



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Frongoch**

**Rhyl Road  
Denbigh  
LL16 3DP**

**Date of inspection: March 2022**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About Ysgol Frongoch

Name of provider	Frongoch Juniors
Local authority	Denbighshire
Language of the provider	English Medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	214
Pupils of statutory school age	214
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	.
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average  <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 21.3%)</i>	12.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a)  <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 20.6%)</i>	14.6%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	5%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	3.5%
Date of headteacher appointment	
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	11-11-2014
Start date of inspection	
Additional information	

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](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

(a) The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below. [My Local School](#)

## Overview

Ysgol Frongoch is a happy, caring school where pupils work and play together confidently. Staff help many pupils to make strong progress when developing their speaking and listening, mathematical and digital skills. They focus well on pupils' well-being, and this allows pupils to thrive in the schools' inclusive environment. Pupils develop their creative and thinking skills well in many aspects of their learning.

Teachers take good account of pupils' ideas when planning the curriculum and this helps to ensure that pupils engage consistently well in lessons. While teachers plan many interesting learning experiences, these do not always focus well enough on developing pupils' skills systematically. This means that in areas such as reading and writing, certain of pupils' skills do not always progress strongly enough. Teachers are beginning to help pupils to understand how to assess and improve their learning independently, but both teachers and pupils do not have a consistently strong understanding of how best to achieve this.

Leaders place a high priority on developing pupils as independent learners who know how to manage their emotions and behaviours and who support their peers helpfully. They focus well on ensuring that all staff feel part of the school team. This ensures that everyone, including governors, understands the school's priorities and works together supportively. Nevertheless, when monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and when planning professional learning, leaders do not always focus well enough on areas that need improvement, such as improving the quality of teaching and planning for the implementation of educational reform.

## Recommendations

- R1 Focus self-evaluation and development strategies more sharply on improving pupils' progress and learning
- R2 Develop a more strategic approach to professional learning that focuses on education reform and securing high quality teaching
- R3 Improve pupils' reading and writing skills

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Many pupils join the school in Year 3 with skills and understanding that are at, or above, those expected for their stage of development. While in many areas of learning, pupils make strong progress, their reading and writing skills do not always develop as successfully. Many pupils think creatively, work well in teams, and develop their problem-solving skills with growing confidence. They use these to find solutions to problems they encounter and extend their learning, for example when finding ways to build bridges to carry increasing weight.

Throughout the school most pupils have strong speaking and listening skills. They listen with interest and concentration to their classmates and to adults. Many pupils explain their ideas and share their opinions clearly. They join in group discussions and respond to others comments sensitively, for example when sharing ideas about living conditions during the Second World War.

Many pupils understand well how to structure their writing for different purposes, such as when writing letters and instructions. As they move through the school, they learn to use more persuasive and descriptive language thoughtfully. They use these skills appropriately when writing across the curriculum, such as when persuading others to take up physical activity to stay healthy. A minority of older pupils write longer and more comprehensive accounts and stories thoughtfully. A few areas of pupils' writing skills are not as strong. For example, towards the end of the school, pupils still mix tenses incorrectly in their writing and do not use paragraphs appropriately. Around half do not spell well enough and do not use basic punctuation accurately.

Many pupils read suitable texts independently and with sustained concentration. They recall and identify accurately the main points of texts they have read. Pupils identify, gather and organise information and ideas from the written resources provided by teachers and use this to further their understanding of other areas of the curriculum well, such as their history work. However, a lack of teaching of reading skills means that pupils have too narrow a range of strategies to read more difficult words and phrases. Only a minority read more complex texts fluently or develop higher reading skills well, such as the ability to infer ideas which are not stated explicitly.

When they begin in Year 3, many pupils have effective Welsh language skills, but as not all teachers are confident in teaching the language, these skills do not develop well in all year groups. Many pupils use simple words and sentences in Welsh, such as discussing their likes and dislikes. They share basic information about themselves, such as describing the colour of their eyes or hair. A few pupils, and particularly those who have someone at home to help them develop their Welsh language, speak and read more complex sentences well. However, by the end of Year six, a majority of pupils' Welsh language skills are not well developed.

