



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Pont Y Gof**

**Botwnnog  
Pwllheli  
Gwynedd  
LL53 8RA**

**Date of inspection: March 2024**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About Ysgol Pont Y Gof

Name of provider	Ysgol Pont Y Gof
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled School
Number of pupils on roll	97
Pupils of statutory school age	85
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	12
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 23.7%)</i>	8.5%
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 13.2%)</i>	14.5%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	77.5%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	08/12/2015
Start date of inspection	18/03/2024

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 Pont Y Gof is a close-knit community that celebrates Welshness, courtesy and respect exceptionally well. All staff are committed to ensuring a high quality of care and well-being for pupils in a homely and hard-working learning environment. This has a strong influence on pupils' attitudes towards each other and others both inside and outside the school. Their behaviour is excellent and they demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.

The supportive working relationship between staff and pupils builds pupils' confidence successfully. Most pupils show strong motivation and a curious interest in their learning and make sound progress from their starting points. This is because teachers plan interesting activities for them which make learning exciting and fun. Pupils benefit from rich learning experiences which enable them to develop the skills they need to take advantage of the whole curriculum. On the whole, pupils organise and present their work appropriately.

The school has a strong Welsh ethos. Pupils' pride in the Welsh language is a strong feature and they use the language completely naturally both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers provide a range of valuable experiences that promote pupils' awareness of their local area, its history and traditions. As a result, pupils show pride in their heritage and a clear appreciation of the culture and history of the local area. A notable quality of the school's work is the clear emphasis placed on providing valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the economy of the rural community of which the school is a part and develop the skills they need to succeed locally.

Pupils have a strong voice in the life of the school and enjoy the opportunities they are given to influence what they would like to learn within the termly theme. They thrive by contributing to a variety of councils that have a positive effect on school life. This creates a strong sense of belonging.

The headteacher provides effective and considerate leadership that values the efforts of everyone who contributes to pupils' education. She receives strong support from dedicated staff who work well together as a team. They show a strong commitment to promoting continuous and sustainable improvements. Governors have a good understanding of the school's work and support the school effectively.

## Recommendations

- R1 Provide more opportunities for the oldest pupils to make decisions about how they organise and present their work and respond to learning activities with increasing independence

## 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, to be disseminated on Estyn's website, on its work in relation to how Ysgol Pont y Gof, in response to the aspirations of the community, plan learning experiences to reflect the nature, context and economy of the local area to encourage pupils to become full members of their community and ensure that they develop the skills to use in the world of work and succeed locally.

## Main findings

### Learning

On entry to the school, most pupils' skills are around what is expected for their stage of development, apart from their Welsh language skills, which is a new language for a few of them. Pupils who are latecomers to the language gain confidence quickly and respond positively to encouragement from staff to use the language during their activities. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress and achieve well.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop effective listening skills and most speak confidently and politely. By Year 2, they use Welsh syntax correctly, for example when discussing the litter problem in the 'Coed Cofan' area. Most of the oldest pupils speak Welsh completely naturally and use purposeful vocabulary and rich language when discussing their work, for example when orienteering on the school grounds. They express themselves maturely in Welsh and English in class discussions and are very considerate of the views of their peers.

The youngest pupils enjoy listening to stories and recounting them to their friends and adults. They begin to recognise and name a variety of sounds and use this knowledge to begin reading simple texts that are appropriate for their stage of development. By Year 2, most read with increasing fluency and understanding with good development in their phonic skills to read unfamiliar words. Most of the oldest pupils read intelligently in various contexts in both languages. They vary their tone of voice and use punctuation correctly to demonstrate their understanding. Most use their reading skills effectively to gather information from various books and texts from relevant websites.

Most pupils' writing skills develop well. By Year 2, they write in an appropriate range of contexts for different audiences. Most of the oldest pupils write skilfully, for example when writing a monologue from the perspective of Bendigeidfran. They have a good awareness of the importance of punctuation and accuracy when spelling. Most draft their work effectively and use similes and idioms creatively to enrich their work, for example when writing an imaginative story about 'Yr Eira' ('The Snow'). They write purposefully across the areas of learning and show a sound

awareness of the characteristics of a range of different genres in Welsh. However, only a minority of pupils apply their English writing skills consistently enough across the curriculum.

