



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

A report on

Ysgol Melyd

**Ffordd Pennant
Meliden
Prestatyn
Sir Ddinbych
LL19 8PE**

Date of inspection: January 2024

by

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

About Ysgol Melyd

Name of provider	Ysgol Melyd
Local authority	Denbighshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	162
Pupils of statutory school age	120
Number in nursery classes	23
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 23.7%)	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 is 13.2%)	40.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	5.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/04/2015
Start date of inspection	22/01/2024

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

When pupils first join Ysgol Melyd, the majority have communication and social skills that are below the level expected for children of their age and stage of development. A notable strength of the school is the valuable care, support and guidance provided across the school community and how it supports pupils to engage positively with school life and experiences. Teachers and leaders across the school place high priority on identifying individual pupil needs. They plan carefully and provide valuable support for pupils, including those with barriers to learning or with additional needs. As a result, many pupils make suitable progress in many areas of learning from their individual starting points, including those with additional needs (ALN) and from low-income households.

The school is a very caring, warm and supportive learning community for its pupils. The highly inclusive ethos permeates throughout the school. Staff know their pupils extremely well and use this information to ensure that all pupils are well cared for. A notable strength at the school is how leaders, staff and pupils succeed in developing an environment where pupils feel safe and happy at school, valued and respected. The school environment promotes well-being and learning opportunities beneficially, which includes expansive garden and growing areas and an outdoor classroom. Pupils behaviour is good and they show a responsible attitude when undertaking various leadership roles in the school.

The school has developed a broad and balanced curriculum for its pupils. Staff plan a variety of interesting opportunities for pupils to build on their knowledge and understanding successfully. Pupils show good levels of interest in their work and participate with enthusiasm and enjoy their learning. Many pupils make progress that is at least good in their literacy, numeracy, and digital skills. However, at times, teachers do not plan well enough to challenge all pupils. Overall, a few pupils do not make the progress they are capable in some areas of their learning.

The headteacher leads the school compassionately and has worked effectively with partners to create a shared vision for the school through the development of the school's vision, 'Happiness leads to success.' Leaders evaluate the school's work to plan for improvements thoroughly, using established self-evaluation processes. The headteacher, staff and governors work together effectively and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that teachers provide learning activities that challenge pupils of all abilities consistently

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main evaluation

Learning

On entry to the school, the majority of pupils' communication and social skills are lower than expected for their age and stage of development. During their time at school, many pupils, including pupils with ALN and those from low-income households, make suitable progress from their starting points.

Most pupils listen attentively to adults and their peers and value and respect the ideas and opinions of others. Pupils' speaking skills progress suitably over time. Over time, they express themselves maturely, particularly in English and respond to others using appropriate vocabulary and sentence patterns. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 use mature vocabulary well, such as 'herbivore', 'carnivore' and 'omnivore' accurately as they sort dinosaurs into groups. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 debate develop their speaking skills effectively, for example when discussing the drowning of the village of Capel Celyn. They support their points of view with valid and well-thought-out reasons. Across the school, pupils make good progress in developing their Welsh speaking skills. The youngest pupils identify common colours and discuss the weather and simple feelings with increasing confidence. As they progress through school, pupils' ability to converse develops well and they use an expanding range of more advanced vocabulary and complex sentences to communicate.

Most pupils' reading skills progress well. There is a sound reading culture at the school and, in general, pupils develop a love for reading from an early age. By Year 2, most pupils read with increasing confidence and use punctuation skilfully to convey meaning. Most pupils in Year 4 show a good understanding of the various features of books. The oldest pupils are beginning to show a preference for particular genres. They read with increasing fluidity and use their voices effectively to bring the texts that they read to life. They employ a range of effective strategies to understand the meaning of less familiar words.

Over time, most pupils' writing skills develop appropriately. The youngest pupils experiment with early writing skills as they form letters using natural materials such as twigs and stones that they have collected. By Year 4 and 5, most pupils become increasingly confident writers, for example they use rhyming words effectively to create poems that convey a strong anti-bullying message. Pupils apply their writing skills purposefully across a range of interesting contexts across the curriculum. For example, the oldest pupils use purposeful language to write an informative text to describe how the circulatory system works.

Many pupils' mathematical skills develop suitably. The youngest pupils recognise and identify numbers up to 20 and the properties of simple 2D shapes well. By Year 3,

many pupils compare different methods of writing metric measurements confidently. Many of the oldest pupils apply prior knowledge and understanding of different mathematical concepts effectively, for example when calculating the perimeter of compound shapes using appropriate methods. Many pupils use and apply their numeracy skills purposefully across the curriculum.

