



## Report summary for parents and carers on Ysgol Bryn Elian

**Date of inspection: March 2024**

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

# Overview

Ysgol Bryn Elian is a caring and inclusive school where pupils feel safe, and staff feel valued. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel that staff deal effectively with any of the rare incidents of bullying. There is a strong culture of care and safeguarding. Pupils at the Individual Support Base (ISB) are well catered for and supported to allow them to integrate successfully into the wider school community.

Teachers and support staff foster positive working relationships with pupils. In the very few cases, where teaching is strongest, teachers ask probing questions that require pupils to provide extended and well-reasoned responses. This ensures that pupils are challenged to think throughout the lesson. The majority of teachers plan suitably to meet pupils' needs, give clear explanations and check for progress regularly. In a minority of cases, where teaching is not as strong, teachers do not have high enough expectations or provide suitable challenge.

There is a well-coordinated approach to improving pupils' numeracy across the curriculum. However, the provision for developing pupils' literacy and digital skills is at an early stage of development.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities, which enrich their education. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop valuable leadership skills through the work of the school council and various working groups. The school's personal and social educational programme (PSE) successfully raises pupils' awareness of important issues, such as respecting diversity, rights and social problems.

The school has a range of worthwhile systems to improve pupils' attendance, including 'Y Gorwel', which offers a safe space for pupils who are particularly anxious. However, attendance rates, especially of those who are persistently absent, remain low.

The recently appointed headteacher provides assured and careful leadership underpinned by a strong moral purpose. Alongside her, the senior leadership team have made worthwhile improvements in a short period of time. They carry out a range of activities to evaluate the school's work. However, these processes do not always focus sharply enough on the impact of provision on pupil progress. As a result, school priorities to plan for improvement do not identify clearly enough the exact aspects on which they need to focus. Although middle leaders work well with senior leaders to identify the strengths and areas of development within their departments, they do not make the necessary improvements well enough.

Overall, pupils in the sixth form make good progress and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They engage well in lessons and are keen to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. Sixth form pupils make a valuable contribution to the life of the school and have mature social skills.

# Recommendations

- R1 Improve the quality of teaching, particularly the level of challenge in lessons and its impact to improve learning
- R2 Strengthen self-evaluation processes and planning for improvement to focus more precisely on pupils' learning and skills
- R3 Ensure that all middle leaders have a precise understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning within their areas of responsibility
- R4 Improve attendance rates, particularly for those who are persistently absent

## What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress. This is the lightest touch of follow-up, as it is not statutory.



## School context

Name of provider	Ysgol Bryn Elian
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Secondary
Religious character	N/A
Number of pupils on roll	993
Pupils of statutory school age	837
Number in sixth form	157
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 Secondary is 21.2%)	22.1%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Secondary is 14.8%)	20.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	8.2%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.6%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	06/10/2015
Start date of inspection	18/03/2024

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