



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Bae Baglan  
Seaway Parade  
Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot  
SA12 7BL**

**Date of inspection: November 2018**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Bae Baglan

Ysgol Bae Baglan is an English-medium 3 to 16 all-age school, maintained by Neath Port Talbot local authority. The school opened in 2016 after the amalgamation of Cwrt Sart, Glan Afan and Sandfields comprehensive schools and Traethmelyn primary school. There are currently 1,512 pupils on roll with 1,226 of secondary school age and 286 pupils of primary school age. The school hosts a resource base for 120 key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils with special educational needs.

The school serves communities in and around the town of Port Talbot. Over 30% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average of 16.4% for secondary schools and 18% for primary schools. Over two-thirds of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. Very few pupils receive support to learn English as an additional language or come from a minority ethnic background. Very few pupils speak Welsh fluently. The percentage of pupils with additional learning needs is around 26% which is higher than the national average of 22.9%. Currently, about 9.2% of pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is well above the national average of 2.2%.

The headteacher was appointed in January 2015 to prepare for the opening of the school in September 2016. The senior leadership team consists of three deputy headteachers, three heads of school, a business manager and an additional learning needs co-ordinator. They have been in post since September 2016.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.  
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

## Summary

Ysgol Bae Baglan is a supportive and inclusive learning community. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous to staff, peers and visitors. Notable features of the school include many pupils having a caring attitude towards others and the successful leadership skills that they demonstrate across a wide range of roles. While pupils make sound progress in the primary phase, there are important areas for improvement. Once pupils arrive in the secondary phase, they benefit from the wide range of learning experiences and make good progress.

Most teachers foster beneficial working relationships with pupils. Many make their classes stimulating and interesting places where pupils of all abilities feel supported and learn productively. The school provides valuable experiences for more able and talented pupils that have a positive impact on outcomes for these pupils.

Leaders and staff share a vision that all pupils, regardless of ability or level of additional need, will access all opportunities at Ysgol Bae Baglan. Interventions are tailored to address the needs of individual pupils very successfully and with great sensitivity. This is an outstanding feature of the school that ensures pupils with additional learning needs make strong progress against their targets.

Following the amalgamation of the four schools, leaders and managers have worked successfully to create an all-age school that is the hub of the community. Leaders have ensured that at this stage in the school's development, wellbeing is a key priority and have secured high standards of wellbeing for pupils.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Improve standards of pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the school
- R2 Improve the impact of feedback and assessment on helping pupils to improve their work.
- R3 Ensure that the self-evaluation and improvement processes focus more precisely on pupils' learning across the school
- R4 Improve opportunities for pupils' use of the Welsh language outside of Welsh lessons

## **What happens next**

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to provision and support for pupils with additional learning needs, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main findings

### **Standards: Adequate and needs improvement**

While pupils make sound progress in the primary phase, there are important areas for improvement. Once pupils arrive in the secondary phase, they benefit from the wide range of learning experiences and make good progress.

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils listen well to teachers and peers and develop appropriate speaking skills. From a low oracy level in nursery, as they move through the foundation phase, many pupils become more confident speakers and listen well to stories. In key stage 2, most pupils improve their oracy skills well listening attentively to each other's opinions and talking confidently about their work. However, the majority of pupils do not use a rich enough variety of language to express themselves. The majority of pupils in key stages 3 and 4 speak confidently and use complex and key subject terms in the correct context. Many reason and extend their answers well, giving examples and using relevant vocabulary. More able pupils use accurate terms and connectives confidently to express themselves fluently.

In the foundation phase, many pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to help them read simple texts. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils have positive attitudes towards reading and name their favourite types of books. The majority of pupils, however, do not have sufficiently developed reading skills and only a few more able pupils use higher order skills such as inference with confidence. In key stages 3 and 4, nearly all pupils read texts appropriately and access relevant information for the purpose of answering questions or to complete a task. The majority of pupils are able to annotate relevant sections of texts to identify information. For example, Year 7 pupils identify features of persuasive language in a leaflet advertising the National Botanical Garden and pupils in Year 11 locate and use key information accurately from a text about Lewis Hamilton.

