



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Penmorfa**

**Dawson Drive  
Prestatyn  
LL19 8SY**

**Date of inspection: February 2023**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol Penmorfa

Name of provider	Ysgol Penmorfa
Local authority	Denbighshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Not applicable
Number of pupils on roll	421
Pupils of statutory school age	339
Number in nursery classes	39
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%)	31.6%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary I 16.1%)	28.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3.2%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	24/06/2014
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](http://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 Penmorfa provides a caring and inclusive environment for its pupils, which encourages them to learn, be happy and participate fully in school life. Pupils take part enthusiastically in the activities provided for them and use resources well to improve their knowledge and understanding, both inside and outside the classroom. The purposeful working relationships that exist with their teachers and support staff promote the school's vision successfully, which is 'Making the Most of Everyone'.

Pupils develop good speaking, listening, reading and numeracy skills. Their artistic, creative, thinking and physical skills are also well established, and they are confident learners. They develop suitable extended writing skills and their application of digital skills across the curriculum is appropriate to their stage of development.

Learning is particularly successful where the teaching is vibrant and purposeful. Additionally, where mutually respectful and positive relationships exist amongst staff, teachers collaborate effectively with each other and support staff to enhance pupils' learning.

Overall, the school environment promotes purposeful learning opportunities and the provision for outdoor learning is highly effective. Staff make outstanding use of the school grounds to provide innovative learning experiences for pupils to learn in authentic and meaningful activities.

Staff provide exemplary support, care and guidance for pupils in all aspects of school life. This bespoke and intuitive approach to meeting the needs of individual pupils motivates them to focus on their own learning, life-skills and well-being extremely well. They are keen to learn and they are ambitious and capable learners. A strong consequence of this is that pupils' behaviour is good.

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. The senior leadership team and governors share her clear vision, and most staff work cohesively with them to secure the best provision possible to improve pupils' outcomes.

Leaders evaluate the school's work to plan for improvements robustly. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes highlight the headteacher's determination to ensure success for the pupils and the community. The monitoring practices and improvement plans align well to relevant training for staff to develop their skills, through a purposeful programme of professional learning opportunities.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Address the issue related to the school's car park, identified at the time of inspection
- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to write extensively in all areas of learning
- R3 Provide effective opportunities for pupils to apply their digital skills across the curriculum

## **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 two case studies on its work in relation to the impact of bespoke learning, care and support packages that cater for every pupil according to their individual needs, and the impact of innovative leadership practices on provision to target pupils' learning, well-being and life-skills, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Many pupils enter the school with literacy, numeracy and social skills lower than the expected level for their age. As they move through the school, many pupils make strong progress from their low starting points. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals make progress that is at least in line with their peers, and most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress in their learning and achieve well.

Most pupils listen attentively, speak clearly and express their ideas sensibly. Younger pupils discuss their work with adults and their peers enthusiastically, such as when they create colourful flowers and ice creams using two-dimensional shapes. Most older pupils communicate clearly in English. They offer answers and express opinions maturely. For example, in Year 6, most pupils contribute to intelligent discussions and expand their thoughts coherently when considering the plight of refugees.

The reading skills of many pupils are developing successfully. By the time pupils are seven years old, many read fluently and decode unfamiliar words accurately using effective phonic strategies. By Year 6, many pupils read a variety of challenging texts with good understanding. They are confident readers, and they use well-researched information from various texts and relevant websites to enrich their work across the curriculum. For example, they research purposefully the role and impact of a social influencer and glean facts from different evidence sources to plan biographies of famous athletes effectively.

Many younger pupils' early writing skills are developing suitably. By Year 2, many write efficiently with appropriate punctuation and grammar as they begin to edit and improve their writing. For example, they use connectives and adjectives effectively when writing descriptions of their inventions to help others, prompted by studying Thomas Edison's devices. Many older pupils develop their writing skills appropriately and show a sound grasp of familiar spelling patterns, paragraphs and punctuation. They adapt the style and structure effectively for different topics, for example when writing a persuasive report on the importance of maintaining the Morfas, a local area of natural beauty. However, pupils do not use the skills they have learnt well enough to produce extended pieces of writing across all areas of learning independently.

