



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Hendrefelin Special School  
Heol Hendre  
Bryncoch  
Neath  
SA10 7TY**

**Date of inspection: December 2015**

**by**

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

| <b>Judgement</b>      | <b>What the judgement means</b>   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Excellent</b>      | Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice |
| <b>Good</b>           | Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement   |
| <b>Adequate</b>       | Strengths outweigh areas for improvement                                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b> | Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths                        |

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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**Publication date: 05/02/2016**

## Context

Ysgol Hendrefelin is a local authority special school maintained by Neath Port Talbot local authority. In 2013, Ysgol Hendre and Velindre Community School were federated to become the federated special schools of Afan Nedd. In January 2015 these federated schools amalgamated with Bryncoch Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) to become Ysgol Hendrefelin.

The school provides day and residential placements for pupils aged 7 to 16 with a wide range of complex educational needs. These needs include moderate learning difficulties, autism and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school is based on two sites. There are 111 pupils at the Bryncoch site in Neath and 21 pupils at the other site in Velindre on the edge of Port Talbot.

Nearly all pupils have a statement of special educational needs and 67% are eligible for free school meals. A very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Twelve per cent of pupils are in the care of the local authority. English is the predominant language of nearly all pupils.

The school has a support unit for nine pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), and a learning support centre for nine primary age pupils with social emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). There is also a nurture centre for 13 secondary age pupils who are highly anxious.

The headteacher was appointed in January 2015, having previously been the headteacher of Ysgol Hendre.

## Summary

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| <b>The school's current performance</b>       | <b>Good</b> |
| <b>The school's prospects for improvement</b> | <b>Good</b> |

### Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- Pupils at key stage 4 gain an appropriate range of qualifications in accredited courses
- Most pupils engage well in lessons, work with enthusiasm and are keen to learn
- Learning experiences are well matched to the needs of pupils
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour
- There are highly effective specialist programmes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and challenging behaviour

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The headteacher, supported by the senior leadership team, has a very clear vision for the school
- Senior leaders analyse the findings of self-evaluation carefully and use this information to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school
- Senior leaders have a successful record of managing change
- Teaching staff and teaching assistants receive a wide range of relevant training
- The school manages its resources well to provide good value for money

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Address the health and safety concern raised during the inspection
- R2 Ensure that arrangements for marking are consistent across the school
- R3 Improve the use of data to track pupil progress and inform planning
- R4 Increase opportunities for staff to observe and share good practice within and outside the school
- R5 Strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they are fully accountable for the quality assurance of standards, and provision in their areas of responsibility

### **What happens next?**

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the school's progress.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Pupils who attend Ysgol Hendrefelin have a wide range of needs, which include moderate learning difficulties, autism and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Across the school, many pupils gain the skills they need to increase their independence, improve their work and contribute to the wider life of the school.

Most pupils across the school make good progress in achieving their learning targets identified in their individual education plans (IEPs).

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the school with national averages because of the wide range of pupils' special educational needs.

There is no notable difference between the performance of boys and girls or those who are looked after by a local authority. Those pupils eligible for free school meals achieve better than those who are not eligible.

Last year, all leavers gained one or more qualifications in accredited courses that are well matched to their individual needs and abilities. These include awards at entry levels 1, 2, 3, and GCSEs in mathematics, English and science. In addition, eight leavers achieved the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award and four pupils achieved the silver award. All school leavers moved on to further education.

In lessons, many pupils recall prior learning well, especially when given prompts and cues from staff. Many pupils are confident to ask and answer questions and share their ideas effectively with their peers.

