



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Ysgol Cae'r Nant**

**Mold Road  
Connah's Quay  
Deeside  
Flintshire  
CH5 4QL**

**Date of inspection: February 2023**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Cae'r Nant

Name of provider	Ysgol Cae'r Nant
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	384
Pupils of statutory school age	290
Number in nursery classes	47
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 23.0%)	23.9%
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 16.1%)	16.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	11.4%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	12/08/2014
Start date of inspection	13/02/2023

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](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

## Overview

Ysgol Cae'r Nant is a very caring and welcoming school. Staff know their pupils and their families well. They provide high-level support and compassion, particularly for those pupils and their families experiencing difficult circumstances. Provision for pupils' emotional well-being is highly effective and is a strength of the school. Pupils say that they feel safe, secure, and happy in school. They know that adults in the school care for them and that they can turn to them when they face challenges or have difficulties. This allows them to thrive in the school's inclusive environment.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to school, behave well and enjoy their learning. They form strong relationships with adults and one another and show respect and courtesy for all members of the school community. Most pupils focus well in lessons and demonstrate interest in their learning. As a result, nearly all pupils make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well.

Teachers and other staff adapt teaching and learning to meet the educational and wider needs and interests of pupils well. Staff are encouraged to try new approaches to teaching and to provide a range of interesting and relevant activities and experiences that reflect the community in which they live. They listen carefully to what pupils want to learn about and weave their ideas into well-planned sequences of lessons that build systematically on pupils' knowledge and understanding. Most teaching is purposeful and enables pupils to develop their literacy and digital skills well. Provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum and their Welsh language skills is less well developed.

The headteacher provides strong leadership. She is motivated and determined to succeed for the benefit of pupils and the community. Staff and governors share her clear vision. They work together cohesively to ensure that the school is a thriving learning community that provides positive opportunities for its pupils. Leaders evaluate the school's work carefully to identify the areas of its work that are most effective and those aspects that need to be improved. This enables them to plan for improvements and provide purposeful professional learning opportunities for staff.

## Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen provision for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills
- R2 Improve provision to support pupils' application of their numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R3 Ensure that pupils in all classes have opportunities to decide for themselves how they respond to learning tasks and to make decisions about how they organise their work

## **What happens next**

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to health and well-being provision that has a highly positive effect, especially on the most vulnerable pupils, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Nearly all pupils make good progress in their learning during their time at the school. The pandemic has slowed this progress for a minority of pupils in some areas of learning, particularly in the development of their Welsh language skills. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) progress well from their individual starting points and achieve well against their personal targets.

Most pupils develop their language and communication skills well. From an early age, pupils listen with increasing interest and sustained concentration for extended periods of time. By Year 2, many pupils express their ideas well and speak with enthusiasm, for example when discussing the little yellow alien who lands in Connah's Quay. As they move through the school, most pupils become increasingly articulate. Older pupils listen purposefully to gain information, for example when learning about the work of the rangers at the local country park. They ask questions and volunteer opinions maturely.

At an early stage, most pupils begin to understand the importance of books and develop an enthusiasm for reading. Nursery and reception pupils enjoy listening to stories. They begin to recognise and name a range of sounds and use this knowledge to start to read simple but stage-appropriate texts. By Year 2, many pupils read confidently, and they are happy to tackle unfamiliar words with a variety of strategies. As pupils move through the school, they build on this progress and develop a good range of strategies to become fluent readers. By Year 6, many pupils read a range of appropriate texts independently. They apply their reading skills effectively to support their learning in different areas of learning.

From a young age, many pupils show enthusiasm for writing when experimenting with mark making. By Year 2, many write an increasing range of sentences effectively, and develop their ideas creatively and imaginatively when writing a class story about the alien landing on earth, for example. As they progress through the school, pupils write perceptively for a wide range of purposes. They choose words carefully to enhance their writing for the reader, for example when writing about how Christmas is celebrated in different countries. By Year 6, many pupils plan, draft and improve their work thoroughly to produce high quality, well-structured writing linked to their class topics, for example when presenting a balanced argument as to whether they should leave the earth or stay.