Most pupils across the school make sound progress in their numeracy skills. By Year 2, most develop a useful range of mathematical skills and enjoy mathematics activities, by completing counting games and handling money successfully in the role-play area. Most of the oldest pupils work confidently with the four rules of number, shape and measurement and develop secure data-handling skills. They apply their skills confidently across the curriculum, for example when measuring the thickness of the trees at Pont y Gof.

From an early age, most pupils use an increasing range of digital equipment and software confidently in different contexts to support their learning, for example when comparing the strength of different magnets. Many of the oldest pupils apply their digital skills effectively to respond to different tasks to support their research skills, for example when creating and presenting an animation to demonstrate the importance of recycling and reusing materials. They handle data well, for example when comparing rainfall in Wales and Australia. They begin to develop their coding skills to control an electronic device.

Nearly all pupils develop their creative, artistic and physical skills. The youngest pupils develop a good range of techniques, for example when creating a hedgehog out of natural materials. The oldest pupils vary tone and colour effectively, for example to create pictures to reflect the colours of the Aurora Borealis. Most develop their confidence and work together enthusiastically when performing in school and local community concerts, Urdd competitions and by learning various musical instruments.

Most pupils develop good physical skills, for example when cycling around the school path and by working with woodworking tools in the '*Cwt Seiri'r Gof*' woodwork hut. They apply themselves enthusiastically in physical exercise, dance and swimming lessons and play hockey, football and athletics together successfully in local competitions.

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

Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe within the school's supportive and inclusive environment and know whom to approach to discuss if a concern arises. They feel that they are respected and treated fairly by staff, which contributes positively to the familial and homely ethos. Most pupils show obvious pride in their school and appreciate the rich range of experiences that are provided for them. This is reflected in pupils' enthusiasm towards their learning. Their behaviour in their learning activities and around the school is excellent. They are polite and cheerful with each other and greet staff and visitors in a friendly manner.

Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. The youngest pupils understand the classroom arrangements quickly and learn to play and learn happily alongside their friends. They develop independent learning skills with increasing confidence and apply a good range of skills and previous learning successfully. As they progress through the school, most pupils concentrate diligently on their activities for extended

periods. They work well together and listen to each other's opinions in pair or group work to solve problems, often without support from staff. For example, the oldest pupils work well together to express their opinions maturely on a plan to create a helicopter pad near the school.

Many of the oldest pupils develop increasing resilience when faced with new learning experiences and situations. They show motivation and curiosity in their learning. When they face any difficulty in their activities, they follow the procedure of reflecting, discussing and working with their peers before asking for support from teachers or a classroom assistant. As a result, many pupils develop into ambitious and confident learners who are ready to learn. However, at times, a minority of pupils do not develop their learning skills effectively enough to organise and present their work with increasing independence.

Most pupils contribute beneficially to their learning by suggesting ideas about what they would like to learn to be included in the termly themes. This helps them take ownership of their learning. Pupils who assume leadership roles do so enthusiastically and take their responsibilities seriously. For example, the school council is proud of its contribution in creating the '*Eto ac Eto*' hut to recycle school uniforms. The Welsh Language Charter group plays a key role in encouraging pupils to speak Welsh, listen to Welsh music and delivering playground games to reinforce the use of the language through play.

Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the importance of making wise choices that affect their health. They understand the importance of a balanced diet and the need to keep fit. They enjoy using equipment on the playground during break time. For example, the youngest pupils enjoy using equipment such as bicycles and large toys. The oldest pupils play an important role in hosting and playing games with the youngest pupils. Most pupils show obvious enthusiasm in physical education activities and many welcome and enjoy the sports clubs and learning new skills with visitors, for example when learning a range of traditional dances. This contributes effectively to promoting their fitness and their ability to work together.

Most pupils develop as ethical and informed citizens. Many have a good awareness of the importance of equality and respecting others. They have an understanding of their rights, including an awareness of the right to be happy. By learning about the history of women like Betsi Cadwaladr and Rosa Parks, for example, they develop empathy and a mature understanding of the experiences of people who were brave enough to take a stand for their principles.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, include staying safe online. They apply this effectively when undertaking their learning activities. They are aware of the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school, which contributes effectively to improving the recent attendance rates.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

By listening and acting on the contribution of all stakeholders, leaders and staff have developed a vision and designed a broad and balanced curriculum that has the local area at the heart of learning experiences. Teachers design a range of valuable

experiences that reflect the nature, context and economy of the local society of which they are a part. They have considered how to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and experiences skilfully to become valuable members of their local area. As a result, pupils show pride in their heritage and an inherent appreciation of the culture and history of their *cynefin* or local area. Teachers place a clear emphasis on providing enterprise projects in each class that weave practical and holistic skills into pupils' learning experiences. This helps pupils to develop the skills they need to succeed locally.

