfully.

Staff provide a broad and relevant curriculum for pupils and consider their views sensibly about what they would like to learn. A rich cross-section of interesting and consistent learning experiences is provided, including extremely effective entrepreneurship activities, to develop pupils' interests and skills purposefully. However, the most effective teaching practices and staff's expectations are not always consistent enough across the federation to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress in their learning.

The school's relationship with parents, local businesses and the wider community is an extremely effective element of the school's work, with pupils making a valuable contribution to purposeful community activities and events.

Governors are very supportive of the federation's work and show a strong awareness of their roles and responsibilities. Leaders monitor the quality of provision regularly and have a clear, shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need to be developed further.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Ensure consistency in effective teaching methods and raise staff's expectations to challenge all pupils regularly
- R2 Ensure that teachers' feedback supports pupils to make further progress in their learning

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Ysgol Bro Elwern is federated with Ysgol Betws Gwerful Goch. This means that the schools share one governing body and that the headteacher in charge divides her time across both sites. Through the robust leadership of the headteacher in charge, the dedicated work of the assistant headteachers and the diligent support of the staff and governors, they promote effective co-operation between the communities of both schools.

The headteacher in charge has a clear vision for the federation, which is conveyed skilfully in a verse composed jointly between pupils and the school's partners, namely '*Un teulu yw'r ddwy ysgol, un teulu ar y cyd, un teulu lle cawn ddysgu, mewn dysg a dawn o hyd.*' This vision forms a firm basis for the federation's work and contributes successfully to providing valuable opportunities for pupils to learn within inclusive and Welsh-speaking communities.

The working relationship of leaders and staff with parents and the wider community are extremely strong and are a notable feature of the federation's life and work. The

continuous co-operation and communication promote the schools effectively in their local communities and parents value the provision and care provided for their children.

Spotlight: Fostering a strong sense of community through effective partnerships

The school is at the heart of its community. Leaders and staff forge and maintain valuable partnerships that enrich pupils' well-being and learning experiences skilfully. They make comprehensive use of contributions by visitors and visits within their local area to expand pupils' experiences. For example, members of the community support older pupils to develop valuable first aid skills. Pupils also contribute regularly to the life of the community by performing at local events and special celebrations, such as 'Cawl a Chên' sessions. Pupils also visit a local residential home regularly to read, perform and play games with the older residents. These experiences develop pupils' social skills purposefully, foster empathy and respect towards others effectively and strengthen the sense of belonging and pride in their local area extremely successfully. The parent teacher association is extremely hard-working and contributes regularly to enriching provision and the opportunities provided for pupils.

Governors take pride in the proactive partnership that exists across the federation. Through regular visits to the learning environments, they have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This enables them to make an informed contribution to specific discussions to set agreed, sensible strategic priorities for the federation.

Leaders have established robust arrangements for evaluating provision and learning. They make purposeful use of a range of purposeful self-evaluation activities, including scrutiny of work, learning walks and gathering the views of pupils and their parents. Through this, they gain a clear understanding of the strengths of provision and the aspects that need to be refined further. Leaders make creative use of the additional funding from a variety of purposeful grants in the community to support the school's priorities and enrich pupils' learning experiences.

Leaders provide an appropriate range of opportunities for pupils to contribute meaningfully as members of the school councils, and they contribute effectively to important developments in the life and work of the school. For example, they have recently worked with leaders to review the anti-bullying arrangements, by strengthening the awareness of pupils and parents of everyone's right to feel safe from physical and verbal abuse. Through these meaningful opportunities, pupils develop their leadership and co-operation skills successfully.

A notable element of the school's work is the warm working relationship between staff and pupils. This fosters a supportive environment for learning. Leaders and staff promote pupils' emotional, physical and social well-being successfully. There is a clear emphasis on providing regular opportunities to promote pupils' physical fitness by taking part in regular swimming sessions and team competitions as a federation. Almost without exception, pupils are happy at school and feel that adults value them and support their well-being through beneficial opportunities to discuss their feelings. Over time, most pupils make consistent progress in their learning from their individual starting points.

Through purposeful strategic action, the headteacher in charge fosters an environment of respect and regular co-operation among the federation's staff. The assistants are valuable members of the school team and contribute effectively to enriching pupils' experiences. Through meaningful professional learning opportunities, staff develop valuable expertise to lead creative and beneficial activities skilfully in the forest area for the federation's pupils. This is a notable feature of the inclusive provision which contributes firmly to fostering pupils' enjoyment and curiosity in their learning.