Across the school, most pupils develop their digital skills appropriately and apply their skills successfully across the curriculum. The youngest pupils use a range of apps on devices to support their writing skills, such as forming letters of the alphabet. By Year 2, most log in to their digital accounts confidently and independently. They add voiceovers to enhance their digital presentations, retelling the Christmas nativity story purposefully, for example. Pupils build their skills progressively and, by Year 6, pupils create eye-catching avatars and logos for various school clubs. On the whole, pupils' understanding, and the use of spreadsheets and databases is limited.

Pupils' physical skills develop well over time. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards physical activity and show good perseverance and resilience across a range of activities. The youngest pupils show good tactical awareness as they develop their speed and agility in a variety of games. They develop their fine motor skills as they cut up fruit pieces to create healthy fruit kebabs, using appropriate implements carefully. Pupils in Year 4 and 5 plan and perform gymnastics sequences energetically. They display clear shapes, show good body tension and move smoothly and dynamically between shapes.

Pupils' creative skills develop appropriately through a broad range of engaging activities. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 apply the methods of famous artists to create their own representations of fossils. They build on these creative skills as they move through the school, for example, Year 4 and Year 5 pupils design and make their own 'dart frog bean bag'. The oldest pupils use natural materials that they forage in the outdoor area to collaboratively build imaginative dens to provide shelter from the weather in the outside classroom.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy within the school's highly inclusive and nurturing environment. They know who they can turn to if they have a problem or concern, and they are confident that staff will listen to their views and opinions. This promotes a strong sense of belonging amongst pupils and has a positive effect on their well-being. Nearly all pupils state that staff respect, value, and treat them fairly. As a result, this contributes successfully towards the caring and family ethos which is a notable strength of the school.

Most pupils show a good awareness of the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices. Through their themes, they have a sound understanding of the effect that a balanced diet and physical exercise have on their health. For example, the oldest pupils investigate how different forms of exercise affect their breathing and heart rate. Pupils take part enthusiastically in activities such as world mental health day, and they suggest subtle adaptations that could be implemented into the school day to promote the importance of having healthy minds also. They value opportunities to keep fit through various after-school sports activities, such as netball and by taking part in local football tournaments.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. Visits from community police officers provide informative sessions to pupils that reinforces the importance of protecting their personal information and reporting concerns to an adult. The oldest pupils discuss the advantages and disadvantages of social media effectively, giving balanced arguments for and against. As a result, most are aware of the main dangers that they may face if they do not behave responsibly online. Most pupils show a good understanding that bullying can take place online, as well as face to face. For example, Year 3 to 6 pupils create sensitive and powerful anti-bullying poems to raise awareness of the negative impact of bullying.

Nearly all pupils throughout the school adhere to the 'Prestatyn Promises' that promote and encourage kindness and respect towards each other. For instance, the younger pupils help each other to achieve their life skill targets, for example they learn how to communicate by learning sign language so that they can support their peers that have less-developed communication skills. The schools' 'Bronze Young Ambassadors' take great pride in helping the younger pupils to develop their playground activities and skills. This contributes effectively towards promoting good behaviour during break and lunchtimes, and as a result, most pupils play well together. Most pupils have a good understanding of what is right and wrong and know that school rules are designed to keep them safe and happy.

Most pupils who belong to pupil voice committees talk about their roles with confidence and are proud of the initiatives that lead to making the school a better place. For instance, the school council have designed interesting wooden characters that are placed outside the school to remind visitors about parking safely and driving responsibly. Members of the 'Tim Swyddi' take immense pride in improving the school environment, as they conscientiously undertake their practical tasks around the school.

The youngest pupils show a good understanding of global matters, such as recycling and pollution. Many pupils can discuss effectively how marine litter negatively affects sea creatures. Most pupils of all ages work collaboratively to carry out their life skills activities, such as cooking and gardening.

Across the school, most pupils settle quickly into lessons and display a positive attitude to their learning. They are fully engaged in activities and participate enthusiastically with a good level of concentration and commitment. As they progress through the school, most pupils become more independent and capable of taking responsibility for their own learning. Most pupils work effectively in pairs and in groups. They sustain their focus without disruption, often engage in their learning confidently, and many have suitable techniques to help them persevere when they are challenged. For example, the older pupils support each other successfully to use useful methods when they are not sure how to approach a task. As a result, most pupils across the school complete their tasks efficiently, conscientiously and take pride in their work.

Most pupils participate readily in opportunities that develop their problem-solving skills and show resilience and perseverance when faced with challenging situations. In the outdoor learning area, nursery children carefully construct a tower made from sugar cubes, and reception and Year 1 pupils use their fine motor skills well to free a toy fish tangled in a net.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff across the school collaborate effectively with pupils, parents and local schools to develop a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of many pupils well. They have effectively developed and shared a vision where the school provides learning experiences that are engaging, equitable and develop pupils holistically. The school's curriculum thoughtfully builds upon pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding. This supports many pupils to make appropriate progress over time.