Many pupils have strong mathematical skills. For example, by Year 6 they add and subtract numbers to three decimal places accurately and use multiplication facts to

solve division problems well. Throughout the school, many pupils transfer their mathematical skills to a variety of different contexts across the curriculum effectively, such as when calculating distances on a map of Australia or creating graphs of children's favourite songs. Many pupils identify the steps needed to solve problems effectively. For example, pupils in Year 3 work out how to find the size of a dinosaur from the size of its footprint. They explain their work using mathematical language confidently.

Many pupils develop a consistent range of digital skills to support their learning and to help them communicate purposefully. Most pupils use a broad range of apps and programmes confidently to help them develop their understanding in other curriculum areas, such as mathematics. For example, they control a virtual avatar around a maze to gain a meaningful understanding of complex angles. Many are developing an effective understanding of basic coding and use this creatively, for example to control an on-screen robot.

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

The school is a welcoming environment where pupils feel happy and safe. Nearly all pupils behave extremely well, both in lessons and around the school. They are kind and respectful to adults and to other pupils.

Most pupils settle quickly to tasks, concentrate well, and engage purposefully in lessons. They show resilience in their learning and understand well that making 'marvellous mistakes' is part of the learning process. Many pupils persevere with tasks and try to improve their work by practising, taking time and giving tasks their focussed attention. Pupils are often supportive of each other and work well in pairs and in groups, for example when taking the roles of engineers and builders, communicating relevant information to create structures from building blocks. They listen carefully and display patience when working together.

Nearly all pupils are keen to be involved in deciding what they learn. They respond well to verbal feedback provided by their teachers. A majority of pupils use this to help move their learning forward suitably. However, their ability to consider their own and their peers' learning and identify where things could improve is still at an early stage of development.

Pupils demonstrate readily their understanding of the school's overarching principal, 'Ready, Safe, Respect', to think carefully about everyone's personal safety. Most pupils use the behaviour strategies the school teaches thoughtfully to contribute to the positive school environment. For example, they consider strategies for managing their own emotions, such as breathing slowly or finding a trusted friend to talk to and think about how they can support others when they need help.

Pupils who take on leadership roles do so maturely and make purposeful contributions to the life of the school, for example by sharing ideas for reducing waste and encouraging others to choose suitable snacks as part of a balanced diet. They ensure that they share important environmental messages with pupils, such as asking them to think carefully about the products their families choose to buy and how some products like those containing palm oil affect the environment. The health

and safety ambassadors work helpfully with the school caretaker to keep the school free from dangers, for example by removing stones from play areas.

Many pupils have an appropriate understanding of how to keep healthy through diet and exercise. They recognise the importance of getting a good night's sleep, the effects of too much sugar on health and which foods are good sources of energy. Most pupils have a strong understanding of the digital world and how to stay safe online. For example, when they undertake research, they identify safe pages and know how to deal with messages and adverts that 'pop-up' on screen, when they occur. They know how to keep their personal information safe and how to report concerns to adults.

Pupils demonstrate a broad understanding of cultural diversity and show care for others through organising and taking part in charity events. They are beginning to understand some of the ethical issues facing the world, such as the problems caused to the environment by deforestation and the challenges faced by children affected by war.

Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not report pupils' rates of attendance during the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Inspectors will, however, consider the school's/PRU's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of Inspection Area 4 (care, support and guidance).

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school provides a broad curriculum that is adapted to the needs of nearly all pupils. Teachers involve pupils considerably in deciding on the activities to include within their termly topics. They use these suggestions to plan a range of activities across the curriculum that helps engage pupils purposefully. For example, they teach pupils about the forces that allow sails to move a ship, whilst fulfilling their request to make a Viking long boat. The school makes good use of trips and visitors to enhance pupils' learning. Older pupils visit the Imperial War Museum in Manchester and younger pupils benefit from a dinosaur workshop where they view a real dinosaur egg and bones. The school's preparations for the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales and the development of a more integrated approach to learning across the six areas identified in the curriculum framework are at a very early stage of development.