The development of pupils' Welsh language skills has been hampered by recent missed learning opportunities. Many pupils have a positive attitude to learning Welsh and respond to teachers' instructions well. Many children in the Nursery classes respond well to class instructions by the teacher and sing songs in Welsh enthusiastically. As pupils progress through the school, many answer with basic responses during discussions with teachers and each other, for example when sharing personal information. By Year 6, many pupils show an appropriate understanding of spoken language in familiar situations. However, their Welsh language skills are not as advanced as might be expected for their stage of

development. Consequently, pupils do not use their oral Welsh language skills confidently enough in other areas of the curriculum and around the school.

Many pupils develop their mathematical skills well. From an early age, pupils build a useful range of mathematical skills and enjoy maths challenges, undertaking counting games and matching activities enthusiastically. By Year 2, many have a secure grasp of number facts to 100. They recognise shapes, use money in their play and are developing confidence in telling the time. As they progress through the school, most pupils work well with the four rules of number and use their developing numeracy skills well to solve problems, for example when discussing the cost of various items in a shop. By Year 6, many pupils use a wide range of methods competently to calculate in their heads. They describe their thinking and reasoning clearly when explaining how they reached their conclusions. Generally, however, pupils across the school do not use their numeracy skills at a similar level in other areas of the curriculum.

From an early age, pupils apply digital skills in a range of creative contexts to support their wider learning. By Year 2, many use tablet computers confidently to practise their literacy and numeracy skills and to record their learning, for example when learning about bees. In Years 3 to 6, many pupils use their digital skills well to support independent research and to write, edit, re-draft and present their findings, for example about the work of famous Welsh artists. By Year 6, many pupils use databases confidently, for example to record their work on the different birds that inhabit the River Dee. They have a good understanding of how basic coding can be used to control a programmable toy and to create a warm-up activity for younger pupils.

Pupils enjoy using their creative and artistic skills. They use a variety of media creatively and demonstrate good fine motor skills, using scissors, glue and paint brushes confidently. By Year 6, most pupils use their creative skills well, for example to represent different landscapes in Wales. Many pupils participate enthusiastically and energetically in a wide range of physical activity. This has a positive effect on their confidence, their ability to work together, and their fitness and well-being.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and are confident in the school environment. Most are happy and proud of their school. They say that they feel safe there and free from issues of bullying. They feel well supported, know where to turn if they need support and are confident that staff will listen and deal appropriately with any concerns.

Nearly all pupils behave well. They move around the school sensibly and purposefully and are polite and courteous to each other and visitors. They listen carefully to what their friends and teachers say and respond to their ideas considerately.

Most pupils show very positive attitudes to their learning. They talk enthusiastically about their work and engage positively with the class topics. From an early age, pupils settle in lessons quickly, concentrate well on their learning and focus effectively on activities. Most pupils collaborate well and show respect and care for

the ideas of others when working in pairs and groups. They engage well with their tasks and work suitably in pairs and small groups. Many concentrate well, avoid distractions, and complete their tasks successfully. They play co-operatively, take turns, and support each other well, when playing games and socialising at break times.

Nearly all pupils take part in planning their termly topics. This results in most pupils displaying high levels of interest and engagement in their learning. They show an increasing ability to plan jointly and to express an opinion about what they want to learn. When given the opportunity, many plan and carry out tasks with limited support. However, in a few classes on occasion, pupils are over-reliant on teacher direction and do not make enough decisions about how they organise and present their work. This limits the opportunities for pupils to think for themselves. By Year 6, many pupils are ambitious, confident, and independent learners, able to plan and carry out tasks with limited support. They persevere well with tasks and activities and seek alternative solutions when a first attempt fails. They understand that making mistakes is an important step in their learning.

