



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

A report on

Ysgol Pendref

**Gwaenynog Road
Denbigh
LL16 3RU**

Date of inspection: February 2023

by

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

About Ysgol Pendref

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| Name of provider | Ysgol Pendref |
| Local authority | Denbighshire County Council |
| Language of the provider | English |
| Type of school | Primary |
| Religious character | N/A |
| Number of pupils on roll | 135 |
| Pupils of statutory school age | 117 |
| Number in nursery classes | 18 |
| 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 23.0%) | 61% |
| 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 16.1%) | 20.9% |
| Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home | N/A |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language | N/A |
| Date of headteacher appointment | 01/04/2019 |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable) | 02/06/2014 |
| Start date of inspection | 13/02/2023 |

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.

Overview

Ysgol Pendref is a happy and inclusive community that places a high priority on the well-being of its pupils. Pupils take pride in having robust relationships with staff, which supports their progress in skills and to discuss any concerns in a safe environment. As a result, many pupils make steady progress from their starting points.

Staff work together effectively to identify the needs of all pupils and plan a range of purposeful and stimulating activities that engage pupils' interests appropriately. In general, teaching is over-directed, which limits a minority of pupils from developing their skills independently.

The school's curriculum is appropriate to best meet the needs of many pupils. Teachers' planning considers pupils' suggestions and ideas, which results in most pupils applying themselves enthusiastically to their work. However, teachers do not plan effectively enough to develop pupils' extended writing skills, numeracy and digital skills across all areas of learning.

Teachers promote the Welsh language effectively. They plan purposefully for pupils to learn about the history and culture of Wales. However, teachers do not plan to improve pupils' ability to communicate in Welsh systematically. This limits pupils' progress in communicating in Welsh in formal and informal situations.

The headteacher and leaders share a clear vision to provide a nurturing and engaging education based on supporting pupils' well-being. They concentrate well on ensuring that all staff feel that they are part of the school team. This ensures that everyone, including governors, understand the school's basic priorities and work together supportively. In general, the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement arrangements are not always robust enough to identify its strengths and areas for improvement.

Recommendations

- R1 Sharpen monitoring procedures to focus on identifying strengths and areas for improvement by evaluating the quality and impact of provision on pupils' learning
- R2 Provide consistent opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum, especially their number, extended writing, and digital skills
- R3 Ensure that pupils make decisions and take responsibility for their own learning to develop their skills independently
- R4 Develop pupils' Welsh oracy skills systematically

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress.

Main evaluation

Learning

Many pupils start school with literacy, numeracy, and social skills below those expected for their age and stage of development. During their time at the school, many pupils make steady progress in developing their skills appropriately across areas of the curriculum. Most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those pupils eligible for free school meals make good progress and achieve well against their targets.

Most pupils have sound speaking and listening skills. They are attentive in class and respond concisely and enthusiastically to questions. They talk confidently about their activities and use key vocabulary and sentence patterns well to describe their learning, for example when explaining the rules to the game 'What's the time Mr Wolf'. Younger pupils take turns in conversations and join in eagerly with rhymes and songs. As pupils move through the school, most develop a range of vocabulary and engage in discussions and interesting debates, for example when explaining how different countries celebrate Christmas.

Many younger pupils make steady progress in developing their Welsh oracy skills. They listen and respond to a range of Welsh songs, words, and phrases and use simple phrases, for example when asking 'ga i grem-pog? (can I have a pancake?)' when playing in the role play area. By Year 2, pupils understand and speak simple phrases such as describing their feelings. However, most older pupils do not recall basic Welsh vocabulary and sentence patterns to discuss different topics confidently. As a result, they are not confident in speaking Welsh in different contexts and do not make the expected progress of which they are capable.

Many pupils make good progress with their reading skills. Younger pupils develop a suitable understanding of the relationships between letters and sounds, for example when matching words with pictures. By Year 2, most pupils apply their skills to read sentences with growing accuracy. They discuss their favourite characters from a book animatedly, often giving a sound reason behind their choices. As pupils progress through the school, most read a range of suitably challenging texts, fluently and accurately paying attention to punctuation. For example, pupils develop their research skills when gathering information about Africa and synthesise the key points in written form. By Year 6, many pupils have a deeper understanding around texts and contextual information and gather information from different sources such as books, fact sheets and electronic devices.