All staff create secure relationships with pupils, which fosters a supportive environment for learning. They know the pupils and their families well and provide effective support as they learn and interact with their peers. This has a positive effect on well-being and progress in pupils' skills. They motivate pupils successfully and, as a result, most become immersed in, and enjoy, their learning. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and encourage respect and courtesy consistently.

Teachers plan a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Provision for developing pupils' Welsh listening and speaking skills is extremely effective. Staff use Welsh correctly and in a polished way and take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' language. This contributes successfully to strengthening pupils' linguistic skills and applying them to be used successfully in different contexts. However, teachers do not plan regular enough opportunities for the oldest pupils to apply their English writing skills across the curriculum.

Across the school, teachers use a wide variety of teaching methods to engage and hold pupils' interest. They plan interesting and stimulating learning experiences for pupils, which meet the needs of most pupils successfully. Purposeful co-operation between teachers and classroom assistants provides valuable support to enable pupils to complete their tasks and benefit from them.

The principles of the foundation phase have been embedded successfully. Beneficial emphasis is placed on fostering the youngest pupils' independence by providing practical and stimulating experiences. Presentations by the oldest pupils' teachers are lively and stimulating, which engages most pupils' interest purposefully. They ask pupils probing questions, which supports them to recall previous learning well. However, at times, there is a tendency for the oldest pupils' teachers to lead learning activities too strictly. This, in turn, limits opportunities for pupils to decide how they organise and present their work and respond to activities with increasing independence.

Across the school, staff make highly effective use of the extensive outdoor areas to promote learning. Teachers plan stimulating learning experiences, for example in the '*Cwt Seiri'r Gof*' woodwork hut, which develops pupils' practical woodwork skills successfully. This enables pupils to use these skills creatively, for example when making Christmas decorations as part of an enterprise project.

All members of staff use consistent and varied methods to assess pupils' progress and understanding of what they are doing well and the next steps in their learning. Teachers in each class share success criteria at the beginning of learning activities, which ensures that pupils are aware of what they need to do to succeed. Across the

school, teachers provide pupils with purposeful verbal feedback and encourage them to persevere and reflect further on how to improve their work. They intervene sensitively to help pupils at appropriate times during learning sessions, for example by encouraging them to check their progress against the success criteria. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate and reflect on their own learning and each other's learning effectively.

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

Staff create a very safe, happy and welcoming community at the school. The strong emphasis on respecting others and celebrating their cynefin, or local area, makes a valuable contribution towards developing pupils who are polite, behave excellently and are proud of their school and its community. Staff plan support carefully to meet pupils' emotional, personal and social needs. As a result, nearly all pupils show empathy and respect for their peers and staff and treat each other with tender care. A strong feature of provision is the consideration given to pupils' well-being by providing extensive opportunities for them to discuss their emotions in various ways. As a result, staff know their children very well.

Staff discussions, along with thorough arrangements for tracking pupils' progress, contribute successfully to identifying the needs of all pupils. This is beneficial for staff to identify and take early action when responding to the needs of individuals and groups of learners. Provision for pupils with ALN is organised and effective. Staff provide a range of valuable support and intervention programmes that are tailored carefully to respond to their needs and personal targets. The school makes good use of external agencies, such as the speech and language therapist and the language and communication team. Classroom assistants work knowledgeably and skilfully to support pupils to make progress in their skills. Staff include pupils, parents and comments from external agencies to plan the next steps in their learning effectively.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils from different backgrounds to influence strategic decisions purposefully, in addition to the content of their themes. The effect of the work of the councils and committees can be seen clearly around the school and has improved pupils' well-being and raised their standards of reading, for example by purchasing new books. The school council has also established the woodwork hut to reinforce pupils' practical skills to prepare them for the world of work in the future.

Staff promote Welsh culture and heritage extremely successfully. The school provides stimulating opportunities to celebrate the history and traditions of Wales through interesting events and when using the community as a valuable educational resource. For example, they invite representatives from the business world and members of the community to raise pupils' awareness of the economy of the rural society of which the school is a part and show them a career path on how to succeed locally. This, in turn, encourages pupils to become full members of their communities and show pride in the local area.

