

A report on
Ysgol y Dderwen

Heol Spurrell
Carmarthen
SA31 1TG

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 Dderwen

Name of provider	Ysgol Y Dderwen
Local authority	Carmarthenshire 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	358
Pupils of statutory school age	273
Number in nursery classes	37
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 the primary sector is 22.9%)	4.9%
Percentage of 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 11.1%)	*
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	63.4%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	08/03/2025

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	28/03/2017
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

The interim headteacher's robust leadership provides a clear direction for the school, with a purposeful focus on enriching learning experiences and supporting the personal development of each pupil. This vision has been shared successfully with staff, parents and the community, fostering a strong sense of collective purpose. With the support of a dedicated team, leaders have fostered a caring environment that reflects the Welsh nature of the school and contributes to high standards of behaviour and commitment to learning among almost all pupils.

Most pupils develop Welsh communication skills effectively and use the language confidently in a range of contexts. As they move through the school, they strengthen their reading and writing skills consistently and express their ideas successfully. Most pupils' mathematical and digital skills are sound. They use their numeracy knowledge purposefully in when handling data and solving problems, while their use of technology supports communication and information presentation skills effectively. Almost all pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to use technology safely and responsibly.

Staff deliver a curriculum that offers a rich range of experiences, engages pupils' interest and supports robust development in their skills across the areas of learning. In the best practice, the activities challenge pupils purposefully to make sound progress and teachers are beginning to use feedback more effectively to support pupils to understand their strengths and the next steps in their learning appropriately. However, these most effective practices are not rooted consistently enough across the school.

Leaders use effective procedures to evaluate the quality of provision which supports them to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The investment in purposeful professional learning has strengthened the quality of provision, especially in the early years. Governors know the school well and provide effective support.

Recommendations

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

R1 Ensure that the most effective teaching practices are consistent across the school.

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The interim headteacher has established a clear vision that focuses on providing rich learning experiences and promoting the wellbeing and development of all pupils. She shares this vision effectively with staff, parents and the wider community, promoting a culture where everyone contributes purposefully to realising it.

The interim headteacher has high expectations of herself, staff and pupils, which contributes effectively to creating a caring and Welsh ethos across the school. She is supported well by a team of dedicated staff who work together diligently to provide interesting learning experiences that ignite pupils' interest and nurture their natural curiosity effectively. As a result, almost all pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent.

Almost without exception, staff model the Welsh language effectively, which contributes strongly to the development of pupils' communication skills. Across the school, most pupils develop sound listening and speaking skills and use Welsh confidently in a range of contexts. From an early age, pupils develop their reading skills effectively while building their understanding of letters, sounds and words. By the top of the school, most pupils are confident and mature readers who use tone and expression skilfully to convey meaning and create an appropriate mood when reading.

Most pupils develop into confident writers who express themselves successfully across a range of genres. The youngest pupils form letters and write simple words skilfully. As they move through the school, most pupils write effectively for different purposes, for example when creating reports as part of their science investigations.

Most pupils make sound progress in their mathematics and numeracy skills. The youngest pupils develop their understanding of mathematical concepts purposefully. Over time, most pupils apply their number skills effectively across the areas of learning by drawing and interpreting graphs, analysing data and solving problems successfully.

Most pupils use digital tools confidently to support their learning. They apply their skills robustly when communicating, researching, and presenting information. For example, the oldest pupils use coding software successfully to create a digital 'rock, paper, scissors' game. Almost all pupils understand the importance of working safely on the internet and use technology responsibly as part of their learning.

Teachers work together effectively to plan a relevant curriculum that engages and maintains the interest of almost all pupils. They provide rich learning experiences, including valuable opportunities to learn in the external environment. Their purposeful questioning methods build effectively on pupils' prior learning and extend their knowledge and understanding further. As a result, pupils, including those from low-income households and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress and develop their skills successfully. In the most effective practice, staff have high expectations and plan activities carefully to ensure that they challenge pupils appropriately. However, these practices are not consistent across the school. Teachers are beginning to use feedback more effectively to support pupils to identify their strengths and the next steps in their learning. This work is in its early days and the practice has not yet rooted consistently enough across the school.

Staff encourage pupils to influence the life and work of the school successfully. This supports pupils to develop appropriate leadership skills and take responsibility for their decisions. For example, they have influenced the provision positively to promote enjoyment and love of reading across the school.

The interim headteacher has established robust arrangements for monitoring the quality of provision and pupils' skills. She uses a wide range of evidence to identify the school's strengths and areas for development. In addition, leaders of areas of learning and experience and teachers work together effectively in scrutinising pupils' work and conducting observations of teaching and learning. This arrangement ensures that staff have a clear awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and implement improvement in a timely manner.

Leaders create and maintain a positive culture to promote, develop and support staff's professional learning, which has a beneficial effect on the learning environment and pupils' skills.

Spotlight: The positive effect of professional learning on the learning environment and pupils' skills

As a result of purposeful professional learning, early years staff have strengthened their understanding of how to plan stimulating learning experiences by considering the principles of the curriculum for non-maintained settings. This has enabled them to create a stimulating and rich learning environment that engages pupils' curiosity and encourages them to explore and learn increasingly independently. In addition, activities are planned purposefully to develop pupils' skills skilfully across the areas of learning, which contributes to strong and sustained progress in their learning.

Governors act effectively. They share responsibilities conscientiously and conduct purposeful visits to evaluate the effect of the provision on pupils' standards and progress. As a result, they have a sound understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. An excellent aspect of governors' work is the way in which they use this information to promote and support improvements. For example, they have offered useful comments on the way the school reports on pupils' progress to parents. As a result, the school has developed more effective reporting arrangements that give parents a clearer understanding of their children's progress and development.

The parent teacher association makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school. By organising a range of successful activities such as St Dwynwen's disco and an enterprise and business fair jointly with the older pupils, they raise money to enrich the provision and resources that are available to pupils. For example, they have funded an adventure course, which expands opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills effectively.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are not a cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for the management of the site are not a cause for concern.

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

At the time of the inspection, the arrangements for managing the school's funding, including the use of the pupil development grant, were appropriate.

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.

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