There is clear planning for, and expectations of, what literacy and numeracy skills teachers should develop with pupils in each year group. In general, this helps pupils to acquire a majority of these skills systematically. However, the school has not considered thoughtfully enough how teachers should teach these skills. For example, there is not a clear approach to how reading skills are taught. This means that pupils' skills do not always develop as well as they could. Provision for digital skills is strong and reflects how digital skills are evolving in wider society. For example, pupils learn how websites track online activity and how pupils can choose not to be tracked.

The school has suitable, progressive plans in place that support teachers to structure pupils' Welsh language learning. However, teachers do not always implement these well enough. This means that pupils' Welsh language skills do not progress well in all classes. Teachers plan a wide range of worthwhile activities to help pupils

understand about Welsh culture well, for example considering historical Welsh figures, such as Owain Glyndwr and supporting the Urdd Eisteddfod.

Provision for the development of pupils' social and emotional skills is strong. Both within and outside of the curriculum there are beneficial programmes that give a clear structure to the development of pupils' well-being. These help pupils to understand how to identify positive behaviours in themselves and others, and how to resolve problems between friends. There are good opportunities within the curriculum to help pupils to develop the knowledge and understanding needed to make healthy lifestyle choices. For example, they learn about good hygiene and the possible effects of too many sweets and sugary drinks on their teeth and on their health.

Many teachers plan interesting learning experiences that engage pupils well in their learning, such as developing pupils' persuasive skills by holding a debate on whether they should let visitors onto their imaginary island. In many lessons, teachers use effective questioning to help pupils extend their answers and develop their thinking. They question pupils carefully and this helps them recall previous learning beneficially. As lessons progress, many teachers monitor pupils' learning and provide clear verbal feedback that allows them to improve their work and supports them when they need help. Teachers' written feedback to pupils is more variable and does not always help pupils understand where or how they could improve.

In a majority of cases, teachers challenge pupils effectively, but they do not do this consistently well, meaning that learning is sometimes at too low a level. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not consider well the particular purpose of learning experiences. This means that they do not always have a clear enough idea of what they want pupils to achieve or how the experiences fit more widely in pupils' continuum of learning.

In a majority of lessons, teachers are beginning to help pupils understand well what they need to do to be successful. As pupils progress through the school, teachers help them develop their own ability to consider what makes an effective piece of work. In a few cases, teachers are not secure in their understanding of this process and as a result, these criteria tend to be a list of tasks that need to be completed. As a result, pupils do not always know what they need to do to be successful.

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

The school is a safe and nurturing environment that promotes kindness and respect among its pupils effectively. It provides a calm working atmosphere where nearly all pupils behave well, are considerate of others and approach their learning positively. The recent focus on strengthening support and guidance for pupils' emotional and social needs enables them to engage positively with their learning. This support is further strengthened by initiatives, such as the sunshine room nurture group, where pupils begin their day meeting in a small group to enjoy breakfast together. This carefully planned start to the day allows pupils to settle and address their worries before joining their classes. As a result of learning to express and regulate their emotions, these pupils are happier in school. This also helps address issues of weaker school attendance.



The school has effective systems to deal with any disagreements between pupils, and pupils feel well supported to solve problems and disputes with their friends. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school, and many have an enthusiastic attitude to learning. Throughout the school, staff provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to understand the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle. Pupils take part in team sport and enjoy a variety of physical activities, such as swimming, yoga and dance.

The school identifies pupils who need additional support to make progress effectively. Teachers and support staff provide beneficial targeted support programmes for pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and emotional development. Staff work closely with families and external agencies to produce effective support plans for pupils with additional learning needs. This support, together with regular communication with parents, has a positive impact on their progress and well-being.