Pupils, from an early age, are encouraged to reflect on their learning. Many respond well to feedback from adults and their peers to improve their work and develop their skills further. Older pupils make increasing use of self and peer assessment and are keen to make changes to their work. This improves their self-confidence and supports their progress as they move through the school. As a result, by Year 6, most pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are progressing with their learning, to think for themselves and what their next steps should be.

Many pupils make good use of opportunities to develop their leadership skills through a range of roles and pupil voice committees, for example the Pupil Parliament, Eco Committees and Digital Leaders. They understand that they are representing the views of other pupils in the school community and take this role seriously. This helps to develop their confidence, resilience and empathy for others, and gives them valuable insight into how decisions are made. While undertaking these roles, many pupils present themselves with confidence and can explain where their work has made a difference to school life. For example, members of the Pupil Parliament talk enthusiastically about their influence in introducing the concept of Wellbeing Warriors who support vulnerable learners during lunchtime. They have also been instrumental in improving playground facilities, including the tyre park and circus equipment, which enhance all learners' outdoor experience.

Most pupils have a clear understanding of the need for rules and the concept of fairness and equality. They demonstrate an appropriate understanding of cultural diversity, for example by learning about different religions. They are beginning to understand some of the ethical issues facing the world, such as the problems caused to the environment by waste and world food hunger.

Pupils are proud of their efforts in support of local and national charities. These initiatives have a positive effect on their awareness of the needs of others in their community and the wider world and help pupils to develop as ethical and responsible citizens.

Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when online. For example, they know not to share their passwords. Many pupils understand the importance of looking after their own well-being. Nearly all pupils know the importance of keeping healthy and fit. They talk knowledgeably about healthy food choices for snacks and the need to drink water regularly. They appreciate the importance of taking regular exercise, involving themselves actively in a range of physical activities, such as the daily mile and a range of after-school clubs.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Staff develop a close working relationship with pupils, fostering a positive and supportive environment for learning. They know the pupils well, encouraging them to participate and frequently praising their efforts while they are working and interacting with their peers. This contributes to a positive learning environment where pupils feel listened to and are confident to ask questions if they need support or help with their learning.

The school's curriculum reflects the principles and values of the Curriculum for Wales successfully. Staff work closely with pupils, parents and governors to create a vision for the school's curriculum. This is based appropriately on local issues and themes including, for example, the story of a local ship the Kathleen and May and pollution in the River Dee. They ensure that the curriculum is relevant, engaging, challenging and accessible to all pupils. They use drama-based approaches creatively to engage the pupils in a wide range of authentic and interesting learning experiences that build on their previous learning and develop their skills effectively. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to influence what they want to learn, and these ideas are incorporated into their work well. For example, younger pupils suggested how they could make Beegu the alien feel welcome in the school.

All staff create attractive and engaging learning areas including working walls, accessible resources and displays of pupils' work that support pupils' learning well. They use the outdoor learning environment, including the forest school, to support learning successfully. Teachers have good up-to-date subject knowledge and use a variety of effective teaching methods that motivate pupils to learn. Support staff work alongside teachers skilfully and contribute effectively to pupils' learning. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well, ensuring that most pupils are engaged and remain on task during lessons.

Teachers provide clear instructions that support pupils to know what they need to do to be successful. They use questioning well to move pupils' learning on and support understanding, according to the needs of pupils. This ensures that most pupils are appropriately challenged. Most teachers provide their pupils with effective feedback and intervene sensitively at appropriate times during the lesson to support pupils as they work. In most classes, teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. In the few classes, where the teaching is less effective, teachers tend to guide and over-direct activities too much, which limits opportunities for pupils to decide for themselves how they organise and present their own work effectively.

