

A report on
Y Pant Comprehensive School

**Cowbridge Road
Talbot Green
Pontyclun
RCT
CF72 8YQ**

Date of inspection: March 2025

by

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

About Y Pant Comprehensive School

Name of provider	Y Pant Comprehensive School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Secondary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	1444
Pupils of statutory school age	1178
Number in sixth form	266
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 21.1%)	9.6%
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 11.2%)	12.4%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	2.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1.1%
Date of headteacher appointment	
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	10/03/2025

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

- a. The term ‘additional learning needs’ is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Summary

Leaders in Y Pant Comprehensive are successful in securing consistently strong outcomes and high levels of well-being for their pupils. The headteacher has a clear vision for pupils to behave with respect and humility and to be well prepared for life. This vision permeates every aspect of school life, resulting in a caring and inclusive community that embraces diversity and welcomes all.

Collaborative leadership is a notable strength and the headteacher, along with her senior team, have created a culture of effective support and challenge. Leaders and staff work well together to ensure that every pupil reaches their full potential. An example of this is the way in senior and middle leaders designed its disciplinary approach to curriculum in Years 7 and 8. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum, although this narrows in Year 9 when pupils begin their option choices.

Leaders maintain a relentless focus on securing high-quality teaching. This is underpinned by strong evaluation and improvement processes, and effective professional learning. As a result, many pupils make secure progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. In a minority of cases, pupils make exemplary progress because of inspirational and highly skilled teaching. The provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills is well established, effectively co-ordinated and regularly evaluated. Across the curriculum, pupils have valuable opportunities to practise and develop their skills in a range of suitably challenging and authentic contexts.

Leaders have secured a strong culture of safeguarding, ensuring that pupils know who to turn to when they need support. The school's strategic approach to securing strong well-being provision has helped to improve pupils' rates of attendance and to ensure that pupils behave well in lessons and around school. The school's 'behaviour curriculum' is a particular strength, which has contributed to the caring and inclusive ethos of the school. This aspect of the school's curriculum beneficially supports pupils social and emotional development and promotes a strong sense of tolerance and respect.

The school provides exceptional support for pupils at different transition points and particularly when helping them to choose their next steps and career pathways. There is a well-planned programme of careers advice and guidance available to pupils of all ages.

Recommendations

We have made one recommendation to help the school continue to improve:

- R1. Ensure that pupils have access to the full range of learning experiences until the end of Year 9

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare two case studies on its work in relation to effective approaches to collaborative leadership and support for pupils' future pathways and careers for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Teaching and learning

Leaders in Y Pant champion effective teaching as the driver for effective learning. This strong focus has ensured that, in many lessons, pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals, recall their prior learning well and make secure progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. A minority of pupils make exceptional progress. They show a deep understanding of prior learning and apply it confidently in a range of challenging contexts. A notable feature is the way in which pupils apply their thinking and creative skills in a range of subjects across the curriculum. For example, in physical education, pupils design a training programme to support people recovering from different injuries.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are a significantly positive feature. Most demonstrate high levels of courtesy and respect for teachers, their peers and visitors. They speak maturely about their learning and contribute constructively to class discussions.

Most sixth form pupils engage well with their learning and demonstrate a strong commitment to improve. They engage positively in class discussions, use a broad range of vocabulary and explain their thinking and reasoning well. They are keen to share their work and are reflective about their strengths and weaknesses, for example when they evaluate the quality of their work in product design.

Most teachers foster positive working relationships and have well-established classroom routines that help pupils to engage purposefully in their learning. These teachers have strong subject knowledge and provide clear explanations and instructions, ensuring that pupils work productively and effectively.

In many lessons, where pupils make secure progress, teachers:

- have suitably high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan carefully for learning
- model work helpfully, establish an effective pace of learning and provide varied and engaging activities
- demonstrate enthusiasm for their subject that inspires pupils to engage purposefully in their learning
- use questioning effectively to assess pupils' understanding and advance their learning

A minority of teachers have very high expectations, skilfully sequencing demanding tasks to enhance pupils' progress. These teachers plan to address pupils' misconceptions and ensure that pupils develop their independent learning skills. They use questioning highly effectively to probe, challenge and deepen pupils' understanding.

