

A report on
Ysgol Bryngwyn School

**Dafen
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA14 8RP**

Date of inspection: November 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Ysgol Bryngwyn School

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| Name of provider | Ysgol Bryngwyn School |
| Local authority | Carmarthenshire County Council |
| Language of the provider | English |
| School category according to Welsh-medium provision | |
| Type of school | Secondary |
| Religious character | N/A |
| Number of pupils on roll | 1045 |
| Pupils of statutory school age | 1043 |
| Number in sixth form | * |
| 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 20.3%) | 22.2% |
| 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 9.0%) | 4.9% |
| Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home | 4.3% |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language | 2.2% |
| Lead partner for Initial teacher education | Yes |
| Date of headteacher appointment | 01/09/2024 |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable) | 01/05/2017 |

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| Start date of inspection | 24/11/2025 |
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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

Bryngwyn School is an inclusive and supportive community within the Bryngwyn and Glan-y-Môr Federation, where pupils feel valued and are well cared for. Staff know pupils well, and this contributes strongly to the school's positive ethos. Most pupils display courteous behaviour to visitors, staff and each other and have positive attitudes to learning, engaging suitably with the routines that teachers establish.

Across the federation, the executive head teacher provides thoughtful and supportive leadership. Governors are faithful supporters of the school and the Federation but do not have a clear or comprehensive enough overview of its strengths and areas for improvement.

The executive headteacher knows Bryngwyn well and offers clear strategic direction aligned to the federation's vision. Senior leaders have established broadly suitable self-evaluation processes which identify improvement priorities appropriately. However, the effectiveness of self-evaluation remains too variable, and there is too much variation in how well leaders hold staff to account. Professional learning is aligned appropriately to school priorities.

Most teachers establish supportive working relationships with pupils. In a majority of lessons, teachers apply sound subject knowledge, provide clear explanations and use suitable questioning to check recall. As a result, a majority of pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make suitable progress. However, a minority of teachers do not plan effectively enough or have sufficiently high expectations of pupils. Their lessons lack challenge, offer limited opportunities for independent thinking, and move at a pace that does not support progress well enough. As a result, a minority of pupils make limited progress.

The school's leaders do not plan well enough to secure consistent progression in pupils' skills. Across the curriculum, teachers do not provide well-planned opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and digital skills in meaningful, challenging ways. While a few pupils demonstrate strong reading, writing and mathematical skills, a minority of pupils do not make the expected progress in these skills.

The curriculum is shaped by a clear vision centred on supporting pupils to become effective learners, consistent with the federation's overarching aims. Leaders have refined their approach appropriately over time, and pupils benefit from a wide programme of enrichment activities. Provision for pupils with ALN is a strength.

Well-being is promoted strongly, particularly through 'The Wellbeing Centre' and 'Gofal', which offer highly supportive environments. However, pupils' attendance, including pupils

eligible for free school meals, remains significantly lower than in similar schools, and strategies to improve this have not had sufficient impact.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Improve the quality of teaching and assessment
- R2 Improve attendance
- R3 Strengthen leaders' capacity to evaluate the impact of their areas of responsibility and plan for improvement
- R4 Strengthen accountability and the impact of leadership at all levels
- R5 Improve the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress about 12 months after the publication of this report.

Main findings

Teaching and learning

Most teachers foster supportive and nurturing working relationships with pupils at Bryngwyn School. They have helpful classroom routines that support pupils to settle down to work promptly. Many pupils listen politely and respond positively to their teachers' instructions. Most pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to their learning. In general, many pupils are punctual to their lessons, however in a few instances, too many pupils arrive late.

Most teachers have sound subject knowledge and use this appropriately to support pupils' learning. These teachers circulate the room providing timely support that helps pupils to remain focused and move their learning forward. Many teachers make use of appropriate questions to check pupils' knowledge and recall. The majority of teachers plan suitably for learning, selecting relevant tasks and resources that support pupils. They provide clear instructions and explanations and model work suitably to support pupils to understand what is expected of them. As a result, a majority of pupils, including those with ALN, make suitable progress.

In a few lessons where teaching is strong, pupils engage enthusiastically in the work set and make strong progress. Teachers present with passion and enthusiasm and provide well-crafted explanations and model work effectively to deepen pupils' understanding. These teachers use probing questions to extend pupils' thinking and challenge them to justify their ideas. They monitor pupils' understanding and progress closely and adjust the teaching to meet their needs.