Teachers plan collaboratively to ensure that pupils develop appropriate skills and make sound progress. They have developed a shared understanding of progression



and have clear expectations of what they intend the pupils to achieve. Staff use guided reading sessions well to enhance pupils' reading skills effectively and encourage pupils to use electronic tablets to support the development of their literacy and mathematical skills. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and digital skills in a range of activities, for example to support their study of the local environment. However, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills at an appropriate level across the curriculum.

Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the language, culture and heritage of Wales, as well as opportunities to learn about their locality, including the area's maritime history. Staff promote the advantages of learning Welsh effectively and Welsh is promoted consistently across the school. Many teachers use basic Welsh vocabulary appropriately in the classroom, for example to give instructions to their pupils. Generally, however, staff do not make the most of opportunities to model the language or encourage pupils to speak, ask and answer questions in Welsh.

Teachers provide annual residential visits, for example to an outdoor centre, and this has a positive impact on pupils' social and physical skills. Visits to school by members of the local community contribute effectively to the pupils' understanding of their local area. For example, older pupils asked questions and found out about how democracy works when visited by the local town councillors. Younger pupils found out about the work of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute in the River Dee. The school provides a broad range of engaging extra-curricular activities that enrich pupils' experiences, including guitar lessons and the netball club.

### **Care, support and guidance**

Staff work hard to provide a calm and caring environment where pupils feel safe, happy, and looked after. They provide an inclusive and supportive ethos that nurtures pupils' personal and social skills successfully and has a positive effect on pupils' well-being and enthusiasm towards learning.

Staff use an extensive range of strategies very well to support pupils' well-being and emotional development, and to promote good behaviour. These include early tailored support for individuals and groups, such as art and play therapy, outdoor learning, and cookery sessions, which increase pupils' self-confidence and social skills. These activities support pupils to manage their feelings and control their emotions highly effectively. Consequently, pupils' needs are very well met, and the early and bespoke support contributes positively to developing pupils' resilience and perseverance.

Staff know the pupils and their families very well. They are very aware of the potential well-being issues that some pupils may face and respond sensitively to their needs. They ensure a network of support for the whole family when dealing with difficult circumstances. This contributes effectively towards ensuring robust support for pupils, develops their self-confidence and social skills effectively, and helps them to manage their feelings and to promote empathy very successfully.

The school's commitment to working jointly with external agencies provides valuable opportunities for pupils to improve aspects of their well-being, in addition to relevant training for staff. As a result, many of the most vulnerable pupils and those with

learning needs are more eager to come to school, and more willing to respond to staff and participate in school activities.

There are effective systems to track and monitor pupils' progress. Arrangements for identifying and responding to the needs of specific pupils are rigorous. Teachers create useful one-page profiles for all pupils with ALN, in addition to good quality individual development plans. This contributes effectively towards ensuring robust support for pupils. Teachers set realistic and achievable targets for them and monitor their progress carefully. Highly skilled staff deliver a wide range of support programmes to improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and well-being. They contribute successfully towards increasing pupil confidence, resilience and self-image.

Parents and carers are well supported by the school and other professionals to support their child through a personal and bespoke approach, which focuses on their child's strengths as well as their areas of need. The approach fosters positive relationships between home and school and supports the child's progress very well. As a result, many of the most vulnerable pupils and those who need additional support in learning make good progress.

There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, and social skills. They have a strong sense of the importance of valuing differences and treating one another with respect. For example, teachers provide valuable and practical opportunities for pupils to learn about what it might be like to have challenging physical needs. The daily acts of worship, where pupils have time for reflection, support their spiritual and moral development well. The school's values on promoting honesty, fairness and friendship are well understood by the pupils and have a positive effect on their attitudes and behaviour.

The curriculum offers pupils with a wide range of experiences the opportunity to develop their understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, younger children use a fictional story character and drama to communicate what they know and have discovered about their local community. Older pupils learn about the flooding of 'Tryweryn' and can talk about local landmarks such as Eryri. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of their local area or 'Cynefin' and demonstrate pride in their Welsh culture.

