



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Pen y Pîl**

**Glan-y-Môr Road  
Trowbridge  
Cardiff  
CF3 1RQ**

**Date of inspection: June 2024**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Pen y Pîl

Name of provider	Ysgol Pen y Pîl
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	195
Pupils of statutory school age	139
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	34
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>	38.4%
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>	3.6%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	12.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	03/06/2024

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 Gymraeg Pen y Pîl is part of the *Ffederasiwn y Ddraig* federation, which was formed in September 2019. Together with Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Eirwg, they create a successful learning community that celebrates Welshness, provides care and respect well and offer valuable experiences for pupils. Pupils' pride in their school, their local area and Wales can be felt clearly within the learning environment.

The headteacher, with the effective support of the heads in charge, co-operates well and provides clear leadership which contributes effectively to consistency in provision and to pupils' well-rounded education. The close working relationship between Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Edern cluster schools contributes further to the sense of effective co-operation and sharing which is a strong element of this leadership. Staff are committed to providing high quality care and well-being for pupils across the school within a supportive environment. This influences pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards each other and adults successfully.

The federation's self-evaluation and planning for improvement arrangements are effective. The school uses the information gathered skilfully to develop provision further. For example, leaders evaluate the effect that including pupils' ideas and transferring responsibility for their learning has had on developing pupils' independence and enthusiasm at the top of the school.

Teachers plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop a strong sense of belonging to the community and to Wales. They place a worthy emphasis on providing a range of valuable and interesting experiences that build effectively on pupils' development and broaden their horizons well. Teachers plan purposefully to provide opportunities for pupils to take part in a variety of interesting activities both inside and outside the classroom.

On entry to the school, nearly all pupils have Welsh speaking skills that are below what is expected. During their time at the school, most make sound progress in their communication, mathematics and digital skills and, by the end of their time at the school, they develop to speak confidently in both Welsh and English. Many pupils' reading skills develop appropriately; however, they do not always understand the meaning of text when reading in Welsh. Most pupils show a mature respect for the presentation of their work and their care and handwriting are a strong feature. Provision to support the learning skills of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is extremely effective. As a result, most make good progress over time.

Maintaining a proactive relationship with all families is a priority for the headteacher and staff and this is reflected in the swift response to occasional cases. This contributes effectively to strengthening the good working relationship between the school and parents.

## Recommendations

R1 Develop Welsh reading provision to support pupils to improve their understanding of texts across all areas of learning

## What happens next

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

## Main findings

### Learning

Many pupils start school with appropriate communication, number and social skills. However, on entry to the school, nearly all pupils' Welsh language skills are below what is expected. By the end of their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional needs, make sound progress in many of their skills.

Most pupils listen carefully to the contributions of each other and adults. The youngest pupils enjoy singing familiar nursery rhymes that enrich their vocabulary and use language patterns that are relevant to the class themes. By the end of Year 2, most talk about their activities and experiences with increasing confidence. By Year 4, many pupils explain their ideas successfully and develop extensive fluency. By Year 6, most develop their oracy skills confidently. They show a willingness to talk maturely about their activities and learning experiences by using suitable language, for example when explaining how to create a reservoir from recycled materials. However, many pupils across the school have a tendency to turn to English when communicating in informal situations.

Many pupils' reading skills develop effectively as they move through the school. The youngest pupils' recognition of initial sounds develops firmly through stimulating and practical activities. By Year 2, many develop their skills to combine sounds to build unfamiliar words. However, pupils read mechanically with a tendency to rush and, as a result, they do not always understand the content of the text. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read English texts confidently by using appropriate intonation, pay attention to punctuation and discuss the content meaningfully. However, as pupils read in Welsh, they do not always understand the meaning of the text effectively enough. This, in turn, limits their knowledge and understanding of different learning contexts.

Most of the youngest pupils enjoy making marks and a few begin to form letters and write simple words sensibly, for example when drawing up a timetable in the veterinary surgery role-play area. As their skills develop, they spell familiar and unfamiliar words with increasing accuracy. By the end of Year 2, many pupils punctuate purposefully and use short verb forms with consistent accuracy when

writing independently, for example when writing a letter detailing what was seen on an imaginary trip to Botswana. In Years 3 and 4, many pupils write purposefully for a number of purposes, for example when writing a script to sell healthy biscuits. By Years 5 and 6, most pupils write pieces of extended work effectively. They present factual information and creative texts in a wide range of learning contexts, which include a monologue by Betty Campbell detailing her emotion when she arrived at a school in Cardiff Bay. Most pupils develop legible handwriting, demonstrate care and respect and present their work in a neat and organised manner. This is a strength across the school.