A minority of teachers do not plan well enough for pupils' learning and do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. In these lessons, there is a lack of challenge and pupils do not make enough progress. For example, teachers provide too much support and there are limited opportunities for pupils to think independently. These teachers do not use questioning well enough to probe pupils' understanding or identify their misconceptions. In these cases, teachers miss opportunities to adapt their teaching to pupils' needs or to deepen learning. In addition, they do not adjust their teaching to match the pace of pupils' learning, resulting in limited progress. In a few lessons, classroom management is not effective and a few pupils become distracted or talk over their teachers.

In the minority of instances where written feedback is particularly useful, teachers offer pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work and provide them with valuable opportunities to do so. However, overall, the quality and consistency of written assessment and feedback across subjects is too variable.

Skills

Currently, there are insufficient authentic and suitably challenging opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum. The planning by relevant subjects to support the progressive development of these skills is too variable and there is a limited whole-school strategic overview of skills.

Leaders are developing a secure understanding of pupils' strengths and areas for development in literacy. They have provided useful guidance and professional learning to support staff in the teaching of advanced reading skills for example. Using helpful work scrutiny, leaders recognised the need to improve the technical accuracy of pupils' writing, which is now a whole-school priority. Those pupils identified as having particularly weak literacy skills benefit from appropriate additional support.

The majority of pupils are comfortable in sharing their ideas and opinions on topics ranging from the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy to the Llanelli riots. A minority have limited confidence in their verbal skills, including vocabulary and expression, and make little contribution to class or small group discussions. A few pupils are particularly articulate and provide compelling responses when teachers pose incisive questions. A few pupils do not listen with sufficient attention or focus so they miss information, including the views of others, and instructions that would support their learning.

Many pupils retrieve information accurately from texts including historical sources and Christian Aid publications. For too many pupils however, their experience and use of reading strategies often does not extend beyond information retrieval. Currently, opportunities for pupils to develop their advanced reading skills are too limited. When pupils do get the opportunity, they make at least suitable progress. This includes a majority interpreting and comparing the poetry of Owen and Pope confidently and using inference and deduction to understand characters' motivations and behaviour in other literary texts. A few develop their inference skills appropriately when interpreting mathematical diagrams, use sources well to analyse how a new consumer society contributed to the economic boom in the USA and analyse how effectively Dickens comments on social issues in 'A Christmas Carol'. A few synthesise information from different sources suitably.

Around half of pupils consistently organise their written work logically. They have a suitable grasp of grammar, and their spelling is generally accurate. A minority write at length competently and coherently including the use of historical terminology and connectives when writing about the Nuremberg trials. A few, often more able pupils, grasp and imitate effectively the style of published authors such as Bryson, employing suitable irony and hyperbole. However, around a half of pupils continue to produce writing that contains too many basic errors which impact negatively on the fluency and coherence of

the work. In general, pupils do not develop their extended writing skills well enough because of limited authentic opportunities to do so.

The majority of pupils have a secure grasp of number skills. They add and subtract decimal numbers suitably, such as when working out the probability of an event happening. In general, pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of percentages, and use an efficient method when calculating percentage change with a calculator. However, a minority of pupils have weak number skills. This is often compounded by an over-reliance on the use of a calculator for simple calculations. A few pupils make strong progress in developing their understanding of a range of mathematical concepts. These pupils develop their algebraic skills well. They successfully build upon prior learning, for example, when adding and subtracting algebraic fractions. A majority of pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of data handling techniques, for example when they calculate and interpret the average and range for a data set. A few pupils construct cumulative frequency graphs with confidence and use these appropriately to work out the interquartile range.

Leaders have identified where general numeracy skills are being covered across the curriculum, however this does not identify progression or depth of understanding. In a few instances where pupils do have meaningful opportunities to develop their numeracy skills, a majority construct, analyse and interpret graphs suitably. They identify trends successfully and use data to support their findings. However, a minority of pupils make basic errors in accuracy and precision when constructing and plotting graphs.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning Welsh. Many read and annotate texts appropriately and extract relevant information suitably. As pupils develop their Welsh skills, they extract information successfully from more extended texts. A majority of pupils write short paragraphs independently to describe themselves and their friends, using a suitably varied vocabulary. A few pupils write more extended passages with a good level of accuracy independently. However, a minority of pupils rely too heavily on scaffolding and structures to speak or write.

In digital technology lessons, pupils have several purposeful opportunities to develop their digital competency skills. In general, many pupils develop their digital skills soundly. For example, they develop a secure understanding of design features within the producing strand of the digital competency framework. A few pupils demonstrate strong digital skills when using advanced features within animation packages. Across the curriculum there are a few appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their digital skills. For example, in their electronics lessons, pupils develop their computer-aided design skills suitably when designing electric circuits.