Many younger pupils develop their Welsh language skills well and respond to commands and greetings successfully. By Year 2, many pupils use basic phrases confidently, such as when they express their feelings and discuss the weather. As pupils move through the school, they develop effective Welsh skills and, by Year 6, they use basic sentence structures and vocabulary accurately to talk about themselves, their hobbies and their families. Many pupils are keen to conduct simple conversations and greetings with visitors and their Welsh oracy skills improve as a result of their positive attitudes to the language and perseverance in learning.

Many pupils develop their numeracy skills well as they move through the school. The youngest pupils develop their knowledge of number well, such as when they fish with

rods to pick up magnetic numbers before ordering them correctly. By Year 2, many pupils calculate the answers to number tasks using two-digit numbers confidently and measure ingredients accurately before making bread, shaped as hedgehogs. They create tally charts and tables effectively to record their findings on birds that visit the school's garden areas and create symmetrical artwork using natural materials carefully.

Many older pupils use number methods successfully and develop a good understanding of how to use negative numbers when comparing temperatures in different cities from around the World. They also use co-ordinates in four quadrants confidently to find Greek artefacts on a map. Additionally, they develop effective strategies to explain the properties of square and cube numbers, compare equivalent fractions and measure perimeter accurately in real-life situations.

Many pupils have appropriate digital skills. Younger pupils use camera functions to create computer-based designs efficiently and program robots well to follow a set route. By the end of their time at school, most pupils create multimedia presentations and manipulate texts effectively. However, many pupils do not apply their digital skills independently across the curriculum with a sound enough understanding.

Most pupils develop good artistic and creative skills. For example, the youngest pupils role-play happily at the kitchen areas and paint Arctic sunsets confidently at an easel. Across the school, most pupils embrace opportunities to experiment creatively, such as Year 6 pupils creating clay models as part of the school's Eisteddfod celebrations. In all classes, most pupils develop effective thinking skills. They use purposeful strategies to accomplish tasks successfully, such as pupils in Year 5 collaborating to measure wallpaper and match its patterns, prior to sticking it to a wall.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Most pupils' behaviour is good in classrooms and around the school, and they are courteous and welcoming to adults and visitors. Most show care and consideration for each other on a daily basis. For example, pupils lead the Penmorfa Parliament and other pupil voice groups across the school successfully. The very few pupils who need help to manage their emotions benefit from the effective support and resources provided. For example, pupils access the sensory room and outdoor well-being room, the Nest, to calm down before returning to their tasks.

The beneficial relationships between staff and pupils are strong. This enables nearly all pupils to engage in learning and develop as confident learners. Most pupils show pride in their school and feel safe within its inclusive and very caring ethos. They feel that adults in the school listen to their views carefully and take them into account when considering decisions that affect them. For example, pupils celebrated the recent World Cup tournament by allocating countries to each class to encourage pupils into learning about them.

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning, take pride in their work, show keen levels of interest in activities and talk enthusiastically about school life. For example, they listen attentively to teachers and concentrate well on their work during their life-skills lessons. They learn how to saw lengths of wood, and decorate internal

walls with wallpaper, which supports their communication and numeracy skills effectively. They collaborate successfully in groups and in pairs, and many make positive contributions to class discussions. As a result, most pupils demonstrate a good level of respect for the contributions of others and develop well as confident and independent learners. For example, younger pupils work collaboratively in making symmetrical shapes out of natural materials in the extensive outdoor environment.

Most pupils draw on strategies to support their emotional well-being effectively. For example, pupils experiencing personal difficulties work with staff in the Nest to resolve issues amicably. Most pupils develop effective independent skills in activities, such as safely accessing and using resources confidently around the classroom and in outdoor areas. For example, pupils make pasta in cooking sessions and plant potatoes in the school garden.