In a few lessons, pupils do not make as much progress as they could. In these lessons, teachers:

- talk too much or provide too much structure, which limits independent learning
- do not use questioning well enough to deepen pupils' learning or help them to develop their responses
- provide resources that restrict pupils' ability to learn independently

Most teachers actively monitor learning, ensuring pupils remain engaged. Many offer helpful verbal feedback, supporting pupils' progress effectively. Where written feedback is strong, it gives pupils clear, effective guidance that helps them to improve. However, the impact of written feedback is inconsistent because teachers do not always ensure that pupils make meaningful improvements to their work.

Progressive development of pupils' skills

The school places considerable importance on the progressive development of pupils' skills and has a well-understood and co-ordinated strategic vision for this. Leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of this provision robustly. This enables leaders to plan targeted professional learning that leads to improvement.

Many pupils benefit from purposeful opportunities to develop their oracy skills. In the best cases, teachers provide a high level of challenge and effective modelling to help pupils understand, for example, how rhetoric can appeal to reason, character and emotion. Pupils then mirror this as they develop persuasive responses to contentious topics such as deforestation, electric cars and animals in captivity. A minority of pupils are highly articulate. For example, they express their views on the social and historical context of literary characters with confidence. Overall, many pupils have secure listening and speaking skills, work well in groups, respond effectively to teachers' questions and use a suitable vocabulary. A few pupils do not listen well enough, so they find it difficult to make meaningful contributions to class discussions and miss useful information and instructions.

The school has developed a strong culture of reading, with the well-managed school library providing an effective focal point. The school places a considerable emphasis on the importance of developing pupils' reading skills. As a result, pupils learn to appreciate the value of reading in many aspects of their lives and benefit from using a range of reading strategies to support their learning in different situations. This includes the use of

inference and deduction in challenging contexts to make astute observations about the usefulness and reliability of historical sources and to appreciate how Gothic writers create fear and apprehension in their readers. Pupils with weaker reading skills are supported well through a comprehensive range of interventions and cross-phase work with local primary schools as required.

Most pupils benefit from a range of relevant opportunities in different subjects to write at length. Many structure their work suitably and are secure in their understanding of purpose and audience. Some produce writing that engages the readers' interest well and provides compelling arguments why, for instance, slavery was abolished and whether capital punishment should be banned in all countries. In addition, pupils in GCSE drama develop impressive five-minute scripts in groups based on a stimulus from the Holocaust or 9/11. The school has identified the technical accuracy of pupils' writing as an area for further development, although currently there is no consistent expectation for pupils to proof-read their work before they hand it to their teachers. In addition, teachers' response to literacy errors is inconsistent and contributes to basic errors being perpetuated.

Spotlight: Effective mathematics teaching

The school provides consistently effective mathematics teaching which supports pupils to develop a strong understanding of important mathematical concepts. It has developed an effective curriculum that builds sequentially on pupils' knowledge and skills. In lessons, teachers ensure that pupils develop their understanding so that they can apply their skills effectively in a range of authentic contexts. Teachers use questioning skilfully to support pupils' thinking skills. As a result, generally pupils have well-developed numeracy skills which they apply successfully across the curriculum.

Many pupils have strong number skills and work successfully with fractions, decimals and percentages. They work confidently with scale when calculating the size of a magnified cell. More able pupils work confidently and independently with more complex aspects such as rearranging formulae. Many pupils draw a range of graphs accurately and analyse them well.

Pupils generally develop their digital skills suitably within their information and communication technology lessons (ICT) and across the curriculum. For example, they select and use a variety of appropriate software and tools to create and combine multimedia components for a range of audiences.

Most pupils have a generally positive attitude towards their Welsh lessons. Many pronounce Welsh words and short sentences accurately. These pupils write extended pieces well, using a scaffold to support their work. A minority of these pupils make strong progress. They understand and use a variety of tenses to develop the quality of their

responses. A minority of pupils lack confidence when given the opportunity to use Welsh with their peers.

