

A report on
Ysgol y Bannau

**Penlan
Brecon
Powys
LD3 9SR**

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 y Bannau

Name of provider	Ysgol y Bannau
Local authority	Powys 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	94
Pupils of statutory school age	85
Number in nursery classes	*
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%)	7.6%
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%)	0.0%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	22.4%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No

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Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	05/02/2018
Start date of inspection	01/06/2026

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 y Bannau is a happy, caring and inclusive school where the well-being of pupils and staff is at the heart of its work. The headteacher provides clear and purposeful leadership and shares the school's vision successfully. She is supported by a dedicated team of staff who foster warm and respectful relationships with pupils. As a result, the school is a safe and welcoming community where pupils are valued and know where to get support. The school benefits from strong support from parents, governors and the community.

Staff work together effectively to provide an interesting curriculum that engages most pupils' enthusiasm. Pupils make a valuable contribution to planning their learning and offer creative ideas that help to shape relevant and engaging experiences. Many pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those from low-income households, make suitable progress from their starting points. Learning experiences do not always challenge a few pupils consistently enough.

Most pupils develop sound oral skills in Welsh and English and gain confidence and develop increasingly rich vocabulary over time. Most pupils' reading skills are strong and, by the time they reach the top of the school, they read fluently in both languages. Many pupils develop suitable writing skills and write confidently across a range of genres. However, opportunities to apply these skills across the areas of learning are not always organised coherently enough. Many develop appropriate mathematics skills but opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills purposefully across the curriculum are inconsistent.

Leaders ensure that there are suitable arrangements for monitoring the quality of the school's work. However, processes are not always incisive enough to evaluate the effect of provision on pupils' progress effectively.

Most pupils' behaviour is good and they treat others with kindness and courtesy. They make a valuable contribution to the life of the school and the local community. Provision for well-being, personal development and additional learning needs is strong and supports pupils effectively.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Ensure that monitoring activities focus more closely on the effect of provision on pupils' outcomes
- R2 Develop the curriculum to ensure that it supports pupils to apply their writing and numeracy skills constructively across the areas of learning
- R3 Ensure that learning experiences challenge pupils appropriately

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Ysgol y Bannau is a happy and supportive school that places a clear emphasis on the well-being of pupils and staff and on fostering strong links with the local community. The headteacher has established a clear and purposeful vision and shares the aim of '*Cyd-ddysgu i greu'r dyfodol*' (Learning together to create the future) effectively with staff, pupils and parents.

The headteacher has high expectations of herself and others. She is supported by a dedicated team of staff who work diligently to support pupils' well-being and progress. They foster warm and respectful working relationships with pupils. This, in turn, contributes strongly to the positive culture and caring and inclusive environment, where pupils feel safe and know who to turn to for support.

Staff work together purposefully to provide a curriculum that engages the interest of most pupils. Pupils contribute enthusiastically to designing the curriculum by offering imaginative and wise ideas about what they would like to learn. Teachers present a suitable range of learning experiences that meet the needs of many pupils purposefully, on the whole. Over time, many pupils, including those from low-income households and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make suitable progress in their skills from their starting points. However, learning experiences do not challenge a few pupils effectively enough.

On the whole, learning sessions are paced appropriately. Teachers model learning purposefully and are strong linguistic models. Pupils respond well and use appropriate language when discussing concepts and providing explanations. Teachers use a suitable range of questioning methods to recall previous learning and confirm pupils' understanding. In the best practices, probing questioning encourages and prompts pupils to consider their learning critically. Teachers' feedback does not support pupils to improve their work consistently enough. Most pupils' attitudes to learning are sound and their behaviour is good. They immerse themselves naturally in their learning experiences and concentrate appropriately on their tasks. They are polite towards each other and adults and treat each other with kindness and affection.

Although a significant percentage of pupils come from non-Welsh-speaking homes, most acquire good speaking and listening skills over time. As they move through the school, most develop their vocabulary and confidence when speaking in Welsh and English. Most pupils' reading skills are sound. By the top of the school, most read fluently in both languages, varying their voices to capture the listener's interest effectively.

Many pupils' writing skills are suitable. The youngest pupils begin to form words and simple sentences appropriately. The oldest pupils develop their writing skills successfully, showing an appropriate understanding of a range of written forms. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across the areas of learning have not been planned coherently enough.

Over time, provision supports many pupils to develop their mathematics skills suitably. In general, opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills purposefully across the curriculum are inconsistent. Many pupils make appropriate progress in their digital skills. Pupils' awareness of how to work safely online is robust.

Most pupils develop an appropriate range of artistic, creative and physical skills purposefully. For example, the youngest pupils control their movements increasingly skilfully and build their confidence to perform successfully when folk dancing.

Pupils are members of an appropriate range of groups and committees and contribute suitably to school life. They take pride in their roles and take their responsibilities seriously. For example, pupils lead and take part in valuable community activities, including the St David's Day parade in Brecon. This contributes effectively to promoting the Welsh language and strengthening pupils' sense of belonging to their local community, in addition to developing important skills such as co-operation, organisation and communication.

Through purposeful periods of reflection that are arranged, such as in assemblies and in the well-being corners, most pupils develop a good awareness of their emotions and how to self-regulate their feelings. Provision develops pupils' understanding of different religions effectively and fosters valuable skills such as tolerance and respect for others. Culture, heritage and the Welsh language are promoted effectively through purposeful activities, such as the school Eisteddfod and visits to relevant historical sites.

Provision to support pupils with ALN is sound. Staff track pupils' progress carefully. This supports them to identify pupils' needs at an early stage and, where appropriate, to provide purposeful support programmes that meet pupils' needs well. Staff work well with parents and a range of external agencies to review progress and adapt provision purposefully, as required.

The headteacher has established appropriate arrangements for monitoring the quality of provision. Leaders use a suitable range of evidence to identify a few strengths and areas for improvement. However, evaluation processes are not always incisive enough and do not identify actions specifically enough.

In general, the school's arrangements for monitoring staff's performance are effective. Purposeful professional learning activities, including visiting neighbouring schools to

share effective practices, address the school's priorities, national priorities and the development needs of individual staff purposefully.

Governors are very supportive of the school and know the community the school serves well. They provide the headteacher and staff with meaningful support. Governors are beginning to undertake a few monitoring activities, which supports them to identify some of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They manage the school's resources carefully.

Links with parents are strong. The 'friends of the school' are extremely supportive of the school. They organise a wide range of fundraising activities that contribute to improving the school's environment and resources, such as developing the wild area. This, in turn, supports pupils' well-being and progress purposefully, in addition to fostering a strong sense of belonging to the close-knit community that is characteristic of the school.

Additional information

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

Concern was raised about the management of the site during the inspection and the local authority has been informed.

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. A plan has been agreed with the local authority to address the financial deficit.

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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Publication date: 03/08/2026