

A report on

Ysgol Heulfan

**Ysgol Heulfan
Sunny View
Off First Avenue
Gwersyllt Wrexham
LL11 4HS**

Date of inspection: May 2025

by

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

About Ysgol Heulfan

Name of provider	Ysgol Heulfan
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	342
Pupils of statutory school age	257
Number in nursery classes	32
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%)	34.1%
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%)	12.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	02/01/2006
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	13/05/2025

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

Ysgol Heulfan is a caring and inclusive school where pupils feel safe, happy and valued. The school is at the heart of its community and is built on strong values such as unity, respect and teamwork. The headteacher provides determined and compassionate leadership. She is well supported by a committed team who work together with a clear focus on pupils' learning and well-being.

Staff plan interesting activities that help pupils learn across a wide range of subjects. They regularly review the curriculum to make sure that it meets the needs of pupils. Many teachers ask helpful questions and often provide useful feedback to support learning. They encourage pupils to think for themselves and make choices about how they learn. This helps them become more confident and independent. In a few lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and activities do not always challenge pupils enough.

Most pupils make good progress in their speaking, reading, number and digital skills. Younger pupils quickly grow in confidence when speaking and listening. Older pupils take part in thoughtful discussions and become more independent readers. Many use number skills well in different subjects. Most develop digital skills that support their learning across the curriculum. While many older pupils write clearly and with purpose, they do not always have enough opportunities or develop the skills to redraft their work.

The school promotes well-being successfully. Pupils understand how to stay healthy and work well with others. Staff work closely with families to improve attendance. However, too many pupils are still persistently absent.

The school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs, including those in the local authority specialist class, is a notable strength. Staff identify pupils' needs promptly and provide effective support. Teachers and support staff work closely with parents and external professionals to ensure that pupils receive the help they need. As a result, pupils with additional learning needs make good progress and take a full and active part in school life.

Recommendations

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

- R1. Improve the consistency of pace and challenge in teaching to better meet the needs of all pupils
- R2. Continue to reduce levels of persistent absence

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Ysgol Heulfan is a safe and happy school and its strong inclusive culture places it at the heart of its community. Its distinct vision is built on collective values including unity, respect, teamwork and support. The headteacher provides determined and compassionate leadership, strengthened by high expectations for pupils' learning and well-being. She is well supported by other leaders and guided by a clear and shared purpose.

Teachers work collaboratively to plan interesting and relevant whole-school themes that support effective curriculum design. This shared approach promotes suitable coverage of the areas of learning and experience and helps to support clear progression in most areas across the curriculum. Teachers regularly reflect on the curriculum's design and review its effectiveness to make appropriate refinements to better meet pupils' needs. Staff work well together to provide a broad range of worthwhile learning experiences that meet the needs of most pupils appropriately.

Many teachers use purposeful questioning to probe pupils' understanding and support them to improve their work. Many pupils benefit from valuable opportunities to make decisions about how they learn, which helps them to develop as independent learners. Where teaching is less effective, learning is overly adult-led and progresses at a slower pace. This limits pupils' independent thinking and reduces the level of challenge.

The school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is a notable strength. Staff have successful well-established partnerships with a wide range of external professionals. These help to strengthen provision and provide valuable advice and guidance to staff and parents. Staff work effectively together to identify pupils' needs promptly and accurately. Class teachers and the ALN co-ordinator (ALNCo) demonstrate a strong understanding of pupils' needs, interests and progress. Support staff across the school provide purposeful guidance, with those in the specialist provision making expert use of a wide range of sensory resources and strategies. Individual Development Plans (IDPs) focus clearly on pupils' specific needs and targets. This ensures that pupils with ALN benefit from tailored support and make good progress from their starting points.

Spotlight: unifying provision through an inclusive vision

The school has a clear vision for inclusion that permeates all aspects of its work. Leaders ensure that mainstream and specialist provision is well aligned. Staff plan authentic learning experiences that draw pupils together from different classes and settings, including those from the local authority specialist provision. In joint activities, such as STEM projects, older pupils take pride in their mentoring roles whilst younger pupils respond well to their help. This inclusive approach enables pupils with a range of needs and challenges to work together successfully. It helps to build positive relationships, strengthen communication skills and create a unified learning environment. In addition, teachers learn from colleagues across different phases and settings.

Most pupils, including those affected by poverty and those with ALN, make at least expected progress in developing their oracy, reading, mathematical and digital skills. Many pupils begin school with communication skills well below those expected for their age. During regular opportunities to talk through play, most younger pupils quickly gain confidence in speaking and listening. Many older pupils express themselves clearly and contribute thoughtfully to discussions. Younger pupils make effective progress in reading through well-structured phonics sessions and many go on to become confident and independent readers. Most pupils develop secure number skills and apply them confidently in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Many younger pupils gain a sound understanding of number and basic calculation skills through practical activities. As they move through the school, pupils use their mathematical knowledge regularly in meaningful contexts to support their learning across the curriculum. Most pupils develop strong digital skills from an early age which enable them to use technology confidently to enhance their learning.

Most pupils develop their writing skills appropriately as they move through the school. Older pupils learn how to structure different forms of writing using suitable conventions and language, particularly when given clear models and purposeful tasks. Even so, teachers do not always plan well enough to provide older pupils with a broad enough range of writing opportunities. In addition, teachers do not provide sufficient support to help them develop the skills they need to redraft their work effectively.

Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn about their local area, Wales and the wider world. Younger pupils use basic Welsh vocabulary with growing confidence. As they move through the school, many older pupils ask and answer simple questions, though their extended spoken Welsh is less secure.

The school promotes pupils' well-being effectively. Nearly all pupils understand how to maintain a healthy mind and relationships and display positive attitudes to learning. They collaborate well with each other and learn how to be patient and cooperate. Most develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well through thoughtful exploration of real-world issues and show a sound understanding of diverse beliefs and values. The school prioritises pupil voice, which helps shape key aspects of school life while interest-led extra-curricular activities strengthen pupils' well-being and sense of belonging.

The school's transition arrangements, particularly for ALN learners, help pupils to settle quickly and support their emotional well-being effectively. Staff work closely with external agencies to monitor attendance. However, the rate of persistent absence remains too high.

The headteacher has established a clear leadership structure with defined roles in areas such as curriculum, inclusion and assessment. Leadership is distributed effectively across the school to support understanding of priorities and ongoing improvement. The school's self-evaluation processes are clearly structured and link effectively to ongoing improvement portfolios that build over time. Staff and leaders work together to monitor priorities and identify most strengths and areas for development in teaching and learning. The school prioritises professional learning linked to improvement targets appropriately. Whole-staff training to increase knowledge and understanding of Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) has led to improvements in how staff tailor support for these pupils across the school.

Governors provide strong support for the school and carry out their roles and responsibilities diligently. Together with the headteacher, they monitor the use of the Pupil Development Grant carefully and use it creatively to support pupils affected by socio-economic disadvantage.

Staff in the local authority specialist class use rigorous evaluation systems to track the progress of pupils with complex needs and ASC. This enables leaders to tailor support effectively. Purposeful professional learning enhances staff expertise, which results in teaching that supports meaningful learning and the development of essential skills. Staff in the specialist provision demonstrate high levels of care and commitment, often going beyond expectations to ensure pupils feel valued, safe and fully included.

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)

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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