Most pupils develop successfully as ethical, informed citizens. They are sensible and caring in their relationships with others and demonstrate a good understanding of their own and other pupils' needs and rights. For example, members of the Morfa Troops make thoughtful decisions and support younger pupils during playtimes and help to resolve any conflicts that may occur on the yard. As a result, nearly all pupils show a strong awareness of the importance of their contributions towards creating a caring and supportive society.

Most pupils participate willingly and express imaginative opinions when offering ideas about the school's curriculum. Most talk with enthusiasm about their lessons and pupils regularly contribute to what they would like to learn. For example, pupils in Year 2 mix different colour paint independently to replicate cave paintings.

Nearly all pupils take an active part in the life of the school and the pupil voice groups are very inclusive. Their representatives demonstrate a range of good leadership skills. They fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and representatives are proud of their valuable contributions. This includes making presentations to classes on matters that are important to them, such as the rights of children. For example, pupils report back on Feedback Fridays to show the rest of the school the positive contributions they have made during the week.

Many pupils develop effective entrepreneurial skills. For example, pupils bake cakes to sell to parents to raise funds to enhance their experiences at the local cinema. Pupil voice groups contribute considerably to social enterprise initiatives. For example, the Eco Ambassadors ensure that the school recycles waste, and saves electricity and water. As a result, pupils have a very good awareness of social and global concerns.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and are encouraged by pupil voice groups to eat fruit at breaktimes. They understand the benefits of physical exercise on their health, such as participating in the daily mile around the school track. Most pupils have a secure knowledge of the importance of good physical and mental well-being. For example, pupils who participate in after-school sports clubs explain the importance of regular exercise effectively and its positive impact on their heart health and general fitness.

Nearly all pupils understand the need to be careful when using the internet, including the importance of using passwords safely. In discussions, nearly all pupils are keen to share what they learn about e-safety. This impacts positively on their well-being and general life-skills.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Overall, the school's curriculum is broad and balanced and offers pupils an extensive range of opportunities that encourage them to explore and learn. Most lessons engage most pupils' interests well and motivate them to persevere and succeed. In general, teachers ensure that pupils engage in a stimulating range of experiences to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

Teachers plan thoroughly to help pupils make good progress in their speaking, listening, reading and numeracy skills through purposeful tasks. For example, as part of the school's work during Black History week, Year 4 pupils research the life and works of influential people. This develops their writing skills appropriately, such as informative pieces about Marcus Rashford's humanitarian work during the recent pandemic and Rosa Parks' fight against injustices. However, teachers do not plan opportunities for pupils to write extensively enough across all areas of the curriculum. In addition, the planning for pupils to apply their digital skills independently in a variety of activities is underdeveloped.

Overall, teachers collaborate effectively to innovate the delivery of the new Curriculum for Wales. For example, they provide pupils with beneficial opportunities to influence what they want to learn. As part of their afternoon provision, pupils share their own ideas when they respond to a 'Big Question', such as 'What has shaped our World?'. This enhances their skills and enriches their appetite for learning. In addition, the curriculum includes productive theme weeks that focus on topics such as diversity and inequality. This supports pupils to develop a firm understanding of the diverse nature of Wales and the wider world, for example when Year 2 pupils compare how they celebrate Christmas in Prestatyn compared to France.

The working relationship between staff and pupils is strong. As a result, the teaching is effective and impacts well on pupils' learning. Staff know pupils well and provide purposeful activities to meet their needs, including those who are identified as needing additional support with their work. Support staff provide these pupils with beneficial guidance and know when to intervene and when to allow them to work independently.

Most of the teaching is effective, such as when Year 4 pupils apply their mathematical knowledge purposefully to build giant structures using skewers and marshmallows. This consolidates their understanding of the properties of three-dimensional shapes whilst exploring pyramids as part of their topic on ancient Egypt. Additionally, through effective and engaging activities, Year 6 pupils write letters using persuasive texts to convince people in authority to accept refugees from Ukraine.

Provision for personal and social education develops pupils' understanding of their well-being successfully. For example, pupils draw on specific strategies as support



techniques when faced with more challenging work. This scaffolds their emotional well-being effectively.

