

A report on

Ysgol Acrefair

**Tower View
Acrefair
Wrexham
LL14 3SH**

Date of inspection: June 2026

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Acrefair

Name of provider	Ysgol Acrefair
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	205
Pupils of statutory school age	158
Number in nursery classes	17
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%)	16.0%
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%)	*
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2025

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/09/2018
Start date of inspection	15/06/2026

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 Acrefair provides a caring and inclusive environment where nearly all pupils feel safe, valued and ready to learn. Strong leadership sets a clear direction and high expectations across the school. Staff understand their roles well and work together effectively, creating a warm sense of belonging. Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals, feel confident and make secure progress from their starting points.

Teaching supports pupils' learning effectively. Teachers plan engaging lessons, use questioning skilfully and provide helpful feedback that supports pupils to improve their work. As they move through the school, most pupils develop independence, resilience and positive attitudes to learning. They work well with others and behave very well, contributing to a calm and purposeful learning environment.

The school offers a rich and engaging curriculum that makes very good use of the local area and community partnerships. This helps pupils enjoy their learning and understand how it connects to real-life experiences. A particular strength is the emphasis on developing pupils' sense of identity and belonging through local links, which motivates them and helps them recognise their role within their community.

Most pupils develop good literacy and numeracy skills. They read confidently, enjoy a wide range of texts and write for different purposes. Many pupils produce imaginative writing, although a minority of older pupils do not always develop their ideas in enough depth. Pupils apply their mathematical skills effectively and use digital technology suitably to support their learning. While pupils enjoy learning Welsh, many do not speak the language confidently in everyday situations.

The school has a robust and effective approach to supporting and enhancing pupils' well-being. Strong relationships, regular well-being checks and a wide range of valuable learning experiences help pupils feel supported, develop respect for others and grow into confident, thoughtful individuals.

Recommendations

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

R1 Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Ysgol Acrefair is a school that places the care, support and well-being of pupils at the heart of its work. The headteacher provides well-considered and highly effective leadership. She has established a clear and ambitious vision and has high expectations for all members of the school community. Staff understand their roles in securing improvement and create a strong sense of belonging. This ethos helps to ensure that most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals, feel safe, attend regularly and make secure progress from their starting points.

Leaders have established a robust culture of safeguarding and implement effective systems to monitor pupils' well-being. Most pupils manage their emotions successfully and engage positively in their learning. These secure foundations, alongside highly positive relationships between staff and pupils, lead to a calm, purposeful learning environment and exemplary behaviour.

Leaders ensure that staff access beneficial professional learning that strengthens the quality and consistency of teaching. Collaboration with other schools and targeted training have supported the implementation of a coherent mathematics curriculum. Teachers deliver lessons with clarity, enabling most pupils to make good progress in developing their mathematical understanding. Many younger pupils explain their thinking clearly using practical resources, while most older pupils apply their numerical skills effectively across a range of meaningful contexts.

Across the school, teachers maintain an engaging pace during lessons and provide pupils with beneficial feedback to improve their work. They draw well on prior learning, question pupils skilfully and adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs. This allows most pupils to develop resilience and take increasing responsibility for their own work. Nearly all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and cooperate well with peers as they move through the school.

Leaders and staff have created a curriculum that links purposefully with the school's locality and community. Staff design rich learning experiences that make effective use of the surrounding area and build strong community partnerships. Pupils benefit from engaging opportunities that motivate them and deepen their understanding of a wide range of interesting themes and topics.

Spotlight: Promoting a sense of Cynefin through local connections

Staff work collaboratively to design a broad and authentic curriculum rooted firmly in the local context, with valuable links to industry and tourism. Through worthwhile learning experiences, such as writing to their regional Senedd member about environmental protection, pupils develop a strong sense of Cynefin and community pride, deepening their understanding of identity and belonging. Most pupils apply their learning confidently in real-life situations and develop a clear awareness of their role as active citizens within their immediate locality and beyond.

The school's focus on developing a broad curriculum ensures that pupils develop a wide range of valuable skills. Effective provision for digital learning enables most pupils to use an appropriate range of devices and applications confidently to enhance their work. Similarly, creative opportunities, including partnerships with external providers, engage most pupils and develop their artistic and musical skills well. These experiences, supported by well-planned assemblies and inclusive teaching, enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and help them become reflective, respectful and appreciative of diversity and different perspectives.

Through effective teaching and well-planned provision, most pupils develop their literacy skills well. Teachers use stimulating books and resources to ensure that a positive reading culture is central to the curriculum. Most younger pupils develop a secure understanding of phonics and enjoy listening to stories, while most older pupils read fluently and with good understanding across an increasingly wide range of rich and varied texts.

Leaders and staff have strengthened provision for pupils' writing successfully. As they progress through the school, many pupils develop a sound understanding of how to structure and refine their writing. In the best examples, pupils produce imaginative and engaging pieces of work. At times, a minority of older pupils do not develop their ideas with sufficient depth or accuracy.

Staff set high expectations for pupils' communication skills. Teachers model ambitious vocabulary effectively and provide frequent opportunities for discussion, supporting most pupils to become confident, articulate communicators. Leaders actively promote the Welsh language and foster positive attitudes towards it in pupils. However, current teaching approaches do not build pupils' confidence in speaking Welsh sufficiently over time. Consequently, pupils' ability to use Welsh in simple conversations is underdeveloped.

In the youngest classes, staff ensure that provision reflects pupils' developmental needs accurately. Well-planned opportunities for purposeful play, supported by the effective deployment of support staff, encourage most pupils to explore, collaborate and develop

independence. Through these experiences, most pupils also build suitable physical skills alongside their curiosity and confidence, creating a strong foundation for future learning as they progress through the school.

Leaders have established inclusive systems to support pupils with ALN. Staff work closely with external agencies to provide tailored support for identified pupils through precise learning goals and targeted interventions. This coordinated approach ensures that most pupils with ALN make secure progress towards their individual targets. Similarly, leaders use the pupil development grant effectively to provide beneficial support for eligible pupils' well-being and early literacy skills.

Staff place a suitable emphasis on promoting pupil voice, reflecting the school's inclusive ethos. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to influence their learning and take on leadership roles. Groups such as the "Happiness Heroes" collect pupils' views and contribute to monitoring the effectiveness of well-being provision. While these opportunities strengthen pupils' sense of belonging and responsibility, adult direction too often limits pupils' independence in these roles.

Governors play an important role in supporting the school's work. They have developed an increasing understanding of the quality of teaching and learning through the evaluation of first-hand evidence and actively monitor national priorities, including improving attendance. This strengthens shared accountability and supports leaders in driving improvement. Governors and leaders manage financial challenges carefully. They secure additional funding and use resources strategically, such as those to enhance outdoor learning provision. These decisions improve the quality of the learning environment and contribute positively to pupils' experiences.

Leaders have established effective self-evaluation processes that link closely to improvement planning. They gather a wide range of evidence to identify priorities accurately and take purposeful action. Recently, they have strengthened site security and improved the consistency of mathematics teaching in response to their findings. These improvements demonstrate leaders' ability to bring about meaningful change that positively impacts pupils' outcomes.

Strong partnerships with parents and the wider community further enhance the school's provision. Clear communication and approachable staff build trust with families, while links with local organisations provide valuable learning opportunities, such as cookery and outdoor experiences. The school has a strong and beneficial relationship with its cluster partners. Work here has helped to develop a shared understanding of progression and has supported improvements in the extent to which pupils understand the next steps in their learning.

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. They have implemented a recovery plan to improve the current deficit budget position, and this has been authorised by the local authority.

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 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:

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