Many pupils' writing skills develop appropriately during their time in school. Many of the youngest pupils develop their skills by mark making, drawing symbols, and writing letters in a range of contexts, for example when drawing a food list for Mr Wolf. By Year 1, many apply their phonic knowledge to spell simple words and write simple sentences correctly, for example whilst describing their perfect pancake. As pupils move through the school, they develop a basic understanding of vocabulary and vary their sentence structures appropriately. For example, Year 3 pupils use effective adjectives and similes when describing the experience of an evacuee. In a few instances, pupils write for different purposes and organise their work into

structured paragraphs. However, across the school, pupils do not plan, redraft and edit their writing well enough. As a result, this hampers the understanding of a minority of pupils of what and how to improve their extended writing skills.

Across the school, most pupils make suitable progress with their mathematical skills. In the younger classes, pupils enjoy engaging in number games and develop effective counting skills, for example whilst counting to 10. By Year 2, pupils show a greater knowledge and understanding of numbers and apply this knowledge to add numbers up to 100 and explore various techniques to develop their understanding of number bonds. By Year 3, most pupils develop a basic knowledge and understanding of various calculation techniques and select their preferred method. They develop and use a range of measuring skills when recording and interpreting data. For example, Year 5 pupils estimate and measure the height of trees appropriately in the school's forest area. However, across the school, a minority of pupils do not apply these skills well enough across the curriculum.

Overall, pupils make limited progress in their digital skills. Many younger pupils use electronic devices effectively, for example when inputting instructions into a programmable device to follow a specific path. By Year 6, the majority of pupils use the internet to gather information about their 'celebration' topic beneficially. They use simple word processing skills, for example when creating presentations about the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. However, the progress of a minority of pupils across the school is limited and they do not make sufficient progress in developing in their digital skills.

Most pupils develop their creative skills successfully. In the younger classes, most pupils use a range of media to explore their ideas, for example when using different apps to paint and draw different images. Nearly all Year 1 pupils enjoy collecting various resources and develop their communication skills well when designing and constructing a den. Most older pupils develop their creative skills successfully. For example, Year 6 pupils design, create and evaluate various and interesting head dresses used in carnivals.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour in lessons, when moving around the school and during break times. They are polite, courteous, and respectful towards each other, staff and visitors. Nearly all pupils are proud of their school and feel safe and secure within its positive and caring environment. Pupils' levels of well-being and attitudes to learning are a strength of the school.

Many pupils show a positive attitude towards learning and remain focused on their activities throughout lessons. Nearly all pupils show perseverance on tasks and co-operate effectively, for example when discussing how to display empathy and propose effective ways of supporting a fictional child who is allegedly being bullied. They are beginning to show a basic understanding of how well they are making progress in developing their skills. The majority of older pupils discuss the strengths and areas for improvement of their work appropriately.

Nearly all pupils have a good understanding on how to stay safe online. For example, they know the implication of their digital footprint, and the danger of unsuitable use of

the internet and sharing too much information about themselves. They understand the importance of eating healthily and ensuring their own personal hygiene and explain why it is important to keep themselves fit.

Many pupils are aware of their rights as a child and write effectively about aspects of Children's Rights such as the right to have different beliefs, religion, and cultures. For example, pupils in Year 5 develop their researching skills to deepen their understanding of how people live in contrasting countries. They show good levels of care for each other and treat one another respectfully throughout the school. Nearly all pupils feel comfortable in expressing their emotions and feelings. They know that they can approach any member of staff and trust them should they experience any worries, anxieties or concern they wish to share.

Many pupils are enthusiastic as they take on leadership roles at the school. For example, the Criw Cymraeg identify various activities to promote the Welsh language and culture. Members of the School Council take on leadership roles efficiently and are active in discussing aspects of the school that need improving. For example, they offer opportunities for their peers to learn about online safety. Pupils across the school are aware of how their opinions can make a difference to the life of the school.