Teachers also plan activities that reflect the cultural heritage of Wales successfully, such as when pupils appreciate different types of songs using their Welsh language skills. As a result, nearly all staff promote the advantages of learning Welsh effectively and use Welsh phrases regularly in their daily routines.

The school enriches its curriculum with a range of visits to the local area and further afield. A notable strength of the school's provision is the exceptional way staff plan and deliver highly effective and rich learning experiences outside of the classroom. For example, staff plan and deliver inclusive sessions in the 'Builders' Yard', where pupils undertake practical life-skills, such as painting and bricklaying. This enhances their communication and numeracy skills exceptionally well and develops pupils' problem-solving skills effectively. In addition, these valuable opportunities increase pupils' motivation, concentration and resilience, and strengthen their understanding of different careers in the world of work.

Teachers use assessment activities beneficially when responding to pupils' work. In the most effective practice, teachers share purposeful feedback, both verbally and in writing, to assess the quality of pupils' learning and target any needs promptly. These strategies help pupils understand how to improve their work to make further progress in their learning.

The school's end of year reports to parents are very effective and inform them beneficially on their children's progress and experiences in school. Pupils are also involved in these reports as they reflect on their individual progress over the year. These reports include individual QR codes for every pupil that link to valuable video clips about their learning and well-being experiences.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school is a very supportive community, and staff encourage pupils to contribute to its caring and friendly ethos successfully. The strong relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are a notable feature of the school. Teachers and support staff know the pupils extremely well and they respond instinctively to pupils' health, emotional and social needs. Through effective use of the Nest and by utilising the exciting and vibrant outdoor experiences, staff provide excellent support for pupils' needs. This creates a reassuring and supportive learning environment that helps nearly all pupils to settle well into school life. In addition, the inclusive provision contributes positively to their happiness and positive behaviour in school. As a result, these thoughtful and caring practices encourage pupils to engage in the life of the school and in their own learning successfully.

The provision for pupils identified as having ALN is a major strength of the school. The ALN co-ordinator works in partnership very effectively with other senior leaders and staff. Together, they ensure that pupils' needs are identified early, and that the tracking and support for individuals and groups of pupils begin promptly. Rigorous pupil progress reviews, linked to a robust tracking system, result in a deep understanding of pupils' needs amongst staff. This is supported by valuable opportunities for staff to engage in training to support all pupils' well-being and

learning needs across the school. The school interacts exceptionally well with a range of specialist services to secure individual support for pupils with a range of learning, physical, emotional and social needs. These bespoke arrangements ensure that nearly all pupils identified as needing additional support make effective progress in line with their different starting points and stage of development.

The school ensures that all pupils take on leadership roles effectively through a variety of purposeful groups. This provision develops their understanding of the importance of active citizenship well. As a result, staff provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to participate in making decisions to improve the school. For example, members of the School Council are active in the planning and creation of the many outdoor areas, such as the life-skills' learning facilities, the trim trail and the woodland school.

Staff provide a good range of beneficial opportunities that help pupils to develop a firm understanding of their Welsh heritage and culture. For example, as part of a local history project, pupils walk to Prestatyn Roman Baths to learn about the impact of the Romans on the local area. The school places a strong emphasis on providing a rich and varied range of trips and visits that support the curriculum and engage pupils in their learning. For example, older pupils attend annual residential visits, such as to a nearby outdoor adventure camp, to enhance their problem-solving and team building skills. These experiences provide varied opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and culture of their own locality and wider areas of Wales, such as Llyn Tegid.

The school successfully promotes pupils' understanding of Welsh culture and works effectively with the Urdd, who support the school well. For example, the school celebrated 'Jambori, Cwpan y Byd' with a Welsh folk musician, and it celebrates Welsh culture successfully in its St David's Day Eisteddfod. The active Criw Cymraeg promote the Welsh language conscientiously and they organise school competitions across the school to further highlight that the Welsh language is 'cool in school'. These activities support the school's effective provision to allow pupils to engage willingly with school life and to feel proud of the school's family ethos.

Staff enable pupils to make strong contributions to the life of the local community. They use the experiences positively so that pupils develop an understanding that caring for others is important. For example, pupils and staff foster links with a local supermarket, which supports the school-based food and clothing bank to help vulnerable families. This contributes to pupils' understanding of the importance of being kind and compassionate to all in society.