Staff nurture pupils' moral and social development purposefully. Periods of collective worship provide valuable opportunities for pupils to consider other points of view. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on how they can help others, for example when supporting local and national charities. Teachers provide beneficial



opportunities for pupils to learn about other beliefs and religions by learning about their traditions and main celebrations, such as the Hanukkah, Diwali and Eid-ul-Adha festivals.

The school provides a range of beneficial opportunities that promote pupils' emotional and physical well-being successfully, for example in swimming lessons, sports clubs and exercise sessions. Teachers organise valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills, for example when working with local artists. Staff provide a rich and varied range of trips and visits to support the curriculum. Purposeful opportunities are provided for pupils to perform and develop their imagination through the expressive, creative and physical arts, for example by competing in local and national eisteddfodau and taking part in cluster sports days. This develops pupils' self-confidence and co-operation skills effectively.

The school's culture of safeguarding is sound and staff understand their roles and responsibilities in terms of pupils' safety and well-being. The school has robust strategies to promote pupils' regular attendance, which includes daily monitoring, regular communication with parents and follow-up work by the local authority. As a result, attendance rates are improving gradually.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher provides effective and considerate leadership, which ensures that the school has a clear strategic direction and a culture that promotes continuous improvement, in addition to a welcoming and happy learning environment. She has a robust vision which is reflected clearly in the school's motto: 'Solid foundations build bridges'. She shared this vision effectively with all of the school's stakeholders. Staff, parents and governors work together effectively to realise this vision and its effect can be seen in pupils' well-being and development.

Leaders promote a culture of effective safeguarding and, as a result, pupils feel safe and enjoy their time at the school. A notable quality of provision is the way in which staff foster and maintain a sense of belonging to the school, the community and Wales. Staff promote the Welsh language and Welshness extremely successfully, which contributes firmly to developing pupils' pride in their identity and heritage. A clear emphasis is placed on providing a rich range of learning experiences that are based on features of the local area as a highly effective means of developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of their locality and its wealth of history and traditions.

The headteacher sets high expectations for herself, staff and pupils. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher. They foster professional values and conduct that contribute well to effective co-operation and lead to a strong team ethos among staff. Leaders ensure valuable opportunities for all members of staff to develop leadership responsibilities.

Leaders know the school well. Robust self-evaluation procedures are at the heart of the school's life and work. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of provision are embedded well and enable leaders to identify aspects that are most in need of improvement clearly. The headteacher ensures that all staff have an active role in the process, which supports them to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. For example, staff have identified the need to improve pupils'

attendance and to ensure more opportunities for the oldest pupils to apply their English writing skills more regularly across the curriculum. Thoughtful and well considered planning ensure that the school addresses these priorities successfully. Staff have a strong awareness and commitment to addressing local and national priorities successfully, for example in introducing the principles of Curriculum for Wales and implementing key elements of the ALN Act effectively.

Staff have a proactive relationship with parents and the wider community, which encourages them to play a key part in the life of the school. Staff communicate with them in an effective and timely manner, which ensures parents' understanding of all of the school's activities and what they can do to support their children. Parents are very proud that their children attend such a supportive school which is at the heart of the rural community of Ysgol Pont y Gof.

Leaders create a positive culture and ethos to promote and support the professional learning of all members of staff. This links clearly with the school's improvement priorities and the individual professional needs of staff. The headteacher keeps a detailed report on the professional learning activities attended by staff. The effect of these activities is measured skilfully to understand the impact on pupils' experiences and progress. These opportunities encourage effective co-operation with other schools, for example to improve pupils' English reading skills and digital skills.

Governors understand their roles well and fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and successfully. They contribute purposefully to setting the school's strategic priorities and have a clear understanding of provision and its effect on progress in pupils' skills. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge and hold the school to account in their role. The governing body ensures that the food and drink that is provided by the school complies with legislation and has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

The school manages its finances efficiently and use them sensibly in line with the school's improvement priorities. It makes purposeful use of additional grant funding, including the pupil development grant, which is used wisely to provide support to help and encourage pupils' well-being and learning. Staff use the school's resources effectively to provide an engaging learning environment that supports teaching and learning purposefully. They use the school's extensive grounds regularly, which include a well-developed forest area, to provide stimulating and creative opportunities for outdoor 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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**This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).**