



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Y Traeth**

**Barmouth  
Gwynedd  
LL42 1HH**

**Date of inspection: June 2023**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh**

## About Ysgol Y Traeth

Name of provider	Ysgol Y Traeth
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	206
Pupils of statutory school age	164
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	18
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 23.0%)</i>	21.9%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 16.1%)</i>	12.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	17/03/2015
Start date of inspection	05/06/2023

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from 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 y Traeth is passionate about developing, assisting and supporting its learners to succeed in a safe environment that respects everyone. The attitude of staff and pupils of belonging to the town and the wider community is embedded in the school's curriculum and ethos.

All staff have an effective working relationship with pupils, which promotes good attitudes to learning and well-being, in addition to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. Pupils' well-being is given extremely purposeful attention. Staff have a sound awareness of the needs of nearly all pupils and respond to their needs in a timely manner. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is effective and responds well to their needs. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are positive. They feel proud of their school and its community.

Most pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' Welsh language skills are developing increasingly well. Staff have implemented a number of strategies to increase pupils' confidence to speak Welsh with increasing confidence and foster a Welsh culture in the classroom and beyond. However, in less formal situations, most pupils turn to English naturally when communicating with each other. Most pupils develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills appropriately by the end of their time at the school. Staff plan interesting activities to engage pupils' interest. However, teachers do not always ensure regular opportunities to develop and extend pupils' independent writing skills. The school has also begun to plan to apply these skills across the curriculum, but it has not planned constructively and purposefully enough to ensure progress and an appropriate challenge to meet pupils' needs.

The headteacher and new deputy headteacher have a clear vision that gives the school a clear direction. There is a dedicated team of staff who model excellent language for pupils. They work together highly effectively and are keen to develop professionally.

## Recommendations

- R1 Address the safeguarding issue that was raised during the inspection
- R2 Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills and develop their Welsh language skills
- R3 Ensure development and progress in pupils' skills across the school

## What happens next

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

## Main findings

### Learning

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with ALN and those who are eligible for free school meals, make sound progress from their starting points. They develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in interesting contexts, which encourage them to enjoy learning.

With encouragement from adults, many pupils develop their skills to communicate with increasing confidence in Welsh and English. For example, in the nursery class, pupils are given opportunities to sing various songs to foster and develop the confidence to speak Welsh increasingly. Across the school, most pupils listen carefully to staff presentations and respect the contributions of their peers consistently. As pupils move through the school, a majority strive to speak Welsh when completing their work and develop their vocabulary and patterns suitably. However, in less formal situations, most pupils have a tendency to turn to English when communicating with each other.

Most pupils' reading skills develop effectively. The youngest pupils develop their knowledge of letter sounds skilfully and, by Year 2, they use a good range of strategies effectively to read less familiar words. Many of the oldest pupils develop their skills soundly and enjoy reading a variety of texts. However, their knowledge of authors and book terminology, for example the contents, the blurb and how to search the contents of factual books, is limited.

In the classes of the youngest pupils, most pupils' early writing skills develop appropriately. They develop their fine motor skills robustly before moving on to make marks appropriately both inside and outside the classroom, for example by using a small tool to match colours and by using dough to make shapes of seashells. As they move through the school, many pupils develop their writing skills appropriately. For example, the school's older pupils develop their writing skills appropriately and consider the audience when writing. Many write with a good level of accuracy and punctuate appropriately. However, they are not given enough opportunities to write extended pieces and refine and improve their work regularly enough to master different genres of writing.

Across the school, most pupils develop a sound understanding of mathematical concepts. From a young age, they recognise numbers to ten and begin to record data successfully in tables and bar graphs. By the end of Year 2, many develop a sound understanding of number facts, such as doubling and calculate the perimeter of picnic blankets confidently. Most older pupils use their four mathematical operations confidently. On the whole, many begin to apply their numeracy skills

appropriately in work across the curriculum. For example, Year 5 pupils calculate the distance between attractions in the local area and Year 6 pupils interpret local train timetables successfully. However, they are not given purposeful enough opportunities to extend their skills to the best of their ability.