The school provides opportunities which contribute to pupils' developing spiritual and ethical beliefs and support pupils to investigate issues related to tolerance and respect for others. For example, focussing on stories from the Bible provides useful opportunities for pupils to reflect on important messages, such as tolerance and helping others, and relate them to their own experiences. However, opportunities to explore issues around diversity are more limited.

A broad range of activities and opportunities helps pupils to develop an understanding of their identity, heritage and culture. For example, taking an active role in Denbigh's St. David's Day celebrations develops their appreciation of Welsh culture. Teachers encourage pupils to be independent in their learning and to contribute ideas about what they learn. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to use their imagination and to engage with the creative arts, through a broad range of activities, such as visits to galleries and museums, creating prints of influential local people and designing festivals.

Pupils have a growing range of opportunities to develop leadership skills and prepare for adult life, for example through their membership of the school council, the health and safety crew and as eco-leaders. Members of these groups contribute effectively to whole school improvements, such as revising an outdated Eco-Code and suggesting thoughtful improvements to the physical activities on offer to pupils.

Leaders and staff monitor pupils' attendance carefully, address issues of poor attendance and support families effectively. Pupils who are absent due to longer-term illness are supported to work at home well and on return to school receive additional support for their learning to help them reintegrate. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirement and give no cause for concern. All staff understand their roles in safeguarding procedures and the school works diligently to ensure that all pupils are safe.

### **Leadership and management**

School leaders have a clear focus on developing resilient and independent pupils, building teamwork amongst staff, and providing a wide range of interesting and engaging experiences for pupils. These intentions are understood by staff and governors, who are all committed to helping pupils make the most of their time in

school. Recently, leaders have, quite rightly, focused on helping pupils to settle back into school following disruption to their learning, and continue to promote and support effectively the health and well-being of pupils.

The school has a clear staffing structure and all members of the leadership team have appropriate responsibilities within that structure. They support and encourage teachers and support staff to work together purposefully, for example when taking the lead in planning for year groups and working in area of learning teams. However, leaders do not always have a full understanding of their role in ensuring that others make planned improvements.

School self-evaluation draws on a suitable range of monitoring processes. Over time, leaders and teachers scrutinise pupils' work, monitor lessons, take part in staff discussions, and take account of the views of pupils and parents. Some of these activities have been limited during the pandemic, but there is now a useful timetable in place for the year, which will enable leaders to return to regular activity. The school's evaluation of progress against last year's areas for improvement is honest. From this, leaders have identified a set of priorities for this year, along with the steps the school needs to take to address these priorities. Although these priorities and steps are broadly relevant, leaders have not identified important areas for improvement in teaching and learning, including the purposeful teaching of reading skills, inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' writing, and insufficient progress in Welsh. This means that development targets do not always focus well enough on the aspects that would make the biggest difference to pupils' learning and their progress. In addition to whole school development strategies, teams responsible for areas of learning create useful action plans. Currently, these tend to concentrate on improving provision and resources, and only occasionally identify ways to improve pupils' learning.

The governing body has a secure understanding of its responsibilities. Governors are supportive of the school's work and influence its direction purposefully, for example by encouraging the development of shared leadership across the school. They understand the school's current priorities and why they are important. Governors and school leaders manage their budget well and careful financial planning has helped the school to make savings over several years, enabling it to recover from a deficit budget. The school allocates and monitors the pupil development grant and other additional funding carefully, ensuring that it supports the relevant pupils. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

Recent professional learning has focused mainly on providing staff with secure skills to support pupils' health and well-being, particularly in relation to their personal and social skills and developing positive relationships with one another. Generally, performance management processes are comprehensive and help to identify some needs of staff appropriately. However, the school does not yet have a clear strategic approach to professional learning and making sure that this learning has the intended outcome on pupils' progress. This includes how to continually improve and refine teaching, for example identifying clear purposes for lessons and understanding how lessons fit into the continuity of learning across the school. Leaders have not focused well enough on professional learning that will support staff to develop a thorough understanding of the principles and expectations of the Curriculum for Wales, and the skills and knowledge to lead education reform securely.

## 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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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**This report was translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).**