When given opportunities, pupils develop their creative skills well, for example, when designing logos and creating animations in digital technology lessons. Pupils develop their

physical skills appropriately when developing their passing technique and ball control or when hand stitching and embroidering in textiles. Pupils develop their thinking skills suitably, for example when responding to the challenge of identifying and discussing the positive and negative impacts of tourism on Thailand.

Curriculum

The school has a clear vision for its curriculum based on the school moto 'Giving our best, to be the best', which focuses on supporting pupils to become effective learners and equipping them for their next steps. The school has also focused on enhancing pupils' learning experiences. Leaders have developed their approach to the Curriculum for Wales suitably over time by trialling, refining, and shaping the curriculum through ongoing staff and pupil consultation. For example, they have introduced 'Freedom Fortnight' where areas of learning and experience come together to explore a big idea to help develop pupils' understanding of learner effectiveness such as curiosity, courage and creativity. The school is working closely with cluster primary schools to develop aspects of the curriculum, such as through the 'Talk for Writing' approach to improve pupils' oracy and writing skills. This is in the early stages of development.

The school has introduced a beneficial range of strategies to support more able pupils. This includes using suitable data to track and monitor individual pupils and support teachers in planning for their learning. In addition, the school arranges a suitable range of activities which include visits to Swansea University, 'Scriblwyr Cymraeg' workshops and 'Seren' opportunities.

The school provides pupils with useful information to help them make informed choices about their next steps. Leaders consider pupils' views carefully to ensure pupils are able to study their chosen courses. In Years 10 and 11, the school offers a wide range of general and vocational courses to meet pupils' needs. There are effective links with a local college to provide taster days and opportunities to study Hair & Beauty, Construction and Public Services.

The personal and social education (PSE) programme supports the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and emotional skills well and helps develop empathy, confidence and resilience. The PSE and relationships and sexuality education programmes are refined in response to pupil feedback and supported well by external partners such as the school nurse and police liaison officer. Pupils benefit from effective provision to teach pupils about the history and experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. This supports pupils' understanding of equality and diversity.

Pupils engage well with the Welsh language and benefit from opportunities to develop their appreciation of Welsh heritage and culture. For example, pupils enjoy competing in

the annual school Eisteddfod, celebrating Diwrnod Shwmae, working with the local Menter Iaith and the Year 7 trip to Llangrannog.

The school offers an extensive and popular programme of extra-curricular opportunities, enrichment activities and visits to enhance pupil experiences such as school musicals and links with a community in Lesotho. The school has effective links with local businesses, charities and local artists. For example, the school works with the Salvation Army to raise funds to support local people, they work with a range of local and national businesses to show pupils how they use the Welsh language and arrange an annual visit for pupils to attend a Careers Fair.

Well-being, care, support and guidance

Bryngwyn school is a welcoming, supportive and inclusive learning community that places great value on promoting pupils' well-being and happiness. Staff know pupils well, and the strong relationships between staff and pupils are a notable strength. Pastoral staff are dedicated and work diligently to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils take pride in the fact they are Bryngwyn pupils and appreciate the support they receive.

The school has effective links with a range of external agencies which contribute beneficially to pupils' well-being provision, for example counselling services and the local police. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop personally and socially outside lessons. These include a variety of clubs and experiences. Pupils note that they are treated with respect and kindness and in return, they are generally friendly, sociable and well-mannered and are polite with adults and visitors. A strong feature of the support they receive is the valuable advice and guidance on their next steps, including transition to Bryngwyn and on to further education, training and employment.

The ALN team provides a friendly and supportive environment for the pupils in their care. They are passionate about providing the best experiences for pupils with ALN and enabling them to fulfil their potential. The school offers a broad range of interventions and provisions for pupils with ALN, which support them effectively to develop their social and basic life skills. The provision for pupils with ALN is centred around 'The Wellbeing Centre' and 'Gofal' which are supportive and purposeful spaces which are having a positive impact on their education. Well-being staff effectively evaluate provision based on pupils' experiences and opinions. Staff analyse pupil questionnaires and have adapted provision accordingly to further meet the needs of their pupils. This is a notable strength. The ALN team works collaboratively with parents, carers and external agencies to support pupils effectively, and as a result the majority of pupils with ALN make sound progress against their targets.

Leaders provide valuable support and information around supporting pupils with ALN's social needs, and to a lesser extent their learning needs, while leaders use an appropriate range of data and information to monitor and track their progress. Individual development plans and one-page profiles help staff understand clearly the challenges pupils face and how best to support them. In addition, teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in supporting pupils with ALN and vulnerable pupils in their lessons.

Attendance for all pupils is significantly lower than that of similar schools and is not in line with improvements seen nationally. Although strategies targeted at improving the attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals have brought about some improvements, their attendance is well below that of their counterparts in similar schools. School leaders analyse data appropriately on the whole, however their strategic work in improving attendance is not precise enough and has not had a sufficient impact.