Pupils are given purposeful opportunities to influence their learning. For example, staff regularly invite pupils to suggest interesting activities that they would like to complete as they ponder one of the 'Big Questions' that is posed each term. For example, reception pupils ask, 'What was here before me?' and learn about different dinosaurs that walked the earth in the past. Older pupils choose to invent a product that might change the world. Pupils are free to suggest ideas for an educational visit or event as a finale to each term. As a result, nearly all pupils feel a strong sense of ownership of their learning and are determined to achieve to the best of their ability.

Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their literacy, numeracy and digital skills in a range of contexts across the curriculum. Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh oracy skills during activities and less formal situations. They are positive about promoting the use of Welsh and encourage pupils' regular use of the language. They purposefully introduce pupils to vocabulary and language patterns that they can use in their daily lives. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about speaking Welsh and proud to be able to do so. Pupils' social, emotional and physical skills are developed successfully through the implementation of a range of extra-curricular clubs.

Without exception, teachers and support staff have a strong understanding of pupils' academic and emotional needs. There is an extremely strong working relationship between staff and pupils that is based on trust and mutual respect. Staff have a good knowledge of the areas of learning and employ a wide range of purposeful teaching strategies. This ensures that many pupils make appropriate progress in developing their skills.

Staff have high aspirations for all their pupils and model positive attitudes towards learning effectively. Teachers plan a range of interesting learning experiences that fire pupils' imaginations, sparks their curiosity, and develops within them a love of learning. Most learning experiences proceed at an effective pace and classrooms are busy, productive places. Most staff use a wide range of questioning techniques that recall pupils' prior learning, reinforce understanding and develop pupils' thinking skills successfully. However, learning activities do not always challenge a few pupils sufficiently. Staff plan effectively for the use of the outdoor learning areas to support pupils' well-being and learning.

In the most effective examples, staff provide useful opportunities for pupils to review their own and their peers' work. Staff and peers offer useful feedback and, as a result, pupils have a suitable understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. When they are given sufficient opportunity, pupils respond positively to feedback. However, teachers do not always ensure

regular opportunities for pupils to respond to this feedback and to make useful improvements to their work.

The school has robust arrangements for tracking pupils' progress that enable staff to provide effective support programmes for specific groups of pupils, including support for their well-being. Annual reports to parents detail pupils' progress and the next steps in their learning appropriately. They include useful contributions from pupils detailing what aspects of their learning they have enjoyed and where they feel they need to develop their skills further.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a homely, nurturing and highly inclusive learning community that promotes a strong culture of well-being of pupils and staff effectively. Relationships between adults and pupils are a notable strength and staff support pupils' emotional health and social needs effectively for them to flourish in their learning. Staff provide an extensive range of support programmes to help pupils manage their emotional health, well-being and develop resilience. For example, they provide worthwhile support for pupils who have experienced bereavement or anxiety.

The nurture lead teacher works closely with the more vulnerable pupils and their families to provide effective support aimed at breaking down barriers to ensure happiness and success for pupils. The school's nurture provision provides a safe haven where staff respond effectively to pupils' emotional needs and promptly address any problems they may have. As a result, pupils' well-being is a key priority and behaviour is good at the school.

The school's support for pupils with ALN is a notable strength and has effective strategies to identify and support pupils. The Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCO) rigorously monitors and tracks pupil progress and meets with staff to ensure that pupils with ALN make suitable progress. The school deploys staff effectively to support pupils with their individual needs. The ALNCO works closely and sensitively with families and outside agencies, such as the educational psychology service and speech and language therapist, to secure the necessary support for learners with ALN. As a result, the school has developed effective parental engagement to support the needs of all pupils, including the most vulnerable pupils.

Staff encourages all pupils to take on additional responsibilities in the school. These responsibilities develop valuable leadership skills and successfully promote self-esteem and self-worth. As a result, pupils are proud of the contributions that they make to school life. Staff provide equal opportunities for all pupils to be part of the school council, 'Dysgwyr Digidol' and 'Bronze Young Ambassadors' groups. For example, in general, pupils develop a good sense of ownership in different areas of the school through leading their own clubs during breaktimes.

The school ensures that pupils gain valuable opportunities to participate in music and dance activities to enhance their understanding of the performing arts. For example, all pupils have access to, and get to learn how to play a musical instrument. Pupils also visit the local theatre and represent the school in the 'Young Voices' concert in Manchester.

The school's curriculum provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop and promote their understanding of concepts and values such as cultural diversity, inclusion, and equity. For example, younger pupils draw Rangoli patterns to celebrate Divali and older pupils celebrate Black History month through their study of influential black people, such as Martin Luther King Jr and Rosa Parks. As a result, pupils have a sound understanding and empathy towards some of the challenges and struggles that others face daily. The school utilises its links with the local high school effectively to attend 'Culture and Diversity Week', where pupils participate in different dance, music and art workshops.