Curriculum

The school has a clear and well-understood vision for its curriculum, which focuses on supporting pupils to become ambitious and capable lifelong learners. This is underpinned by a strong focus on effective teaching and purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Staff collaborate extensively within and across areas of learning and experience to develop challenging and meaningful learning experiences for pupils. The school carefully evaluates the curriculum to improve its provision.

In Year 7 and Year 8, pupils have valuable and well-considered opportunities to engage in a full range of progressive learning experiences within a disciplinary approach. Although the school has recently adapted its approach in Year 9 to ensure that pupils engage with all six areas of learning and experience, these pupils do not have access to the full range of learning experiences required by Curriculum for Wales.

Leaders consider pupils' views carefully to ensure that as many as possible are able to study their chosen courses. They then provide a wide range of general and vocational courses at Key Stage 4. In the sixth form, the school offers an extensive menu of subjects and works in partnership with a local secondary school to widen the offer.

A notable feature of the school's work is the support provided to help pupils consider their next steps. Subjects across the curriculum offer helpful opportunities for pupils to consider different careers. For example, the drama and music departments work with a local film studio to promote careers within the creative industries. The school also offers a wide range of enrichment opportunities, such as a careers fair for all pupils. In addition, the school offers a valuable range of activities to broaden the horizons of more able pupils, including science and maths competitions, debate training and poetry projects.

There is a tailored programme of personal and social education to support the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and emotional skills. Thoughtfully planned 'Life Skills' lessons and assemblies discuss important contemporary topics such as Black History Month, positive relationships and anti-bullying. Subjects across the curriculum provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to consider equality and diversity, such as the impact of LGBTQ+ artists on the music industry.

Pupils benefit from opportunities to develop their appreciation of Welsh heritage and culture across the curriculum. The school is beginning to develop pupils' use of the language outside of Welsh lessons.

The school provides a vibrant programme of creative, sporting and cultural extra-curricular opportunities. This includes two school shows annually to support pupils' creative and artistic development. Teachers plan a wide variety of educational visits and enrichment activities to complement the curriculum. This includes visits to the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Llangrannog and Shrewsbury Prison Museum.

Well-being, care, support and guidance

Senior leaders have developed a cohesive and strategic approach to supporting pupils' well-being, securing strong attendance, and fostering a culture of respect through the 'Y Pant way'. All pastoral staff understand their roles well and are supported by an extensive team with clear responsibilities. They are visible around the school and know their pupils well. As a result, pupils are fully aware of who to approach for support.

Spotlight: The Y Pant 'Behaviour Curriculum'

The school has a comprehensive approach to identifying and supporting pupils' needs, working closely with parents and external agencies where appropriate. Data gathered from well-being surveys and behaviour logs is used strategically to monitor pupils and identify those pupils who require additional support. The school has developed its own behaviour curriculum, which teaches pupils about tolerance, respect and positive behaviours. This 'behaviour curriculum' successfully develops a culture of mutual respect between staff and pupils, and this has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. The school uses data responsively to modify its provision to meet pupils' needs.

The 'behaviour curriculum' has been supported by the school's recently introduced policy to no longer allow pupils to use their mobile phone during the school day. This has helped to improve behaviour, reduce incidents of bullying and improve pupils' social interaction during lunch and break times.

The school's arrangements to keep pupils safe are robust. Staff and governors receive regular training relevant to their roles. This effectively supports them to identify and respond appropriately to any safeguarding concerns. It includes enhanced training, for example on recognising current harmful influences on young people. As a result, nearly all staff have a highly-developed understanding of their role in securing a strong safeguarding culture.

The additional learning needs team is led effectively, supported by a strong strategic oversight of this area of the school's work. The school has made sound progress towards meeting the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018.