A majority of pupils develop their thinking and problem-solving skills well. For example, in science, they identify suitable methods and equipment to investigate how to separate materials. In mathematics, more able pupils at key stage 4 select appropriate methods for calculation and apply these successfully.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills. They use a range of measuring skills well in line with their needs and ability. A majority apply their numeracy skills appropriately in other suitable areas of the curriculum. For example, they sequence dates and create time lines in topic work and read scales and measure liquids accurately in science. Many pupils develop their mathematical language well, such as using "big" and "small" when describing the size of objects. A majority of pupils make suitable progress in using their numeracy skills in everyday situations. For example, they learn to tell the time and understand the value of coins and the use of money.

Most pupils develop their literacy skills well. Pupils on intervention programmes improve their sight reading of high frequency words. Less able pupils improve their handwriting. They are able to match letter sounds to the start of words, and break down words to spell them out. They make good progress in developing their reading skills and improve the presentation of their written work.

More able pupils are able to talk about books that they have read. For example, they describe the main characters and discuss the plot. A few more able pupils at key stage 4 produce extended writing that is organised well into paragraphs and use a suitable range of vocabulary. However, a majority of pupils repeatedly make mistakes with their spelling.

A majority of pupils across the school develop their ICT skills well in ICT lessons. They apply these skills well in a few other subject areas, such as word-processing pieces of writing in English and designing adverts and posters in topic work.

A majority of pupils develop their understanding of Welsh greetings and build on a small range of phrases to increase their vocabulary. Pupils gain a good understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils feel safe in school and believe that the school responds well to any incidents of bullying. They know whom to talk to if they are worried and they show a high level of trust in the staff.

The nurturing ethos of the school helps nearly all pupils to gain in confidence and self-esteem. As a result, most pupils engage well in lessons, work with enthusiasm and are keen to learn. They behave well and develop good social skills. Nearly all pupils are polite to visitors and take pride in their own achievements and those of their peers.

Most pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress in controlling their behaviour.

Most pupils understand how to be healthy and develop an understanding of which foods are healthier than others. They enjoy taking part in physical activity, for example gymnastics, football and swimming.

Pupils learn to care for others and a few act as buddies and peer mentors. Nearly all pupils take part in a wide range of activities to raise money for local and national charities.

Pupils contribute well to decision-making in the school through the effective school councils at each site. The councils have been influential in promoting healthy eating across the school, deciding the new school motto and creating the code of conduct for pupils.

Attendance rates vary across the different parts of the school. However, generally, pupils with a poor record of attendance in their previous placement make good progress with their attendance at Ysgol Hendrefelin

|   |
|---|
| <b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b> |
|---|

|             |
|-------------|
| <b>Good</b> |
|-------------|

**Learning experiences: Good**

The school provides a suitable range of learning experiences to meet the needs of all learners. This includes an appropriate balance between National Curriculum and vocational options.

Key stage 4 pupils have good access to vocational curriculum opportunities, for example in construction and carpentry. However, very few pupils have the chance to learn alongside their peers in local mainstream schools. The school provides a broad range of extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' experiences. This includes a youth club for pupils with ASD at the school and those from the wider community.

The school places an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy across the school. Lesson plans identify useful opportunities for the development of these skills across the curriculum. The school has made good progress in planning for the delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. All pupils have suitably challenging targets in these areas. Generally, the school provides well for ICT. The school promotes the development of thinking skills well.

The school makes suitable provision for pupils to develop their understanding of the Welsh language and Welsh culture. This includes a Welsh 'phrase of the week' and an annual school Eisteddfod to celebrate St David's Day.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is a strength. There are regular opportunities for pupils to learn about sustainability, through recycling and organic gardening. The school raises pupils' awareness of other cultures through effective links with pupils in France and the Czech Republic.

**Teaching: Good**

Teachers and teaching assistants have strong working relationships with the pupils they teach. They know the individual needs of their pupils well and have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They manage pupil behaviour skilfully and give constructive advice, which helps most pupils to remain focused and achieve well in lessons.

Teachers plan lessons carefully. They set clear learning objectives and stimulate pupils' interest through a wide range of engaging activities and resources that are well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils. Lessons have good pace. Teachers make effective use of questioning, which enables pupils to recall and extend their knowledge and understanding.