Many pupils' mathematics skills develop soundly across the school. The youngest pupils develop their understanding of the order of numbers and use them confidently up to at least 20. As pupils move through the school, many develop a range of mathematics skills successfully. For example, in Year 2, they organise odd and even numbers up to 1000 correctly by using numbers from a raffle book. By Year 4, most pupils build on their skills appropriately, for example when calculating the area and perimeter of a castle, using centimetres and centimetre square successfully. By year 6, most pupils apply their number work successfully across the curriculum and recall previous learning skilfully. For example, they use their knowledge intelligently when handling eight-digit numbers to compare how many shipments arrived at Bute Docks and Barry Docks confidently. Many of the older pupils develop their numeracy skills purposefully.

From an early age, most pupils apply their digital skills consistently in a range of imaginative contexts to support their wider learning. Many of the youngest pupils use a digital tablet confidently to record their learning, for example when using an animation program to tell a story and developing simple control skills with the turtle. By Year 2, they extend their skills by creating a multimedia picture of a bee, for example. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 use their digital skills confidently to support their independent research skills, by editing, redrafting and presenting their findings on the environmental theme, 'Planet or Plastic'. They begin to develop their data-handling skills appropriately, including presenting and analysing information about the class's favourite wild animal. Pupils confirm their methods for staying safe when using the internet confidently.

Nearly all of the youngest pupils develop their physical skills with increasing confidence, for example when taking risks while climbing, controlling bicycles and practising balancing on the adventure equipment. The oldest pupils participate enthusiastically in physical education sessions, for example when reinforcing travelling and ball-control skills with hockey sticks and in local competitions when the opportunity arises.

Nearly all pupils develop sound creative skills through regular opportunities to design and create. Pupils show an inherent pride in their creative activities and, by the end of their time at the school, they develop mature skills which enable them to create intricate and impressive pieces of artwork. They use their imaginations maturely when creating and filming a drama about the history of Tryweryn.

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

Nearly all pupils are happy and polite and treat others, both adults and pupils alike, indiscriminately and with respect. Most enjoy being a members of the learning community and feel pride in their school, their local area and the Welsh language. Most pupils show a sound awareness of their rights and this is referred to regularly during whole school sessions.

Most pupils have a sensible understanding of the importance of making healthy choices in terms of food and drink. Through relevant well-being activities, they understand the importance of discussing their feelings and, as a result, develop their skills to make wise choices about their actions. From the youngest age, nearly all pupils develop their physical skills effectively, they take advantage of a range of valuable experiences in the classroom and the outdoor areas. Most pupils across the school develop their social skills well.

Nearly all pupils feel safe within the school and know whom or where to turn to for support, if necessary. They are confident that staff will listen to them and give them fair attention. Nearly all understand how to keep themselves and others safe online and know the importance of keeping passwords confidential. Across the school, pupils discuss the merits and dangers of social media effectively. Pupils play happily together during break times and engage in various games with their friends in groups or pairs. Most pupils' understanding of the difference between misbehaviour and bullying is sound. They are considerate of others and aware that purposeful actions are available if there is any misbehaviour among their peers.

Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and develop as hard working and enthusiastic learners. Most of the youngest pupils are happy on arrival at the school and show exuberant confidence as they immerse themselves in their activities. An increasing number of pupils develop confidence and resilience by using methods such as 'three before me' and turning to a friend before asking a teacher, as appropriate. They work together effectively and persevere for extended periods. They apply their skills effectively when choosing their method of recording and their involvement in challenges in learning develops well, for example as they familiarise themselves with independent learning activities. By the top of the school, many pupils develop a range of skills effectively by organising activities and working together to promote entrepreneurial skills. A good example of this is the enthusiasm shown by pupils as they plan and prepare activities for the Christmas fair.

On the whole, a majority of pupils take advantage of beneficial opportunities to respond to feedback on their work from staff and peers. This is beginning to have a positive effect on their ability to deepen their understanding of their skills.

Across the school, many pupils make good use of beneficial opportunities to develop their leadership skills by being members of the school, eco and children's rights committees. They have influenced school life by raising money to expand the play equipment during break times and contributing to the local food bank. Members of the eco council have developed an electronic method to record how they travel to school. This, for example, has raised pupils' awareness of their personal health and the importance of caring for the world around us.