There are clear processes for identifying the needs of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). Individual development plans for these pupils are valuable and reviewed regularly. Pupils who require them have appropriate one-page profiles. They access effective interventions, which have clear entry and exit criteria. Staff receive regular and valuable training to enable them to plan effectively for and support these pupils in their lessons. These pupils' progress is monitored robustly against the performance of other groups. Staff use this information effectively to adapt support. There are comprehensive arrangements to support pupils with ALN to progress successfully to each key stage and beyond to suitable destinations.

The school has well-planned arrangements to help pupils settle into school, including enhanced transition in Year 5 for pupils with ALN and others at risk of adverse outcomes. All pupils are provided with comprehensive, impartial advice and guidance to help them make informed choices about their learning and career pathways. For example, they have access to the school's informative careers website, a careers' advisor and a one-to-one interview with a senior leader. The school also uses an innovative process for allocating sixth form pupils to tutor groups based on their chosen subject disciplines. For example, those predominantly studying sciences are grouped together and supported by a subject specialist as their form tutor. This approach adds an additional layer of well-considered support for pupils to achieve their potential.

The school provides pupils with a range of valuable opportunities to develop their leadership skills and influence the life of the school. For example, the school parliament, the buddy system and memorial events help pupils to contribute effectively to the wider life of the school community.

The school's work to improve attendance is a notable strength. There are beneficial processes to support pupils with low attendance, including working closely with external services and parents to address issues quickly through early interventions. Over the last two years, the school's rate of attendance has improved and compares well with that in similar schools. However, it remains below pre-pandemic levels. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved and is higher than that seen in similar schools. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has also fallen.

Leading and improving

The headteacher, supported ably by the senior leadership team, provides consistently strong and thoughtful leadership. This has been successful in securing strong outcomes and high levels of well-being for pupils over several years. Her vision of ensuring that pupils are healthy, respectful and prepared well for life is understood clearly by all members of the school community and permeates every aspect of the school's work.

Leaders have established a strong ethos of collaboration and reflection amongst all staff. This has helped them to develop a secure understanding of the school's performance and to take appropriate and effective actions to bring about improvement. Senior leadership roles and responsibilities are distributed carefully, focus clearly on the school's priorities and make best use of the skills and experience of individual staff. The extended leadership team adds helpful capacity and provides beneficial professional learning for the staff involved.

Collaboration between subject areas is a notable strength. Regular opportunities for departments to work together and share good practice have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning experiences. In addition, staff frequently undertake cross-department quality assurance activities. This not only provides further opportunities to share effective practice, but helps leaders develop a common, robust approach to evaluating their provision.

Line management processes focus clearly on raising standards and improving pupils' well-being. Middle leaders value the balance of challenge and support offered by senior leaders. Arrangements to manage the performance of staff are robust and used effectively to hold staff to account and to identify their professional development needs. All staff are expected to undertake educational research to support progress towards meeting their objectives. This contributes positively to the development of effective teaching and improvements to the curriculum.

Senior leaders evaluate the work of the school robustly and accurately. Carefully planned, comprehensive quality assurance processes help middle leaders to consider a wide range of first-hand evidence. Leaders at all levels use data well to track pupils' progress in their examination subjects. Many middle leaders have a detailed understanding of the specific strengths and areas for improvement in their area of responsibility, which helps them to plan for and secure improvement successfully. However, in a few instances, when carrying out work scrutiny, they focus too much on compliance with school policies rather than the impact of teaching. This means that they do not always identify improvement priorities precisely enough.

Leaders have been successful in addressing national priorities such as improving attendance. The experienced governing body has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Along with the headteacher, governors monitor the school's finances carefully and ensure spending is focused on improvement priorities. Governors contribute appropriately to setting the strategic direction of the school.

The school has a comprehensive, well-established approach to reducing the effects of poverty. It supports the well-being and attainment of pupils from low-income households through an extensive range of strategies, such as providing them with uniform, equipment,

music lessons and in-school screenings of theatre productions. It raises the aspirations of pupils through targeted careers guidance and enrichment trips; it also ensures that these pupils are equitably represented in, for example, trips, clubs and the school council. This has a positive impact on the achievement and attendance of these pupils.

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 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 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 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, where appropriate
- visit a broad sample of lessons, 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
(<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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