The school's processes for monitoring attendance are efficient and the impact is beginning to improve attendance and punctuality. Staff communicate well with each other to support pupils and understand their roles in keeping pupils safe. For example, the school's Mini Police promote safer internet days effectively, which supports pupils to make the correct choices about keeping safe. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are appropriate and give no cause for concern. However, inspectors brought an issue related to car park safety to the attention of school leaders during the inspection.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher works diligently with the senior leadership team, governors, pupils, and parents on promoting a shared vision for the school. Most staff share her strong values and her high expectations. Her conscientious work and clear thinking on how to improve the school reflect the school's motto, 'Making the Most of Everyone', successfully.

The headteacher leads the school purposefully. She ensures that all staff focus on creating a warm, family atmosphere that places pupils' outcomes and life-skills at the heart of their work. This ensures that all pupils and adults have opportunities to embrace the positive opportunities that the school provides. Along with the deputy headteacher, they model successfully the values and aspirations that the school community encourages, such as respect, ambition and the determination to succeed. As a result, there is a shared commitment amongst governors and most staff to improve the school's practices and pupils' learning and well-being.

Staff fulfil their roles and responsibilities against set timescales efficiently and most feel that they contribute purposefully to the school improvement process. For example, they plan in departmental teams to develop a shared understanding when designing the curriculum. They also develop new systems confidently to determine pupils' starting points at the school and to evaluate pupils' progress as they move through the school.

Leaders have established a range of rigorous monitoring activities to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development. They gather a range of first-hand evidence effectively to inform their views of the school. For example, they analyse how well the pupils are progressing from their starting points and consider the views of pupils and parents carefully. Leaders use findings from the self-evaluation processes realistically to set purposeful targets in the school's development plan. They also identify, share and apply the most effective practices, noted in their monitoring processes, across the school. For example, there are opportunities for staff to share each other's teaching and planning practices. As a result, the findings of leaders' monitoring leads to beneficial professional learning opportunities for staff, which includes visiting other schools.

Leaders and staff ensure that pupils' use of the school grounds is outstanding, particularly the areas that promote opportunities to develop pupils' life-skills. They have increased covered outdoor facilities and gardening activities, which allows pupils more choices as to where and how they learn. For example, pupils use first-hand learning opportunities to improve their practical life-skills in the school's innovative 'Builders' Yard'.

The headteacher and staff collaborate well with other schools and external partners, such as to plan for and deliver the Curriculum for Wales. Arrangements to promote professional development for all staff link well with the school's priorities for improvement. For example, leaders provide time for staff to embed the school's new assessment arrangements, and through implementing the ALN reform successfully.

Parents and carers are kept well informed of school developments. For example, the school uses weekly newsletters and its electronic messaging service and social

media effectively. Additionally, staff and senior leaders meet parents at drop-off and pick-up times to maintain a close contact with the extended school community. As a result, parents feel that the school is a safe and caring family environment. They appreciate how quickly leaders and staff respond to any concerns and suggestions that they raise and that information sessions at the school raise their awareness of new initiatives well.

Governors are supportive of the school. They understand their roles and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, for example in areas such as financial management and developing the school site and its provision. They keep up to date with national priorities, such as the Curriculum for Wales and the need to address the risks of pupil deprivation on their experiences and learning in school. Link governors are assigned to the school development plan's priorities and hold leaders to account sensibly as these areas develop over time. For example, they support the school's pro-active approach to enhance pupil voice opportunities and to improve the provision for pupils to develop as independent learners. They also monitor the implementation of policies and procedures sensibly, such as ensuring that the school promotes the importance of healthy eating and drinking among pupils.

Leaders manage the budget carefully and ensure that spending decisions are in line with the school's priorities for improvement. This includes the pupil development grant. The school uses this funding wisely for specific interventions across the school, which includes emotional support and nurturing sessions for pupils, such as in the school's sensory room and its outdoor well-being room, the Nest.

## 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](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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

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