By the end of the foundation phase, the majority of pupils write in short sentences and are starting to use capital letters and full stops correctly. Many spell common words correctly using their phonic knowledge appropriately. More able pupils write accurate instructions such as how to make a cucumber sandwich using correct sequencing words. In key stage 2, a minority of pupils improve their writing skills well. Around half of pupils in key stage 2 have poor handwriting and do not present their work with enough care. Across the foundation phase and key stage 2, most pupils do not use their literacy skills well enough across the curriculum.

In key stages 3 and 4, the majority of pupils write well at length. They use a variety of information from different sources to support their writing. Most of these pupils edit their work confidently. For example, Year 8 pupils plan and accurately redraft a recount of the Battle of Bosworth in history lessons. The majority of pupils are confident and accurate in their use of key subject terminology.

Many pupils develop a secure understanding of number in the foundation phase. Pupils in nursery correctly add and order numbers up to 10. By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils work confidently with numbers up to 100 and

recognise simple fractions. The majority of pupils improve their numeracy skills well in key stage 2 and use number confidently to help them solve real life problems. For example, more able pupils understand and use coordinates in four quadrants and convert imperial to metric units of measurement using decimals to calculate the distance between places in France. In key stages 3 and 4, the majority of pupils develop their numeracy skills appropriately. Many construct suitable graphs to display information correctly. For example, in geography, pupils draw graphs to present data on the top ten deadliest weather hazards and analyse the information gathered. Most pupils apply their number skills suitably when given the opportunity, for example in calculating the percentage yield of chemical reactions.

Pupils develop a wide range of ICT skills by the end of the foundation phase and the end of key stage 2. Most use their skills confidently and effectively to support their learning across the curriculum. Many pupils in the foundation phase use ICT well. For example, they create a set of instructions successfully to move Little Red Riding Hood safely through the forest, or the wolf to each of the three little pigs' homes. In key stage 2, many pupils gain valuable research skills and begin to develop a solid understanding of how a database and spreadsheet works. However, the ICT skills of the majority of pupils in key stage 3 do not build sufficiently on this firm foundation.

Across the school, most pupils develop their thinking skills appropriately through, for example, considering the advantages of genetically modified food. Pupils demonstrate suitable creative skills. For example, they create original designs to represent the planets when painting on polythene, design and make wind chimes from scrap metal.

Across the school, many pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh. In the foundation phase, many pupils ask and answer appropriate questions about how they are feeling and what they are wearing. They use simple language with increasing confidence and write short sentences, for example to describe themselves to an alien. In key stage 2, most pupils develop appropriate Welsh oracy skills, such as when they create simple verbal reports to describe the weather in different countries of Great Britain. A majority of older pupils, with some prompting, speak about themselves and their likes and dislikes. However, most of them do not extend their sentences or speak in different tenses well enough.

Many pupils read known texts in Welsh with appropriate pronunciation and some understanding. They write in Welsh for a suitable range of purposes, for example an autobiography about Charles Darwin as part of their science topic.

At the end of key stage 4, many pupils are entered for GCSE Welsh. The minority of these achieve a level 2 qualification. However, across the school, pupils' use of the Welsh language outside of Welsh lessons is limited.

At key stage 4, performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics in 2017 is above the average for similar schools. Provisional outcomes for 2018 shows a decline to place the school well below similar schools in this indicator. Performance in the capped points score is below similar schools in 2017 and provisionally for 2018. The proportion of pupils that gain five GCSE or equivalent grades at A\*-A is above that in similar schools in 2017 and provisionally in 2018. In 2017, pupils made better than expected progress in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics from the end of key stage 2. Progress in the capped points score was below that expected.

