

A report on

Ysgol Y Faenol

Penrhosgarnedd

Bangor

Gwynedd

LL57 2NN

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 y Faenol

Name of provider	Ysgol y Faenol
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	225
Pupils of statutory school age	171
Number in nursery classes	30
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%)	11.4%
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%)	11.7%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	14.6%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	15.2%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2025

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May 2026

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

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

The school's leaders foster a shared vision of a happy and caring Welsh learning community, where all pupils are valued and supported to thrive. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff are an effective and passionate team who provide rich experiences in a safe and supportive environment. The close relationship between staff, pupils and parents, along with the strong links with the community of Penrhosgarnedd, are key elements of the school's success. The school celebrates pupils' cultural diversity and fosters a strong sense of belonging to their local community, Wales and the wider world.

One of the school's strengths is the natural use of the Welsh language by staff and pupils. From an early age, pupils begin to speak confidently and, by the time they reach the top of the school, they use mature and accurate language. The curriculum is broad and learning experiences provide a purposeful level of support and challenge. Pupils value the purposeful opportunities to contribute their ideas to build a curriculum that engages their interest and promotes their commitment successfully. Teachers also ensure that experiences develop pupils' skills, including their literacy, numeracy and digital skills, consistently over time.

Leaders have self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes that have been established firmly and contribute effectively to improving pupils' well-being and the development of their skills over time. Leaders respond appropriately to national and local priorities, for example by increasing the use of the Welsh language as a medium for teaching and learning and by fostering a firm Welsh and Welsh-speaking ethos. Although the school's leadership capacity has developed suitably, wider leadership roles have not yet been developed fully. Leadership responsibilities have not been allocated clearly enough and leaders across all levels do not contribute fully to promoting sustainable improvements in teaching, learning experiences and pupils' outcomes.

Members of the governing body are extremely dedicated and are supportive advocates for the school. They have a sound understanding of the financial situation and fulfil their financial supervision duties carefully and responsibly. Recently, the governing body has begun to engage more directly with quality evaluation activities that develop their ability to challenge leaders on aspects of teaching and learning. However, the governing body does not currently contribute systematically enough to the school's self-evaluation processes.

Leaders promote broad, creative and balanced provision that supports most pupils' well-being, skills and emotional development effectively. Teaching assistants play an

essential part in providing successful support programmes, particularly for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are learning English as an additional language (EAL).

Recommendations

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

- R1 Strengthen the role of the school's wider leadership team, including the governing body, to contribute strategically to self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The warm, welcoming and Welsh atmosphere at Ysgol y Faenol forms the basis of its happy and inclusive learning community. The headteacher is an excellent role model who commands the respect of all members of the school community. He has high expectations of himself, staff and pupils. The headteacher works diligently with staff, governors and the wider community to set a firm strategic direction and to provide consistent education, care and support for pupils. This contributes to ensuring that most pupils make good progress in their learning.

Leaders are passionate that the motto, '*Tyfu, dysgu a llwyddo gyda'n gilydd*' ('Together we grow, learn and achieve') is at the heart of all the school's work and there is a clear emphasis on using and celebrating the Welsh language.

Staff work together effectively to plan rich learning experiences that develop pupils' skills successfully. The stimulating learning environments celebrate pupils' work and provide accessible resources that support their development.

Very few pupils speak Welsh naturally on entry to the school or they are from households where neither Welsh nor English is spoken as their first language. With the successful support of staff, who are effective language models, most pupils develop to become confident and lively speakers. Positive attitudes towards the Welsh language are evident among pupils and staff across the school.

Spotlight: Developing the Welsh language and Welsh culture

Provision to develop pupils' ability to speak Welsh naturally is a strength. A strong ethos of Welshness is a prominent feature of the curriculum and weaves effectively through the life and work of the school. There is a whole-school focus on developing pupils' Welsh oracy skills and staff act as strong language role models. Daily opportunities to develop language patterns and correct syntax nurture fluent, polished Welsh speakers from an early age. Progress is clear and there is robust progression in pupils' linguistic skills, with most using mature and rich language by the time they reach the top of the school.