Most pupils' listening skills develop purposefully as they take an increasing interest in each other's contributions. Most pupils behave politely and respectfully, demonstrating inherent care towards each other, adults and visitors.

Most pupils develop positive attitudes to their learning. As they move through the school, they develop increasing confidence and persevere well with their learning. As a result of using purposeful thinking techniques, most pupils develop as confident independent learners who try to find a solution themselves before turning to adults for support.

Many pupils' reading skills in Welsh and English develop well as they move through the school. The youngest pupils use phonics methods to identify simple and familiar words correctly and effectively. They enjoy reading with their older peers, which builds their confidence and engages their interest in books purposefully. As pupils' skills mature, many read an appropriate range of texts with increasing fluency and apply their reading skills purposefully to support their learning across the curriculum.

Most pupils develop their writing skills soundly and use them successfully across the areas of learning. The youngest pupils practise their early writing skills by using different tools purposefully in the indoor and outdoor areas. At the top of the school, the oldest pupils continue to develop their writing skills further in both languages and adapt their style appropriately for different texts effectively.

In the best practices, staff question pupils skilfully to check their understanding and provide valuable opportunities for them to discuss and refine their work as a natural part of learning. However, in general, teachers' written feedback focuses too much on spelling accuracy and does not always provide specific enough guidance to support pupils to improve their work. Teachers also do not always take advantage of opportunities to expand and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of various themes purposefully enough.

Most pupils develop a sound understanding of a range of mathematical concepts and apply their numeracy skills confidently in relevant contexts. Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to nurture their digital skills purposefully. From an early age, the youngest pupils apply their various skills purposefully to support their learning. As their skills mature, the oldest pupils, for example, produce a podcast to discuss effectively what if Christmas happened every day.

Leaders and staff provide a broad and balanced curriculum which is rooted firmly in the local area, pupils' Welsh identity and the wider world. The valuable link with a school in Uganda contributes effectively to developing pupils' awareness of other people's cultures and perspectives around the world. Leaders and staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development purposefully.

Staff plan purposeful learning activities that build deliberately on pupils' previous skills and knowledge. They provide an appropriate balance between adult-led activities and opportunities for pupils to learn independently. Pupils respond confidently to these experiences and work together effectively while taking increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Spotlight: Expanding pupils' horizons through meaningful entrepreneurship experiences

Through a wide range of entrepreneurial activities and creative financial strategies, such as planning businesses, developing and selling products in local shops and managing savings plans in the school, pupils develop entrepreneurial and money management skills skilfully.

As part of this work, pupils work diligently with leaders to identify shared priorities for improvement, which include promoting pupils' attendance and developing reading at home. Through creative initiatives, such as collecting 'ELWOS' tokens on a weekly basis, pupils make meaningful decisions about spending in the school shop or investing their savings in the bank. This is beginning to contribute firmly to fostering pupils' enjoyment of

reading and to maintaining consistently high levels of punctuality and attendance over time. These valuable experiences broaden pupils' understanding of the world of business and the economy of the local area effectively, contributing successfully to raising their aspirations for the future.

In the best practice, staff ensure a pace that is suitable for learning, have high expectations and provide an appropriate level of challenge. By tracking pupils' progress purposefully, leaders and staff support them purposefully to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding continuously. However, the most effective teaching practices and staff expectations are not always consistent enough across the federation to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress in their learning.

Upholding pupils' pride in their Welsh and Welsh-speaking identity is an integral part of the life and work of the federation. Staff promote the language enthusiastically, which has a robust effect on pupils' Welsh literacy skills from a young age. By the time they reach the top of the school, most communicate eloquently in both languages and contribute purposefully to class discussions, expressing their opinions clearly and maturely. For example, the oldest pupils discuss significant events in the Aberfan disaster and place them intelligently on an emotion graph.

Through close co-operation with staff from nearby schools, teachers and assistants are given regular opportunities to share effective practice and their specialisms in teaching and learning. This contributes firmly to the federation's ability to improve continuously. They present a beneficial variety of joint activities to the schools' pupils, such as modern foreign languages, and develop pupils' wider digital and expressive skills successfully.

Additional information

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

The school's arrangements for site management do not give any cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances and grant funding appropriately.

Leaders recognise that the federation has a financial surplus and they spend it prudently.

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Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers, staff and the governing body/committee members 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 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 the specialist resource base (where appropriate) 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 (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- 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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