Most pupils' digital skills are developing strongly. They use these skills successfully to research and support their learning in the areas of learning and experience regularly. The youngest pupils give instructions to a programmable toy confidently. However, pupils' data-handling and coding skills have not been developed effectively enough.

The sound creative skills of nearly all pupils are a strong feature of the school. From the earliest age, most pupils show imagination and curiosity and develop their creative expression successfully through a variety of means. The youngest pupils develop their creative talents effectively, for example by gathering and selecting natural materials to create jackdaw nests. At the top of the school, pupils emulate the various styles of Welsh artists to create impressive pictures and experiment with sounds and rhythms by using tuned and non-tuned instruments to compose short pieces of music.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop their physical skills with increasing confidence and proficiency and apply them successfully in team sports and fitness sessions.

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

Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy within the school's caring and inclusive community. They are confident that staff listen and respond promptly when they have concerns or need support. They offer visitors a very warm welcome and show obvious pride when sharing information about their school and the local community. Most pupils show courtesy and are thoughtful of the needs of others, for example by opening doors and letting others go in front of them. Many develop mature social and interpersonal skills and interact responsibly with their peers, demonstrating increasing maturity.

Most pupils develop a sound understanding of the importance of moral and principled citizenship and respond well to the emphasis the school places on promoting sound values in all individuals. The various cultural and linguistic backgrounds within the school community prepare them effectively to develop a very good awareness of their responsibility to maintain aspects such as inclusion, equal opportunities and sustainability. Most develop the ability and willingness to share and discuss their feelings when the need arises and in more formal opportunities, such as 'Circle Time'. They show empathy towards the needs of those in need and are very keen to lead and organise events to support charities.

Most pupils understand the importance of making responsible choices to promote their physical, mental and emotional well-being. For example, by drinking water regularly from their individual bottles, which have been designed by them and are a source of pride. Nearly all pupils also show an enthusiasm to participate in physical activities, such as the '*Deffro'r Bore*' session, the '*Ffitrwydd, Byw'n Iach*' programme and the wide range of opportunities they are given to take part in games and sports

competitions. All of these are popular among nearly all pupils, promote their fitness and resilience and give them a firmer footing for learning.

Most pupils appreciate the opportunity to offer their ideas about the school's life and work and respond enthusiastically to those opportunities. Members of the school council demonstrate a good understanding of their role and undertake their duties conscientiously. They are confident that their views and ideas are taken seriously by leaders, for example in developing the school's outdoor area and providing resource boxes for each class to use during break times. However, their voice has not been developed fully to have a more effective influence on the school's wider life and work.

Most pupils have a sound awareness of procedures for staying safe online. They show a good understanding when explaining the importance of following the advice they receive from their teachers and the school's police liaison officer.

Most show an interest and curiosity in their learning tasks and face learning experiences and new challenges with increasing confidence and resilience as they move through the school. Most pupils respond well to the purposeful range of strategies and interventions that promote their well-being and enable them to participate fully. As a result, most pupils behave responsibly.

Most pupils welcome opportunities to make choices in terms of what they would like to learn, for example by sharing and developing ideas for the content of their learning themes, such as studies of their local area (*cynefin*) and the 1960s. As they move through the school, many pupils develop the confidence to work increasingly independently and to challenge themselves more, for example when choosing their tasks. However, they do not always take enough ownership of their own learning or try to apply their own solutions before seeking support from staff.

Overall, most pupils demonstrate the ability to concentrate for extended periods and persevere well with their tasks. On the whole, they achieve productively and successfully within timescales, apply themselves to their tasks and do not allow other things to distract them. Many pupils respond positively to oral feedback from staff and show a willingness to act on comments to improve their work.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

There are exceptionally good working relationships between all staff and pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils and their families very well and ensure that nearly all pupils feel safe and happy in their classes. Staff manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and sensitively. The learning environment is welcoming and attractive, which engages pupils' interest in their learning successfully.