Pupils understand their role in the local community and the wider world. For example, Year 6 pupils develop their understanding and skills on how to support people with who live with the dementia condition, and many pupils readily donate items to the local food bank. These initiatives have a positive impact on their awareness of the needs of others in their community and help them to develop as ethical and responsible citizens.

Teaching and learning experiences

All teachers and support staff foster very effective relationships with pupils based on a happy and caring environment where pupils feel valued and appreciated.

Staff use the school's calm learning environment and resources effectively, for example to plan meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their health and well-being in valuable outdoor learning activities. Staff use displays around the school beneficially to celebrate and support pupils' learning, for example to help pupils to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and respond to their needs consistently, in particular their emotional and well-being development. Almost all staff use probing and questioning techniques effectively to check for pupils' understanding and address any misconceptions beneficially. All staff provide positive praise and celebrate what pupils have done well. In the best cases, teachers provide relevant written feedback to support pupils to develop their skills and support them in identifying areas to develop. The majority of teachers use effective methods to identify what pupils have done well and what needs to improve to support the next steps in learning. However, opportunities for pupils to reflect on and improve their work are inconsistent.

In the best examples, teachers maintain a good pace in lessons and engage most pupils in the learning. In nearly all lessons, teachers have clear learning objectives

and use a range of purposeful resources to engage pupils' interest. They support pupils to recall previous learning appropriately. However, teachers tend to over-direct the learning, which inhibits a minority of pupils from applying their skills across the curriculum independently.

The school's curriculum is appropriate to best meet the needs of many pupils. Teachers' planning considers pupils' suggestions and ideas beneficially. All staff ensure that the curriculum develops pupils' personal and social skills well and, in general, builds progressively on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. Teachers organise pupils' learning into topics and plan effectively around the areas for learning. However, teachers do not plan relevant and meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their number, extended writing and digital skills across the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not develop these skills well enough in line with their stage of development.

The school is making good progress towards developing and refining approaches to delivering the Curriculum for Wales. The learning activities are supported effectively with purposeful educational visits and visitors. For example, pupils in Year 6 visit the War Museum as part of their topic on War and Conflict. Staff make worthwhile links with outside agencies to provide exciting opportunities to nurture pupils' aspirations for the future, such as visiting a local university. Staff make good use of external partners to offer a varied range of extra-curricular activities. For example, staff organise regular visits for sports coaches to visit the school to provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to engage in football tournaments, cricket and indoor athletics to develop physical and social skills.

Teachers promote the Welsh language effectively through a variety of appropriate activities and visual displays across school. They plan purposefully for pupils to learn about the culture of Wales, for example while taking part in Saint David's Day celebrations and gathering information through their research work about Santes Dwynwen. Staff encourage and model the Welsh language appropriately, for example when reading stories in Welsh during assemblies and when encouraging pupils to speak Welsh in traditional yard games during play activities. However, provision to develop pupils' Welsh oracy skills is inconsistent across the school and, as a result, does not support pupils to build their vocabulary and sentence patterns systematically over time.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a nurturing and caring community where staff and pupils show a high level of respect and understanding for each other. Staff know the pupils and the local community well and, as a result, they meet their social and emotional needs successfully. This is a notable strength of the school.

Through a range of pupil voice groups, the school develops appropriate opportunities for pupils to participate in decision-making at a school level and to influence what and how they learn. For example, staff respond to the School Council's request to provide support for pupils to develop their reading skills at home.

The provision for pupils identified as having ALN is strong. The school's effective co-ordinator, along with well-trained support staff, ensures that the process for early

identification for pupils with ALN is robust. Staff use relevant information about pupil progress from their different starting points effectively and monitor their progress carefully as they move through the school, for example in pupils' literacy skills. Staff work effectively to implement the new ALN reform and set clear and specific targets for pupils in their individual development plans. As result, many pupils understand the progress they make against their targets, which supports their confidence and motivates them to make further progress. Staff work extensively with a range of specialist services to secure additional and timely resources to support pupils with a range of needs. These arrangements ensure that targeted pupils make sound progress in learning.