The school teaches pupils to be respectful and empathetic. Across the school, all staff promote co-operation, reinforce whole school expectations of tolerance and consideration, and expect socially responsible behaviour from pupils. They engage well with national events to provide an authentic context for pupils to develop their values and understanding of the needs of others.

The school plans a range of interesting and worthwhile trips and residential visits to support the curriculum, such as recent visits to a zoo, a local Roman archaeological site and Glan Ilyn. Pupils talk enthusiastically about these visits and what they have learnt.

The school offers a wide range of engaging extra-curricular activities that cater for different interests, such as 'Dragon Sports' and the 'Creation Club' that encourages creativity. These activities also enable pupils to develop their team-working skills, physical fitness and to overcome challenges. The wide range of after-school clubs enriches pupils' physical development successfully and contributes well to pupils' well-being. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and drinking, and this is developed successfully through the curriculum.

Staff promote a positive and robust culture of safeguarding, ensuring that the well-being of all is a high priority. The school adopts a strong multi-agency approach to provide appropriate help and to support the welfare of pupils and their families. The school has effective procedures in place to monitor and improve attendance. Staff work closely with the local authority to challenge and support families whose children have poor attendance.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides effective and compassionate leadership in a caring and inclusive environment, where pupils and staff feel a strong sense of belonging. All staff work together positively to encourage pupils to be responsible and respectful and, as a result, the behaviour and engagement of most pupils towards their work and school life is good.

The headteacher has a clear vision that is based on ensuring that the well-being of pupils and staff is at the heart of the school's ethos and is a priority for all. He sets high expectations for himself, staff, and pupils. This encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning and to do their best. He is supported skilfully by the deputy headteacher, and they share their vision of 'happiness leads to success' effectively with staff, pupils, parents, and governors.

Staff undertake their roles and responsibilities professionally and conscientiously. There are regular staff meetings to organise and implement activities to achieve the agreed school priorities. They collaborate well together, and with other schools, to deliver effective classroom provision that enables many pupils to make progress in line with expectations. Support staff are key members of the school's team and contribute regularly and skilfully to improving pupils' standards of learning, well-being and social skills.

The headteacher uses a range of effective activities for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and, as a result, all staff have a sound understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. Through a clear process of actions, success criteria and milestones, school leaders identify and plan the steps to address each area for improvement well. Over time, the school has identified key areas for improvement correctly, such as improving pupil's reading skills, resilience, and independence.

Leaders address local and national priorities well. For example, they have made good progress in designing the school's bespoke curriculum, which includes enriching, cross-curricular tasks that promote independent learning effectively. As a result, pupils develop good resilience and perseverance when undertaking various practical and enquiry-based projects. Work to address the ALN reform and tackling the impact of poverty is successful at the school. Leaders plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in formal and informal situations and implement these plans effectively.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's role in serving the local community and are highly supportive. They share responsibilities conscientiously, and leaders take advantage of governors' skills and expertise to support and challenge the school. For example, members collaborate with the school's 'Digital Club' to help develop their new website. By conducting purposeful visits, they identify accurately that the school's arrangements to care for and nurture pupils is a notable strength. Although governors scrutinise reports provided by the headteacher and have a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, they do not always have a secure enough understanding of pupils' progress and standards in specific areas of learning.

The headteacher and the governors manages the schools' finances efficiently. There are a suitable number of staff and resources, and spending is monitored carefully. They pay due regard to challenging the impact of poverty, using the pupil development grant to support o support improvement priorities successfully. For example, they ensure that pupils from low-income households and those who are eligible for free school meals, have equal access to curriculum enrichment, subsidise extra-curricular provision, such as trips and visits and opportunities to promote their well-being. As a result, this has a beneficial effect on the confidence and behaviour of pupils with emotional and social needs.

Governors and leaders across the school promote healthy eating and drinking well through planned curriculum arrangements and through daily activities, such as ensuring that pupils have access to a water fountain. The headteacher, staff and governors promote a culture of healthy living and safeguarding highly effectively.

The headteacher creates a positive professional learning culture for all staff. He ensures that opportunities for professional learning link purposefully to both whole school priorities and the individual needs of staff. As a result, staff have a wide range of expertise, which they use effectively to support the needs of many pupils in the school.

Leaders work in partnership with parents and the wider school community to improve opportunities and outcomes for all pupils. The school develops the parents' capacity to support their own children to promote an enjoyment for reading effectively. For example, staff work alongside parents to share worthwhile reading strategies and donate a wide range of books to them. This has led to parents having a better understanding of methods to support their children's reading skills and to build a positive culture of reading. As a result, this contributes to pupils' love of reading in school and at home.

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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