## Teaching and learning experiences

Staff have a positive working relationship with pupils. They treat all pupils with kindness and respect and, as a result, the learning environment is inclusive and caring. Staff manage pupils' behaviour extremely effectively.

Teachers have high aspirations for developing pupils' Welsh communication skills. They model correct language which supports pupils effectively to develop their ability to speak Welsh increasingly skilfully. Teachers take advantage of opportunities to expand pupils' vocabulary and sentence patterns in purposeful activities, including as they learn in the outdoor learning areas. Staff promote the benefits of learning Welsh purposefully and constructively.

Leaders promote effective co-operation between staff across the schools in the federation and the cluster schools. They share ideas purposefully to provide a broad and rich curriculum for pupils. They consider the effectiveness of provision and pupils' progress sensibly which, in turn, improves teaching and learning. As a result, teachers provide a wide range of valuable and stimulating learning experiences across the learning areas which engage and hold pupils' interest successfully.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that builds valuably on most pupils' stage of development. Teachers, in co-operation with the schools in the cluster, have developed a curriculum that reflects the local area and the cultural, linguistic and diverse nature of Wales extremely effectively.

Leaders and teachers consider the needs of different groups of learners effectively. The curriculum enables most pupils to acquire the necessary skills in literacy and numeracy in learning sessions. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities and support for pupils to understand the meaning of Welsh texts effectively enough. This, in turn, limits their ability to engage appropriately in all aspects of their learning.

Staff provide a curriculum that is inclusive and promotes fair opportunities to develop pupils as confident and well-rounded individuals. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to enjoy and engage with their learning in formal and informal situations. Regular weekly sessions in the outdoor learning areas nurture pupils' curiosity and develop their co-operation and problem-solving skills purposefully. As pupils develop through the school, teachers listen and act on their ideas increasingly effectively and plan activities and experiences that pursue their interests; for example, when pupils contribute to the learning areas and including their ideas when planning independent learning activities. Attractive displays, which are a suitable combination of celebrating pupils' work and guidance from teachers to support their learning, enrich the learning environment extremely effectively.

On the whole, teachers provide clear and effective guidance during learning activities. They motivate pupils successfully and, as a result, most concentrate for extended periods and are eager to learn. Where teaching is most effective, pupils make sound progress. In these example, pupils develop their independent learning skills beneficially when applying and developing their learning successfully across the areas of the curriculum.

Staff question pupils to extend their learning effectively. In the best practice, staff provide useful feedback that allows pupils to develop elements of their skills beneficially. However, there are not regular opportunities for pupils to respond appropriately to feedback to move their learning forward. Teachers track pupils' progress effectively and use this information purposefully. For example, they use the information effectively to provide support and challenge for pupils to develop their early writing skills skilfully.

The school organises valuable visits for pupils which link with the themes and benefit from links with local agencies, which enrich their learning and improve their understanding of issues relating to their personal well-being, for example as staff organise regular visits to a local home for the elderly to support the well-being of residents. Staff also provide a variety of activities for pupils to benefit from extra-curricular experiences. During these activities, there are opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills and improve their social and physical skills while taking part in a variety of sports.

Staff share relevant information about pupils' well-being and progress with parents in reports. They are provided with guidance to support their children to aim to reach the next stage of their development.

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

The school is a warm, caring and happy community that places a clear emphasis on safeguarding pupils and promoting their well-being effectively. Staff work closely as a team to support the development of pupils' social and emotional skills successfully. There is a friendly relationship between staff and pupils and the respect with which they treat each other is a strength. Teachers and assistants know the pupils well and respond purposefully to their emotional and social needs.

Pupils' behaviour is managed effectively. Staff work closely with pupils to develop self-regulation methods to support them to manage their emotions. They work well together to develop pupils' understanding of how to maintain positive relationships and how to resolve differences. This supports staff further to ensure that pupils' behaviour is good.

Staff plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to nurture their well-being and develop their physical skills. They organise beneficial learning sessions in the outdoor learning areas, physical education sessions and ensure the use of a variety of play resources during break times. Staff ensure purposeful opportunities for pupils to discuss their emotions, which promotes their emotional well-being successfully. Teachers organise purposeful activities that foster pupils' understanding of how to eat and drink healthily.

The school organises provision for pupils who have been identified as having ALN extremely effectively. Staff work closely with a variety of external agencies and include the input of families well when planning activities and support for specific pupils. The ALN co-ordinator, who supports pupils across the federation, considers the needs of each individual pupil before planning purposeful support programmes for them. Assistants engage pupils' interest well during well-being, literacy and



numeracy support sessions. This has a positive and continuous effect on pupils' ability to access their learning.