At key stage 4, the performance of boys in nearly all indicators is below the average for boys in similar schools. Girls' performance in 2017 is above the average for girls in similar schools in many indicators. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the average for their counterparts in similar schools in all indicators.

Across the school, many pupils with additional learning needs make very strong progress against their targets. By the end of key stage 4, many of these pupils make exceptional progress.

At the end of Year 11, most pupils remain in full-time education, employment or training.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Ysgol Bae Baglan is a supportive and inclusive learning community. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and benefit strongly from the wide range of learning experiences and extra-curricular activities provided. Many have a positive attitude towards their learning. They work well in pairs and small groups and persevere successfully to complete tasks.

Most pupils feel safe in school and believe the school deals effectively with any concerns they have. They feel that the school has a clear understanding of individuals' needs and that the well-being teams, subject staff and senior leaders support them effectively when they have personal challenges or concerns.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous to staff, peers and visitors. Many have a caring attitude towards others and the way that they support each other is a strength. For example, 'playground buddies' support pupils' play at lunchtimes well and Year 7 peer supporters work with Year 6 pupils effectively on the transition process.

A notable feature of the school is the successful leadership skills demonstrated by pupils across a wide range of roles. They contribute well to the school's life and work, for example through the main pupil leadership forum. This active group has had a positive influence on school life such as contributing to the creation of the salad bar and the selection of healthy foods available. Many other valuable sub-committees, such as the community leaders, pupil wellbeing and eco leaders, also make a beneficial contribution to the school's work. For example, the digital ambassadors run a successful coding club for key stage 3 pupils and video conferencing sessions for those in the foundation phase and key stage 2.

Many pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and taking part in physical activities. Across the school, many pupils develop positive attitudes to regular exercise through the wide range of sporting activities on offer. Sports ambassadors fulfil their duties effectively in encouraging pupils to take part in physical activities, for example the multi-sports sessions during lunchtime.

Many pupils develop their social and emotional skills well through participation in a wide range of charity and community work, raising large sums of money and an awareness of important issues locally and across the world.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

Most teachers foster beneficial working relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. Many make their classes stimulating and interesting places where pupils of all abilities feel supported and can learn productively.

Many teachers plan lessons effectively and provide a range of engaging and purposeful activities that build well on pupils' previous learning and knowledge. They provide pupils with clear explanations and prepare resources that engage pupils successfully. In many classes, teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team to support individuals and groups of pupils well. In the majority of lessons, teachers use skilful questioning techniques to probe and develop pupils' understanding.

In a few instances, teaching is not consistently effective enough. In these lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They over-direct pupils' learning which hinders pupils' ability to work independently and improve their presentation skills, particularly in the foundation phase.

Many teachers circulate the classroom effectively during lessons in order to provide pupils with valuable verbal advice. In these lessons, teachers monitor pupils' understanding well and provide constructive ongoing support for individuals and groups of pupils.

The majority of teachers provide pupils with useful written feedback that identifies clearly how pupils can improve their work further. However, a minority of teachers do not monitor closely enough how well pupils respond to their advice and as a result, pupils often repeat the same errors. In a minority of instances, teachers' written feedback is too positive, particularly when pupils' work is inaccurate or poorly presented.

The school provides a wide range of valuable learning experiences for nearly all pupils. The school uses the subject expertise of staff appropriately throughout the school, for example pupils in key stage 2 are taught by specialists in physical education, French and technology.

Provision in the foundation phase is developing suitably and provides an appropriate balance between indoor and outdoor activities. At key stage 2, the school works with partner cluster schools closely to deliver a programme of thematic learning to engage pupils well.

At all key stages, teachers and leaders benefit from the use of an online notebook and document management system which has increased collaborative planning within areas of learning. Long term planning includes appropriate activities that meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. The school provides successful flexible arrangements for vulnerable pupils who benefit from a range of learning pathways that engage and meet their interests, needs and abilities well. The school provides valuable support for more able and talented pupils that includes a range of activities



that enrich their experiences and broaden their horizons. This has a positive impact on outcomes for these pupils, for example the proportion gaining the highest grades at key stage 4.