The school has a clear vision and teachers are beginning to adapt their schemes or work appropriately to cover the areas of learning and experiences appropriately. They have worked with pupils, parents and governors to create a vision for the curriculum and relate it to pupils' lives. The school provides a broad curriculum that reflects the school's local context and strong sense of belonging to the town and their local area, which ignites pupils' interest in learning more about their history and culture. A good example is Year 5 pupils working on the rich enterprise project, '*Meistri Mynyddoedd*', by creating a mountain guide company in the local area.

Teachers plan a range of engaging activities, which ensure that pupils are given interesting and stimulating experiences that engage the interest of nearly all pupils successfully. Staff are excellent language models and this helps pupils to develop their fluency appropriately. Curricular experiences promote pupils' understanding of well-being and fitness effectively. For example, the school works with external agencies that provide fitness sessions, with a focus on healthy living. Teachers also provide valuable opportunities for pupils to influence what they learn, for example by emulating the work of the Welsh artist, Tom Sloan, during their project on the football World Cup.

On the whole, staff plan suitable opportunities for pupils to learn in the areas outside the classroom. In the best practice, the youngest pupils use various outdoor areas that enrich their skills successfully. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to nurture their independence and creativity in the areas outside the classroom.

Staff plan suitably to develop the skills of the school's youngest pupils. For example, teachers in the reception class hold lessons in the local nature area, Y Wern Fynach, which promotes pupils' literacy and numeracy skills effectively. However, teachers do not plan effectively enough to ensure regular and cohesive opportunities for pupils to develop their skills progressively. The over-use of worksheets, including some in English, hinders the development of pupils in terms of communicating confidently in Welsh in lessons and informal situations. In the school's upper years, there are also very few opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum. This means that teachers do not develop the full range of skills for the oldest pupils nor challenge them sufficiently across the range of ability.

Across the school, teachers ask probing questions to build on pupils' previous knowledge and develop their thinking skills. They ensure interesting presentations and endings that engage pupils' enthusiasm and hold their interest effectively. They provide beneficial and timely oral feedback to encourage pupils to consider what they are doing well and how to improve their work. Teaching assistants support this effectively. However, written feedback does not always place enough emphasis on opportunities to improve and refine the content of their work. For example, pupils are not given enough opportunities to master different genres of extended writing.

Teachers and teaching assistants track pupils' progress appropriately and use a range of standard tests results and other information about their development. This ensures that they respond promptly to their needs and support them in a timely manner. A strong feature of provision is the input and support of the teaching assistants, who support learning robustly with specific groups of pupils skilfully.

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

The school is a caring, inclusive and happy community that supports the emotional, health and social needs of all pupils very effectively. This enables nearly all pupils to engage positively and benefit from the learning opportunities that are provided for them.

Staff have a very thorough knowledge of all pupils and aim continuously to meet their individual needs. Progress discussions and continuous assessments contribute very

successfully to ensuring a clear and current picture of all pupils' needs. This enables staff to respond suitably and promptly to all pupils and their very wide range of learning and well-being needs.

Provision for ALN is a notable strength of the school's provision. The school has adopted the new code of practice successfully and has produced a provision map which includes a detailed record of all elements of provision. As a result of planning provision skilfully, pupils receive support that meets their needs successfully. The ALN co-ordinator, teachers and teaching assistants work together closely and conscientiously as a team to tailor support for pupils appropriately. Staff have appropriate arrangements for tracking the progress of pupils with ALN, which relate to their targets in their individual development plans and their progress from their starting points. As a result, nearly all pupils on the ALN register make good progress.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately. The school's caring and inclusive ethos, in addition to the varied range of learning opportunities, is an effective means of promoting pupils' understanding and development of these aspects. Opportunities to reflect on values, for example through discussions during lessons, collective worship and 'Circle Time', provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on values such as kindness and respect, caring for the environment and diversity. Teachers plan to promote pupils' knowledge and understanding of other religions, in addition to Christianity. Pupils are given an opportunity to learn about religions and religious celebrations, such as Diwali and Ramadan and about the contributions of influential global individuals, such as Martin Luther King and Barack Obama.