Staff provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to voice their opinion about some aspects of provision, including increasing opportunities to discuss how they would like to present their tasks. For example, the youngest pupils are given regular opportunities to choose different materials to present work on the theme of 'water'. However, at times, a few members of staff over-direct pupils, which limits opportunities for them to think independently about which elements of their learning and wider school life they would like to influence.

The school provides purposeful opportunities to celebrate and develop pupils' understanding of their identity, heritage and culture. Pupils study the historical features of the area by researching how Liverpool City Council flooded the Tryweryn valley. This supports pupils to reflect and learn about the importance of the local and national history of Wales.

Developing Welshness is a strong element of the school's provision. Staff provide Welsh music for pupils to enjoy regularly, and national celebrations and taking part in the Urdd Eisteddfod promote the sense of belonging successfully. This is reinforced through colourful and purposeful displays that celebrate aspects of the landscape, culture and history of the area and Wales extremely effectively.

Staff provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to identify with the local community and the wider world. Staff encourage pupils to understand issues relating to inclusion well and promote their spiritual and social development effectively. Moral aspects permeate school life well. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about equality and diversity within the community securely; for example, the youngest pupils discuss the diversity in families.

The school creates and maintains a safe environment for all pupils and leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding successfully, which includes effective site security. Visits from the local police officer develop pupils' awareness of how to keep themselves safe in the wider community. The school's provision to improve attendance and punctuality is effective.

## **Leadership and management**

The two schools that are part of *Ffederasiwn y Ddraig* are led and managed by a headteacher who is passionate about providing a variety of rich learning experiences for pupils. A firm priority is given to broadening pupils' horizons and encouraging them to take pride in their Welshness, their culture and their bilingualism. He is supported extremely effectively by members of the senior leadership team, who make a valuable contribution to setting a purposeful direction across the federation. Together, they have a clear vision for the federation which is based on the importance of working together as one close community to create a safe, supportive and harmonious learning environment for pupils.

Members of the senior team have a sound understanding of their leadership responsibilities. They work together effectively as a team and have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. They demonstrate professional values that contribute

firmly to ensuring that the school is a safe and homely haven for all. They foster a strong culture of safeguarding.

Leaders have a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They make purposeful use of the comprehensive information that derives from a wide range of sources, which include learning walks, scrutiny of books and various questionnaires. They have a programme to monitor and track pupils' progress which enables them to develop a sound awareness of provision. They use this information purposefully to identify areas for improvement.

Leaders manage staff performance continuously and encourage them to improve any specific areas that are agreed upon. The federation has an appropriate programme of training based on national, local and school priorities and the professional needs of individuals. Staff have recently attended training to improve pupils' reading skills. However, pupils do not have a sound enough understanding of the meaning of Welsh texts to support them to develop their skills across the areas of learning.

Leaders provide beneficial opportunities for staff to work together as learning triads across the federation. The triads take advantage of valuable opportunities to observe the learning practices of both schools, reflect on their teaching methods and plan learning activities together. This strengthens the productive working relationship that is developing between the federation's teachers and leads to consistency in their teaching methods.

The working relationship between the federation and local schools is a strength. Leaders of the Bro Edern cluster schools meet regularly to co-operate on key elements of provision. As a result, staff develop a robust mutual understanding and ensure consistency in aspects of pedagogy which have a good influence on pupils' development. They have benefitted from the expertise of representatives of the areas of learning while working together closely to plan a shared curriculum. The curriculum provides firm guidance for developing the skills and knowledge that are presented and provides appropriate flexibility for teachers to personalise and adapt the content, as appropriate. As a result, the federation provides a wide range of experiences that motivate pupils to take ownership and enjoy their learning.

Governors ensure that they provide leaders with a sensible balance of support and challenge. They hold discussions with staff and visit the schools regularly to evaluate provision. As a result, they have a sound understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. This enables them to contribute to specific discussions in an informed manner to set strategic priorities and fulfil their roles effectively. Members of the governing body manage funding prudently. This includes the pupil development grant, which is used appropriately to employ staff to promote learning and reduce the impact of poverty on pupils' educational attainment. Governors ensure that the federation has purposeful arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders have a close relationship with parents and ensure that they have effective communication arrangements with them to enable them to raise any issues that may affect their children's learning and well-being. Parents are confident that the school's staff listen to their concerns and value the speed with which staff respond to them.

## 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).**