The recently introduced 'Pupil Engagement Policy' reflecting the schools '3 'R' approach of Respect, Relationships and Responsibilities provides a clear and well understood framework for the promotion of positive behaviour and attitudes. As a result, most pupils behave well.

Pupils have many valuable opportunities to participate in school life and develop their leadership skills well, for example through the school council, eco committee, Criw Cymraeg and Curriculum Ambassadors. Pupils contribute effectively to the development of the whole school approach to learner effectiveness and the promotion of the Welsh language and culture across the school.

Senior leaders, supported by staff and pupils, maintain a strong safeguarding culture. Clear systems and procedures ensure that the safeguarding team responds to concerns promptly and diligently. Staff complete useful and regular training to help them understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff are confident in recording and sharing concerns appropriately and leaders investigate and act upon any allegations of bullying or harassment incidents thoroughly. The school's designated safeguarding lead works effectively with external agencies in child protection matters.

Leading and improving

The executive headteacher across the federation provides considered, reflective and supportive leadership to both schools, underpinned by a strong sense of moral purpose and ambition. Since his appointment, he has developed a strong understanding of both schools and uses this insight to identify their specific needs. The executive headteacher has identified clearly the key areas requiring immediate improvement and is beginning to implement helpful changes, but it is too early to see the impact of these. Senior leaders across the federation embrace the federation's vision of "excellence through partnership".

The recent leadership restructure has strengthened the capacity of the senior leadership team across both schools. Roles have been allocated appropriately, drawing on leaders' experience and skills. In general, senior leaders support the executive headteacher well and are beginning to implement worthwhile improvements in their respective areas of responsibility. However, these improvements are relatively recent and are not implemented consistently.

The senior leaders who work across both schools enable teachers to meet and discuss good practice across the federation. There are some new common processes, such as personal development reviews that are beginning to impact positively on practice.

Senior leaders have established more rigorous self-evaluation and improvement planning processes after a period of instability and change. They have ensured that both schools now have a suitable programme of self-evaluation and improvement planning activities. This includes a range of activities, at senior and middle leader level, including lesson observations and learning walks, scrutiny of work and canvassing pupils' views. Leaders use data well to identify strengths and areas for development in their area of responsibility. Across the school, self-evaluation processes are beginning to help leaders to identify the strengths and areas for improvement required. However, the effectiveness of these activities are too variable across departments.

Leaders in the well-being team at Bryngwyn have a suitable overview of the strengths and areas that are most in need of improvement. They have a sound knowledge of the pupils and their families that helps to provide appropriate support where necessary.

The federation improvement plan identifies appropriate priorities which cover most aspects of the school's work and responds to many national priorities appropriately. Leadership has had a positive effect on the care, support and guidance for pupils across the federation. In a few other areas, the school has demonstrated improvements such as in the provision for ALN and improvement in provision in a few departments. Despite these improvements, there has not been enough impact on improving teaching and its impact on learning or on the progressive development of skills. Attendance remains too low for all groups of learners.

Performance review systems are consistently applied across departments, with links to professional learning. Staff set suitable targets that are appropriately reviewed in a timely fashion. Senior leaders have implemented useful changes to strengthen the school's accountability processes, including line management arrangements. However, there remains a lack of consistency and rigour in how well leaders hold staff to account.

The school provides a beneficial programme of professional learning activities. It offers both tailored pathways and training sessions for all staff which link appropriately with the

development aims of the school. Professional learning has had a modest impact on improving teaching and leaders' self-evaluation. The school is a lead school for Initial Teacher Education and, as a result, staff in the school benefit from their links to higher education and research updates.

Members of the governing body are committed and loyal supporters of the federation. They have a sound understanding of the federation's financial position. However, overall, governors are overly positive in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness. In addition, they do not have a strong enough understanding of important aspects of the schools' work such as the quality of teaching and its impact on learning.

The business manager and the executive headteacher plan and monitor the schools' budgets robustly. There are appropriate processes in place to ensure strong financial management. The school uses grant funding appropriately to support pupils impacted by poverty. They provide a variety of suitable strategies which aim to reduce the impact of poverty on attainment and well-being. These strategies include supporting pupils with equipment, subsidising extra-curricular activities and providing wrap around care provision. Over the last three academic years, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in their Year 11 qualifications was generally below that of their counterparts in similar schools.

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. Although there are suitable actions for the pupil development grant (PDG), the plan lacks success criteria and leaders' evaluation of the impact of the PDG are overly general and there is no reference to external examination data.

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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