The school takes advantage of opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of their Welsh identity, heritage and culture appropriately. Opportunities are taken to share and celebrate these elements through a range of activities that are shared through exhibitions within the school and on social media. These include a St David's Day Eisteddfod and Cymraeg Cŵl Week, inviting musical artists and drama companies to the school and learning about Welsh artists. However, opportunities to learn and link their Welsh identity with the wider world are limited.

Nurturing pupils' kindness is at the heart of the school's provision. Pupils are given opportunities to take part in performances and events as individuals and in groups. This fosters their self-confidence and their expressive ability to contribute creative ideas by working on musical compositions and taking part in shows and concerts in the community. The input of external artists is also used, such as a professional drama company that promotes aspects of Welsh history through the tales of the Mabinogi. These experiences have a positive influence in nurturing pupils' curiosity and imagination successfully.

The school provides appropriate opportunities to promote the pupil's voice. However, these opportunities are limited and the concept of pupil councils has not been developed widely enough at the school, for example, opportunities for pupils to contribute their views and ideas to have an influence on the school's wider life and work.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding and a caring ethos towards all pupils. The procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns about pupils are sound



and staff make timely referrals to external agencies, where appropriate. The school has sound processes for monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality. However, there are health and safety issues relating to the school grounds. Leaders have identified these and have begun to respond to these issues.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has established and created a clear vision jointly with the school community effectively. The vision is based on creating a happy and caring learning environment to provide a firm foundation for pupils to develop their basic skills.

The senior management team sets high expectations for staff, pupils and themselves. They develop an effective team of highly effective teachers and support staff who focus well on promoting pupils' well-being. All staff are keen to develop their practice while fulfilling their duties skilfully. Leaders use staff expertise effectively to support pupils' well-being and achievement.

Middle leaders model and promote professional values and behaviour, which make a positive contribution to improving the school and fosters effective co-operation between staff and staff from a nearby school. For example, leaders have shared good practice from projects to develop pupils' oracy, such as *'Ein Llais Ni'*, in addition to visiting nearby schools as part of their continuous professional development. Through regular meetings and staff discussions, nearly all have a sound understanding of the school's main priorities.

Members of the governing body are highly supportive of the school and contribute increasingly to the school's self-evaluation processes, which enable them to identify strengths and areas for improvement. They receive regular, up to date information from the headteacher and use their experiences from their visits to support leaders with their work.

Leaders have appropriate arrangements for managing financial resources and are aware of the importance of trying to reduce the effects of poverty on pupils' achievement. This includes using the pupil development grant suitably to improve standards and ensure inclusion in the school's activities, such as visits, musical instrument lessons and a reading bag for each pupil. Leaders spend the budget prudently and allocate funding to support priorities for improvement. Governors promote provision for pupils' health and well-being successfully, for example by encouraging parents to provide healthy lunchboxes for their children.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils, the school and its community exceptionally well. The school has strong and beneficial links with the local community to provide valuable experiences for pupils. For example, the youngest pupils use the community area regularly to reinforce pupils' learning experiences. Leaders and staff respond to communication from parents in a timely manner. Recently, leaders have developed a new website to promote communication between the school and the home successfully.

Leaders identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement through a variety of evaluation processes. These processes are developing increasingly well, with teachers and curriculum leaders playing an increasingly proactive part. As a result,

leadership across the school is beginning to develop appropriately. Leaders have begun to seek the views of all members of the school community, including pupils, appropriately as part of the improvement processes. Through these processes, leaders have already identified some priorities for the improvement plan for the next academic year.

The school works effectively with staff from local schools to respond to national priorities, the new curriculum and ALN legislation, for example. From this co-operation, leaders produce shared priorities that focus suitably on improving provision and pupils' outcomes and identify staff's responsibilities for taking action and monitoring progress appropriately. However, actions for improvement are not always purposeful and detailed enough to improve standards of teaching and learning within the school effectively enough.

Leaders have created a productive culture and ethos to promote and support the professional learning of all staff. They support rich opportunities for them to take part in a good range of training that responds robustly to their individual needs and the school's priorities. For example, many teachers and teaching assistants are given intensive training to support pupils' well-being, which has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body/members of the management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons, 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

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (<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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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