The school provides worthwhile opportunities that contribute well to developing pupils' spiritual and moral understanding, such as the importance of respecting others. Staff provide a range of worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about different religions. For example, older pupils discuss confidently how different countries take part in different celebrations.

The school places a high value on enabling pupils to understand Children's Rights such as the right to have different values, beliefs and cultures. Staff promote equity and diversity well and encourage pupils to help others by raising money for local and national charities. This helps them to understand the important values such as empathy, courage and compassion effectively.

Leaders and staff have a very positive partnership with parents and families. As a result, parents appreciate the care and support their children receive in school. Staff support pupils' well-being by working effectively with a range of external partners such as the police liaison officer. Staff also draw effectively upon local and national well-being support to help pupils to take care for their mental well-being.

The school provides a rich and varied range of trips and visits that support the curriculum and encourage pupils' engagement in their learning, such as the residential trips for Years 5 and 6 pupils. Staff provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to perform in Welsh celebrations, including in the annual school Eisteddfod.

Staff provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of Welsh culture, for example by reflecting on the work of local artists and emulating pictures of the Clwydian Hills. Staff develop pupils' understanding of Welsh history beneficially through the King Arthur legend and the story of Rhita Gawr.

The school has sound processes in place to promote good pupil attendance. There is beneficial support from the local authority education welfare officer to increase the attendance of a very few pupils. The school's arrangements to keep pupils safe meet requirement and give no cause for concern. The safeguarding culture and arrangements are thorough, and all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in contributing successfully towards pupils' overall safety and well-being.

Leadership and management

Leaders have a clear vision based on nurturing and developing pupils' learning and well-being. This vision, co-constructed by pupils, staff, governors, parents and the wider community, promotes a warm, inclusive and happy learning environment where

nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning and show a high level of respect for each other and staff. The school has a strong culture of effective teamwork and members of staff have clear responsibilities and undertake their roles purposefully. All members of staff share positive and professional working relationships, which support the school's caring ethos successfully.

Leaders and staff have a strong understanding of the overall well-being needs of the pupils and their families. They have developed productive relationships with parents and communicate regularly and efficiently through a range of platforms, including a regular newsletter that informs parents of upcoming events. Staff make good use of the parental engagement teacher, which has led to more effective lines of communication between the school and families. As a result, parents feel confident in raising any issues with staff that may affect their children's learning and well-being quickly and effectively. In addition, the staff work closely with parents to arrange activities that raise funds successfully, which in turn supports pupils to attend education visits.

Leaders' arrangements for the management of staff performance are effective. Targets link well to the school's priorities and personal development. There is solid provision for staff to develop their roles through a beneficial professional learning offer. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and well-being, such as developing a whole-school approach to plan and deliver the Curriculum for Wales. This is beginning to have a positive impact on developing provision to best meet the needs of all pupils.

In general, leaders plan a purposeful range of opportunities to gather information on how the school is performing. They evaluate the quality of support programmes interventions and speak to pupils appropriately about their experience of school. However, leaders do not focus well enough on identifying the strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' learning, or the impact of provision on pupils' outcomes. As a result, they do not have a clear enough picture of how the school is performing in a few areas, such as how well pupils apply their basic skills across the curriculum. Leaders plan for school improvement sufficiently and ensure that all staff are aware of what they need to do to bring about change. For example, all staff are aware of their role in developing the school's ALN provision and how their roles benefit individual pupils.

Governors undertake their roles supportively and diligently and focus their work well on helping to ensure that the school runs smoothly. Governors question leaders suitably about the school's actions. However, they are over-reliant on the information presented to them by leaders to challenge the school's strengths and areas for development. They have suitable arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and promote the school's safeguarding culture effectively.

Leaders manage the school's budget purposefully. The school monitors the pupil development grant and other additional funding effectively, ensuring that a range of support programmes are available for pupils who need additional support.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer 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

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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