Over time, most pupils make good progress in their reading skills. They have a good understanding of texts, predict correctly and express a purposeful opinion about the content of texts. Most pupils' writing skills develop soundly. Older pupils write maturely across a range of creative genres with increasing fluency, accuracy and detail which takes good account of purpose and audience.

The development of most pupils' mathematical skills is strong. Teachers provide challenging and meaningful mathematics activities for pupils which support their understanding of a range of concepts skilfully. They apply their numeracy skills successfully across a good range of purposeful contexts. Most pupils' digital skills develop extremely effectively, from early coding to using devices confidently to complete interesting projects.

Staff develop pupils' physical and creative skills successfully through art, music and sports activities. Through these activities, most pupils foster pride in their local area and Wales, in addition to an understanding of the various cultures of the world, which prepares them to become intelligent and ambitious citizens. Pupils respond effectively to feedback from teachers, which supports pupils to know what they have done well and to identify the next steps in their learning.

Staff work as an effective and passionate team and create a caring environment, which permeates all aspects of school life. This promotes strong working relationships between staff and pupils. Teaching assistants are an integral part of the school team and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and to promoting their emotional well-being through purposeful and meaningful support programmes. Through all of this, pupils' foster curiosity and respect skilfully, which supports them to take pride in the diverse nature of their community.

Through activities, assemblies and celebrations, pupils celebrate the school's linguistic and cultural heritage and foster pride in their Welsh and multicultural identity extremely successfully. The broad and balanced provision promotes a sound spiritual, moral and social awareness which forms the basis of the inclusive community.

Staff know the community well and work with dedication to ensure that all families receive the appropriate support. Staff have a very good knowledge of the needs of individual pupils. The school has robust arrangements to support pupils from low-income households and those with additional learning needs (ALN), including pupils in the moderate needs class. Staff monitor and track pupils' progress from their starting points very thoroughly and provide a comprehensive range of purposeful support programmes that respond very effectively to pupils' needs.

Spotlight: Supporting the well-being and skills of pupils with ALN and those who are learning Welsh and English as an additional language (EAL)

Regular professional discussions among staff ensure that they have a detailed understanding of the needs of all pupils. They use a wide range of comprehensive evidence to plan learning experiences that are tailored carefully to specific needs. Teams of skilful assistants lead effective support programmes that promote pupils' well-being and the development of their literacy and numeracy skills, including those who are learning EAL, extremely successfully. Promoting pupils' well-being is a clear priority. The language immersion programme for the Welsh language at the school also strengthens the skills of those pupils who are learning EAL, while promoting their confidence and ability to integrate successfully into the life of the school and its Welshness. Strong partnerships with parents and external organisations contribute significantly to the success of provision. As a result, nearly all pupils who receive support make very strong progress.

The school's leaders and staff demonstrate sound values and professional conduct of a high standard, creating a safe, warm and inclusive environment where pupils feel valued. High expectations for pupils' behaviour are communicated clearly and constructively, fostering a community based on respect, empathy and fairness. As a result, the behaviour

and attitudes of nearly all pupils in lessons, and around the school, are exceptionally good. Pupils' pride in their school is also clear, with a strong sense of belonging to one big family. They treat each other, adults and visitors with respect, courtesy and kindness.

Leaders have clear self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes which have an appropriate effect on pupils' well-being and progress in their skills over time. Leaders respond effectively to national and local priorities, such as providing more Welsh as part of teaching and learning and establishing a Welsh and Welsh-speaking ethos. Although the school's leadership capacity has developed suitably, wider leadership roles have not yet been developed fully. Leadership responsibilities have not been allocated clearly enough and leaders across all levels do not contribute fully to promoting sustainable improvements in teaching, learning experiences and pupils' outcomes.

Members of the governing body are wholly committed and are strong advocates for the school. They have a strong understanding of the financial situation and manage it carefully. Recently, they have undertaken a few quality evaluation activities, which is beginning to develop their ability to challenge leaders on aspects of teaching and learning. However, the role of governors in the school's self-evaluation processes has not yet been developed fully.

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 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, 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.

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:

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