

**A report on**

**Ysgol Bryn Garth**

**Ysgol Bryn Garth**

**Maes Emlyn**

**Pen-y-ffordd**

**Holywell**

**Flintshire**

**CH8 9JA**

**Date of inspection: January 2025**

**by**

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education**

**and Training in Wales**

## About Ysgol Bryn Garth

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| Name of provider   | Ysgol Bryn Garth          |
| Local authority  | Flintshire County Council |
| Language of the provider   | English                   |
| School category according to Welsh-medium provision  | English medium            |
| Type of school   | Primary                   |
| Religious character  | None                      |
| Number of pupils on roll   | 84                        |
| Pupils of statutory school age   | 65                        |
| Number in nursery classes  | 14                        |
| 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 22.9%) | 40.2%                     |
| 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 11.1%)               | 36.9%                     |
| Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home   | 0.0%                      |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language  | *                         |
| Date of headteacher appointment  | 01/04/2014                |

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|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable) | 07/11/2018 |
| Start date of inspection                          | 20/01/2025 |

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.

## Summary

Ysgol Bryn Garth is an inclusive and nurturing environment. Staff and pupils have warm and positive working relationships and, as a result, nearly all pupils feel safe in school. Pupils feel confident that staff are ready to listen to their ideas and any concerns they have. This means that nearly all pupils are happy and play a full part in the life and work of the school.

The school provides a positive early start to learning with a stimulating environment that motivates pupils and fosters curiosity. This leads to good progress in the younger pupils' skills, including independence, resilience and problem-solving. Staff use a suitable range of questions to determine pupils' understanding and check their progress. However, in older classes teachers tend to direct the learning too much and lessons do not always provide appropriate challenge for all pupils.

Leaders and staff have developed a broad and stimulating curriculum centred around the culture and heritage of Wales. Teachers plan effectively to ensure that many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those from low-income households, make good progress in their learning. Staff provide a wide range of authentic learning experiences that capture pupils' interests, such as working with the school's chickens, that promote enterprise skills through the selling of produce.

The headteacher and staff place great importance on working relationships with the community. However, despite the school's work with families, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Parents have valuable opportunities to participate in a range of learning sessions at the school. Leaders have secured grant funding to improve the school environment and create a safe and welcoming space for everyone. The headteacher is a conscientious and hard-working leader who prioritises the well-being of pupils and staff successfully. Governors are supportive of the school's activities and identify its strengths and areas for improvement well.

## Recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Provides appropriate challenge for older pupils and opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning
- R2 Continue to work with families to improve pupils' attendance

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

The headteacher and staff share a vision that inspires members of the school community to be respectful and caring of one another. Staff ensure that there is a nurturing and positive learning environment for all pupils, and this leads to exceptional pupil behaviour throughout the school. The support for pupils with additional learning needs, and those from low-income households, is effective. Pupils appreciate the high-quality care and support they receive when they experience social and emotional difficulties. Nearly all feel safe and are confident that leaders and staff will look after them whenever they need their help. The headteacher is a conscientious and hard-working leader who prioritises the well-being of pupils and staff successfully.

Leaders have created an inclusive learning environment that involves parents and the community in the school's life. A range of valuable, well-planned activities engage parents in learning with their children. Successful community events, such as the 'over fifties' lunches, promote the benefits of older pupils collaborating with community members.

### **Spotlight: A school at the heart of the community**

The headteacher places great importance on staff communicating and working with parents and carers as partners in their children's education. They have embedded a programme of activities that pupils and parents enjoy together, for example, on 'Welly in the Woods' and 'workshop with construction toys' days. Leaders have been successful in obtaining valuable grant funding to enhance the school environment to ensure that the school is a welcoming space, and this helps to develop positive relationships within the school community. Nearly all parents feel comfortable to take part in social and learning experiences and feel valued by the school staff.