Various pupil voice groups such as the Pupil Parliament provide pupils with valuable opportunities to contribute to school development. Teachers listen to their ideas, taking many on board, for example by adopting the concept of Wellbeing Warriors who care for and support vulnerable learners at playtimes.

All staff understand their roles and responsibilities in contributing robustly to pupils' safety and well-being and ensure that these are prominent elements of school life. As a result, the school's culture and arrangements for keeping pupils safe meet requirements and give no cause for concern. There is effective provision to support pupils to keep themselves safe when working online. The school has sound strategies in place to promote good pupil attendance, including daily monitoring, regular communication with parents and follow-up work supported by the local authority.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear strategic direction for the school. She is passionate about the school and the community it serves and puts staff and pupil well-being at the heart of school life. She promotes a clear mission statement for the school, 'Imagine with all your mind, Believe with all your heart, Care for all your friends, and Exceed all your goals and dreams'. Leaders embrace this vision firmly and convey it effectively to all staff, pupils, governors, and parents.

The headteacher's sensitive and efficient leadership has a positive impact in all areas of the school. She is supported strongly by the leadership team and, together, they effectively model professional values and behaviour that contribute purposefully to effective collaboration amongst staff. The teamwork that exists within the school is a strength and ensures that everyone contributes effectively to realising the vision successfully. Staff are dedicated and hardworking and collaborate well to ensure that pupil well-being is at the heart of their work. They have created a positive safeguarding culture, where pupils and staff feel safe and valued. Staff know their community well and work with dedication to ensure that all families, including those who are disadvantaged, are well supported. One of the school's strengths is the clear emphasis on well-being strategies to support pupils' emotional needs, particularly for vulnerable pupils.

Governors are conscientious and supportive of the headteacher. They monitor the school's finances carefully to make sure that expenditure directly benefits the pupils. They receive regular updates from staff regarding progress towards identified areas in the school improvement plan, pupil progress and staff training. These clear lines of communication ensure that the governors clearly understand the areas for improvement and are able to challenge and support leaders appropriately as the school moves forward.

The school has robust self-evaluation processes. Leaders gather a wide range of information about the school's work and use this well to make decisions about the school's priorities for improvement. Leaders work diligently with staff to develop a collective responsibility for self-evaluation and school improvement and hold staff to account appropriately. For example, they hold regular progress meetings to consider individual pupils' progress and, as a result, pupils who are found to be underperforming are identified quickly and suitable provision is put in place. They seek the views of a good range of partners, including pupils, parents and governors. As a result, plans for improvement identify the school's priorities accurately, including the need to extend opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum and to improve pupils' confidence to speak Welsh beyond the classroom. Among leaders and staff, there is a strong commitment to address local and national priorities, such as implementing the Curriculum for Wales and transitioning to the new ALN system.

Leaders and staff establish effective links with parents. There is regular communication using digital platforms. Well-organised face-to-face parent meetings to discuss pupil progress are highly valued by parents, particularly the opportunities to share and celebrate their children's work. Family learning programmes provide parents with valuable opportunities to work alongside their children and support their children at home.

Leaders create a strong culture of professional learning across the school. Professional development links well to the needs of individual teachers, local or national priorities and areas identified in the school improvement plan. Leaders ensure that all staff have purposeful opportunities to engage in professional learning, which impacts positively on their own development, the direction of the school and the outcomes for pupils. This has a positive effect on improving pupils' oracy skills, for example. Staff reflect carefully on their training and welcome the regular opportunities to share their experiences with colleagues. This ensures that there is a whole-school approach to delivering aspects of the curriculum, for example in providing high quality gymnastics activities across the school.

School leaders and governors manage their school budget well and careful financial planning ensures that the school has sufficient funds to deliver plans in the coming year. The school monitors and allocates the pupil development grant and other additional funding carefully, ensuring a range of valuable support programmes to help the emotional and social development of vulnerable pupils.

## 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 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

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://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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