Nearly all teachers mark work regularly and their comments are supportive and encouraging. However, marking is not consistent across the school. In a minority of cases, marking is not accurate and teacher comments are too superficial. As a result, pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve their work.



The school is using an increasingly wide range of data to track pupil progress. This includes tracking pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers use this information effectively to identify pupils who need support and plan suitable interventions.

Parents receive useful reports on the achievement and progress of their children.

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

The school has effective policies and strategies for promoting nearly all aspects of care, support and guidance, which make a strong contribution to pupils' learning outcomes and wellbeing. However, arrangements for promoting healthy eating are not applied consistently across the school.

The school promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development effectively through a well-planned personal and social education programme, assemblies and other activities. These provide pupils with valuable, age-appropriate information about a wide range of issues including sex and relationships, substance misuse and how to stay safe on line.

The school works well with a wide range of specialist external agencies, including social services and the CAMHS team. They provide beneficial advice, guidance and support for vulnerable pupils. Where necessary, school staff put in extra support to meet specific needs as they arise. In this way, vulnerable pupils receive the help they need during times of crisis.

There is an appropriate range of opportunities for pupils to engage with the community through activities such as visits to the library and local shops and fundraising coffee mornings for members of the local community. These help pupils to develop their social and independent living skills well.

Pupils are elected by their peers to the school councils. The councils meet regularly and are an effective forum for pupils to raise and discuss issues that concern them.

The school has effective arrangements for identifying and monitoring the wide range of pupils' additional learning needs. These include highly effective specialist intervention programmes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and challenging behaviour. All pupils have a one page profile that provides relevant information on their learning needs as well as individual education plans, which contain suitable targets. Pupils know their personal targets well and are involved appropriately in measuring their success in reaching them.

The school uses rewards and incentives well to improve attendance and behaviour. Where necessary, pupils have detailed positive-handling plans that outline suitable strategies for staff to use in managing the pupils' behaviour.

The school provides effective support and guidance for pupils to prepare them for moving on to colleges of further education.

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

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

There is a highly supportive and positive ethos throughout the school, with a strong focus on equality and diversity. The school ensures that there is equality of access to the curriculum. All pupils are treated with respect and dignity.

The school has made a few appropriate adaptations to the school buildings to accommodate both the increase in the number and type of pupils at both locations. These include refurbished teaching areas and a new ICT suite. Overall, there is an appropriate range of resources that are well matched to pupils' needs.

The school buildings and grounds are generally well maintained. At one site, outdoor areas are limited. A health and safety concern was raised with the school during the inspection.

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b> | <b>Good</b> |
|--|-------------|

### **Leadership: Good**

The headteacher and deputy heads provide strong leadership and management for the school. They have worked together well to overcome the challenges of setting up a new school across two sites, and have established a team of staff who work together effectively. They have created a positive ethos, with a clear focus on learning.

The senior management team meets on a regular basis. However, there are no formal minutes of these meetings. As a result, it is hard for managers to monitor whether agreed actions have been completed.

The school has recognised the need to develop the role of its middle managers and is taking appropriate steps to appoint members of staff to co-ordinator roles. However, this is at an early stage. As a result, practice across the school is not always consistent, for example in relation to marking and assessment.

The school has effective processes in place for monitoring the performance of staff. Performance management objectives for managers, teachers and teaching assistants link well to the priorities of the school development plan. Performance management identifies and addresses individual and whole-school training needs. Teaching staff and teaching assistants receive a wide range of relevant training, in relation to teaching and learning and issues to do with additional learning needs. As a result, the school is able to meet the changing nature of the pupils entering the school.

Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the work of the school. They have relevant knowledge and experience, which helps them provide useful support. They are beginning to develop their ability to provide challenge.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The school is developing its self-evaluation processes well. An annual self-evaluation day gives all staff a valuable opportunity to reflect on the strengths and areas for development at the school. The school also seeks the views of parents and pupils through regular questionnaires. However, the role of the governing body in relation to self-evaluation is underdeveloped. Although the self-evaluation report links well to the targets in the school improvement plan, it does not always set out clearly enough why these targets have been identified.

Senior managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development at the school. The school improvement plan identifies appropriate priorities, and includes detailed actions with realistic timescales and clear responsibilities. As a result, managers are able to monitor progress against actions effectively.

Managers use a range of processes to help them understand the quality of work across the school and to inform planning. These include lesson observations, peer observations and work scrutiny. Lesson observations are thorough, and have an appropriate focus on both teaching and learning. Managers analyse the findings carefully, and use this information to improve the quality of teaching across the school, for example in relation to the use of ICT.

Peer observations are at an early stage. Overall, opportunities for staff to observe good practice both within and outside the school are underdeveloped.

The school is developing its processes for collecting and analysing data in relation to individual pupils. Teachers use this data well to decide which pupils require specific interventions. Managers are starting to use this data more effectively to inform planning at a strategic level

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has strong partnership arrangements with a variety of external agencies to increase the range of learning experiences available to pupils. These include the police, an environmental charity and the fire service.

The school provides valuable support and guidance for parents and carers. This includes a weekly 'parent group' which enables parents and carers to discuss any issues or concerns they may have about their child.

The school, along with the local authority, has recently introduced an accredited training programme for parents of pupils with ASD. This training has been extended to include parents from other schools. However, it is too early to measure the impact.

The school has recently started work with special schools across the region within a pioneer schools network, with a focus on ASD, IEPs and assessment for learning. However, it is too early to measure the impact.

The well-managed partnership working with local mainstream primary schools and the further education college enables successful transition at key entry and exit points.

**Resource management: Good**

The school has an appropriate range of teachers and support staff, who are deployed effectively to meet the needs of pupils with increasingly complex needs. The school is taking appropriate steps to appoint a specialist mathematics teacher.

The school has started to use staff more flexibly across the different parts of the school. This means that more pupils benefit from the specialist knowledge and skills of individual members of staff.

Staff have appropriate planning, preparation and assessment time. This enables them to plan interesting lessons and make sure that resources support their teaching well.

The school's financial management is efficient and effective. The school has used its budget appropriately to make necessary improvements to the buildings. The school makes appropriate use of the pupil deprivation grant to deliver specific intervention programmes.

In view of the good standards achieved by the pupils and effective teaching, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