The school provides a stimulating, engaging and nurturing learning environment for all pupils. This supports many to make suitable or better progress, often from starting points that are lower than expected. The youngest pupils settle well into daily routines and benefit from the many purposeful opportunities, indoors and outside, that help them to explore, solve problems, and develop their language and physical skills successfully.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their social and communication skills. They listen well to adults and by Year 6, many collaborate effectively and discuss their learning activities and school community confidently and with pride. They develop their phonic skills well and, over time, become confident readers. Teachers nurture pupils' writing skills effectively and, by Year 6, many write for a range of purposes using different genres. Pupils explore simple numbers in the youngest classes and move on to solving complex problems in Year 5 and 6. Teachers provide authentic opportunities for pupils to develop their digital skills well. For instance, younger pupils program a toy to carry out specific instructions. Older pupils use technology effectively to create a podcast for the community.

Staff provide a wide range of authentic learning experiences and capture pupils' interests effectively. The school's chickens, bees and garden are extremely beneficial in motivating pupils' learning, and selling their produce enhances pupils' numeracy and literacy skills. Despite these whole school initiatives, older pupils do not have sufficient opportunities in lessons to develop their independent learning well enough through making choices about how they learn or present their work.

In many cases, teaching provides an appropriate level of support and challenge for pupils' learning. However, in the older classes, staff sometimes direct older pupils' learning too much and tasks are not always challenging enough to meet the needs of all pupils. Across the school, teachers provide useful feedback during lesson 'pit stops' that help to reinforce learning or address misconceptions.

The headteacher provides effective leadership and has high expectations for pupils' learning and well-being. Leaders, including governors, have established a happy and calm school community, based on a respectful team ethos. The school runs efficiently, and communication is a strength. This contributes strongly to its robust safeguarding practices.

A positive culture of continuous improvement and reflection is established in the school. By taking part in purposeful self-evaluation activities, leaders and staff have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders hold teachers to account effectively and use performance management processes to drive improvement. Leaders encourage staff to take responsibility for their professional learning, share learning regularly, and conduct research to support school improvement. This has led to a positive impact on the provision of outdoor learning in the younger classes, as well as planning for the progression of pupils' skills.

The school's strategic planning takes good account of national priorities, such as developing pupils' Welsh language skills. Leaders know that, while younger pupils develop suitable skills in listening and speaking, older pupils' ability to use the Welsh language is not strong enough and they are working effectively to address this. As a result, older pupils show a passion for the language and are beginning to use a wider variety of phrases.

Leaders, staff and governors work together well to keep strategic decisions under review to ensure these are in pupils' best interests. Leaders monitor pupil attendance carefully and staff work effectively with external partners and support families to improve their children's attendance. However, pupils' rates of attendance are below expected levels.

Governors work closely with the headteacher to manage the school's finances effectively. Leaders have secured a significant amount of grant funding to improve the school environment, including purchasing outdoor play equipment, developing the forest school area and redeveloping a community cooking area. This has created a safe and welcoming space for staff, pupils, parents and the wider community. The headteacher is a conscientious and hard-working leader who prioritises the well-being of pupils and staff successfully.

There are opportunities for governors to work with school staff, engage in learning walks and talk to pupils about their work. This helps to ensure that governors are informed about pupils' progress. Governors understand their role and provide an appropriate level of challenge and support to leaders. They are knowledgeable and supportive of the school's activities and identify its strengths and areas for improvement well.

### **Additional information**

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for site management do not give any cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.



## **Evidence base of the report**

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers 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

## Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. ‘*most pupils...*’ or ‘*very few pupils...*’. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

|               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| nearly all =  | with very few exceptions |
| most =        | 90% or more              |
| many =        | 70% or more              |
| a majority =  | over 60%                 |
| half =        | 50%                      |
| around half = | close to 50%             |
| a minority =  | below 40%                |
| few =         | below 20%                |
| very few =    | less than 10%            |

## 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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**This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).**