The broad and varied curriculum at key stage 4 is inclusive, builds on the interests of pupils and has extended the choice of subjects since the amalgamation of the three secondary schools. As a result pupils access a wide range of courses, for example vocational engineering, vehicle technology and construction courses offered on site and supported by local employers.

The school provides a comprehensive range of beneficial activities outside the classroom. These include a wide range of sporting activities such as the triathlon club, football, netball, rugby and hockey. Effective creative and enrichment experiences are provided through a signing choir, art club, band, theatrical productions and the 'BBC Reporters' Club'. Most year groups are involved in valuable additional opportunities such as Rosslyn Park rugby 7s tournament, annual netball trip to Devon and ski expeditions each year. Staff facilitate the participation of more vulnerable pupils, and those with additional learning needs well.

The school has mapped opportunities appropriately to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy in all areas of learning. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop these skills at an appropriate level across the curriculum.

The school has been successful in developing a strong reading culture through their reading behaviours programme and a range of reading enhancement activities. As a result, there are suitable opportunities to develop a range of higher level reading skills across the curriculum especially in key stages 3 and 4.

Teachers have identified an appropriate range of beneficial opportunities for pupils to improve their numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example, in science, pupils in key stage 2 analyse data linked to insulating properties and in key stage 4 explain the effects of exercise on the cardiovascular system. However, the level of challenge offered in numeracy tasks across the curriculum is inconsistent.

The school is well resourced with ICT equipment and pupils make effective use of it when available. Teachers offer interesting opportunities across the school for pupils to use video conferencing to communicate with other pupils in countries across the world to develop their oracy skills. However, staff do not give pupils in key stage 3 enough worthwhile opportunities to develop their ICT skills in purposeful contexts in other subjects.

The school offers rich opportunities for pupils to develop their appreciation of Welsh heritage and culture. Examples of this are the annual Eisteddfod, residential visits, and an annual visit to Euro Disney's Welsh culture event for St David's Day. Pupils in key stage 2 experience educational visits that enrich their experience of Welsh history and culture through visits to Saint Fagans National Museum of History to study the life of Celts. Provision for Welsh enables many pupils to make sound progress by the end of key stage 4. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills outside Welsh lessons.

## **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The quality of care, support and guidance is a strong feature of the school. Leaders and staff share a vision that all pupils, regardless of ability or level of additional need, will access all opportunities at Ysgol Bae Baglan.

A senior leader and team work exceptionally well with staff and support workers across the school to provide individual support for all those pupils who need it. This team collaborates successfully with a range of external agencies to support this work. Pupils receive a comprehensive programme of support. This helps them to engage positively in their learning and most make strong progress. Interventions are tailored carefully and sensitively to address the needs of individual pupils. This is a strong feature of the school's work.

The school's monitoring and tracking system is thorough and comprehensive. This is used well by the school to identify underperformance and provide additional support where needed. Individual development plans are detailed and include useful and measurable targets. The plans are shared with pupils and parents and reviewed regularly.

The monitoring and tracking system includes worthwhile pastoral support diaries that are used to share information about social and emotional challenges faced by pupils. Leaders consider evidence and make informed decisions about how to best support individual pupils experiencing difficulties.

Attendance is monitored regularly and staff work closely with a variety of partners to ensure pupils are motivated to attend. As a result, persistent absenteeism has reduced substantially.

A strong pastoral team work collaboratively to monitor the wellbeing of individual pupils. Staff know their pupils well and provide effectively for their emotional and social needs. School leaders model care and respect effectively and encourage pupils to support each other. As a result, most pupils have positive relationships with each other and with staff. The peer mentoring system ensures that there is always someone for pupils to turn to if they have difficulties during break times. There is a comprehensive programme to support transition from partner primary schools.

The school provides many beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. The school helps pupils to take on responsibilities and play a full part in the life of the school. They value pupils' views when making decisions. For example, through the many pupil committees, pupils have opportunities to lead changes that affect the environment, such as the introduction of recycling bins for plastics.