|   | Number of responses<br>Nifer o ymatebion | Agree<br>Cytuno | Disagree<br>Anghytuno | Don't know<br>Ddim yn gwybod |  |
|---|--|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--|
| I feel safe in my school.   | 85                                       | 81<br>95%       | 4<br>5%               | 0<br>0%                      | Rwy'n teimlo'n ddiogel yn fy ysgol.  |
|   |  | 93%             | 4%                    | 3%                           |  |
| The school deals well with any bullying.  | 84                                       | 72<br>86%       | 12<br>14%             | 0<br>0%                      | Mae'r ysgol yn delio'n dda ag unrhyw fwlio.  |
|   |  | 82%             | 11%                   | 7%                           |  |
| I know who to talk to if I am worried or upset.                                 | 85                                       | 82<br>96%       | 3<br>4%               | 0<br>0%                      | Rwy'n gwybod pwy i siarad ag ef/â hi os ydw I'n poeni neu'n gofidio.                   |
|   |  | 92%             | 4%                    | 4%                           |  |
| The school teaches me how to keep healthy                                       | 84                                       | 76<br>90%       | 8<br>10%              | 0<br>0%                      | Mae'r ysgol yn fy nysgu i sut i aros yn iach.  |
|   |  | 92%             | 5%                    | 3%                           |  |
| There are lots of chances at school for me to get regular exercise.             | 85                                       | 78<br>92%       | 7<br>8%               | 0<br>0%                      | Mae llawer o gyfleoedd yn yr ysgol i mi gael ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.               |
|   |  | 91%             | 7%                    | 3%                           |  |
| I am doing well at school   | 84                                       | 70<br>83%       | 14<br>17%             | 0<br>0%                      | Rwy'n gwneud yn dda yn yr ysgol.   |
|   |  | 91%             | 6%                    | 3%                           |  |
| The teachers and other adults in the school help me to learn and make progress. | 85                                       | 84<br>99%       | 1<br>1%               | 0<br>0%                      | Mae'r athrawon a'r oedolion eraill yn yr ysgol yn fy helpu i ddysgu a gwneud cynnydd.  |
|   |  | 97%             | 2%                    | 2%                           |  |
| I know what to do and who to ask if I find my work hard.                        | 85                                       | 83<br>98%       | 2<br>2%               | 0<br>0%                      | Rwy'n gwybod beth I'w wneud a gyda phwy i siarad os ydw I'n gweld fy ngwaith yn anodd. |
|   |  | 94%             | 3%                    | 3%                           |  |
| My homework helps me to understand and improve my work in school.               | 83                                       | 45<br>54%       | 38<br>46%             | 0<br>0%                      | Mae fy ngwaith cartref yn helpu i mi ddeall a gwella fy ngwaith yn yr ysgol.           |
|   |  | 66%             | 24%                   | 10%                          |  |
| I have enough books, equipment, and computers to do my work.                    | 84                                       | 79<br>94%       | 5<br>6%               | 0<br>0%                      | Mae gen i ddigon o lyfrau, offer a chyfrifiaduron i wneud fy ngwaith.                  |
|   |  | 90%             | 6%                    | 4%                           |  |
| Other children behave well and I can get my work done.                          | 84                                       | 47<br>56%       | 37<br>44%             | 0<br>0%                      | Mae plant eraill yn ymddwyn yn dda ac rwy'n gallu gwneud fy ngwaith.                   |
|   |  | 75%             | 20%                   | 5%                           |  |
| Nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunch time                      | 84                                       | 61<br>73%       | 22<br>26%             | 1<br>1%                      | Mae bron pob un o'r plant yn ymddwyn yn dda amser chwarae ac amser cinio.              |
|   |  | 81%             | 15%                   | 4%                           |  |

## Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

|                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Anthony Mulcahy      | Reporting Inspector |
| Caroline Rees        | Team Inspector      |
| Andrea Louise Davies | Lay Inspector       |
| Aron Bradley         | Peer Inspector      |
| Teressa Jones        | Nominee             |

## 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))

### Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

|      |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |       |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|
| Year | N   | R   | Y1  | Y2  | Y3  | Y4  | Y5   | Y6    |
| Ages | 3-4 | 4-5 | 5-6 | 6-7 | 7-8 | 8-9 | 9-10 | 10-11 |

Secondary phase:

|      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year | Y7    | Y8    | Y9    | Y10   | Y11   | Y12   | Y13   |
| Ages | 11-12 | 12-13 | 13-14 | 14-15 | 15-16 | 16-17 | 17-18 |

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

|                  |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Foundation Phase | Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 |
| Key stage 2      | Year 3 to Year 6                      |
| Key stage 3      | Year 7 to Year 9                      |
| Key stage 4      | Year 10 and Year 11                   |

## Glossary of ALN terms

**ADHD:** attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

**ALN:** additional learning needs

**ASD:** Autistic Spectrum Disorders, includes Asperger's Syndrome

**ATR:** additional teacher resource

**BESD, ESBD or SEBD:** Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties

**CoP:** Code of Practice

**HI:** hearing impairment

**MSI:** multi-sensory impairment

**PMLD:** profound and multiple learning difficulties

**SpLD:** specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia

**VI:** visual impairment