The school is successful in ensuring that most pupils have a comprehensive understanding of how to make healthy lifestyle choices. There are appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. For example, the school has introduced a healthy tuck shop for key stage 2 pupils and a salad bar for older pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their physical fitness in the wide range of school clubs. In the foundation phase, a dental hygiene programme promotes dental health effectively. For example, nursery pupils brush their teeth to music daily.

Leaders take into account the views of pupils from surveys and use them effectively to inform the personal and social education curriculum. For example, in response to concerns from pupils, the school works with the local police to cover topics such as sexting and internet safety.

The school has a clear anti-bullying policy and staff deal with incidents thoroughly. The school fosters a positive approach to dealing with pupils' behaviour. There is a comprehensive reward system in place across the school and as a result, most pupils' behave well.

Staff provide pupils with purposeful opportunities to develop awareness of equality, tolerance, sustainability and children's rights. For example, peer mentors took part in an external event on the Children's Charter and participation in the 'Reclaim' project allowed pupils to produce a short play on homelessness. The school holds regular assemblies to promote matters such as anti-bullying, children's rights and responsibilities and managing feelings.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

Following the amalgamation of the four schools, leaders and managers have worked successfully to create an all age school that is the hub of the community. Staff, pupils, parents and governors contributed effectively to creating a vision for a positive, caring and highly inclusive learning community.

Since the opening of the new school, leaders have worked well to bring staff together and develop policy and practice that supports the inclusive ethos and wellbeing effectively. Leaders have ensured that at this stage in the school's development, wellbeing is a key priority. As a result, it secures high standards of wellbeing for pupils.

Within a relatively short period, leaders have established a wide range of effective procedures that on the whole, provide an accurate picture of many of the strengths and areas for improvement. Arrangements to monitor and strengthen the work of middle leaders are developing well. Regular meetings focus suitably on improving elements of provision and pupils' standards, although, at times these focus more on key stages 3 and 4. As a result, leaders do not have a secure enough understanding of the shortcomings in the foundation phase and key stage 2.

Self-evaluation processes draw on a wide range of useful first hand evidence such as departmental reviews, pupils' work, lesson observations and pupils' and parents' views. The evaluation of many aspects of the work of the school, especially those relating to learning support and wellbeing, are thorough and take into account work across the whole school. These evaluations feed well into improvement planning and have had a positive impact on pupil wellbeing and the progress of pupils with additional learning needs.

To date, the focus of senior and middle leaders has been mostly on evaluation and planning relating to standards and teaching in key stages 3 and 4. The work to evaluate and plan for consistency and continuity in the provision for teaching and learning across the whole school is at an early stage of development.

The school has created a culture and ethos which promotes the professional learning of all staff successfully. Performance management objectives are aligned well with individual needs and school priorities for improvement. Leaders have ensured that there are rich opportunities for all staff to expand and refine their professional knowledge through an extensive internal programme of training. For example, the school provided training for staff to enable them to collaborate, communicate and share best practice across the school through the use of ICT. In many curriculum areas, staff share good practice and support others internally and in other schools.

Enthusiastic and dedicated governors have played a key role in establishing the all-age school. The governing body supports and challenges the school well. Leaders ensure that governors have a secure understanding about the standards that pupils achieve and of the areas in need of improvement, particularly in relation to key stages 3 and 4.

The headteacher, business manager and governing body monitor the budget carefully and manage expenditure well. They make best use of resources available to create a welcoming and homely environment for pupils. Staff are deployed suitably and only a very few teachers teach outside their area of specialism. The school makes effective use of grant funding, including the pupil development grant, to support vulnerable pupils and reduce class sizes. This has had a positive impact on the wellbeing and attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Extensive out of hours use of the facilities by the community provide the school with extra income that funds the maintenance of the building. This also contributes substantially to the goal of making the school a key community hub.

## 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))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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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