



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Pontrhydfendigaid**

**Pontrhydfendigaid  
Ystrad Meurig  
Ceredigion  
SY25 6BL**

**Date of inspection: May 2023**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh**

## About Ysgol Pontrhydfendigaid

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| Name of provider   | Ysgol Pontrhydfendigaid   |
| Local authority  | Ceredigion County Council |
| Language of the provider   | Welsh                     |
| Type of school   | Primary                   |
| Religious character  |                           |
| Number of pupils on roll   | 71                        |
| Pupils of statutory school age   | 61                        |
| Number in nursery classes (if applicable)  | *                         |
| Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average<br><i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 23.0%)</i> | 17.9%                     |
| Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a)<br><i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 16.1%)</i>               | 26.2%                     |
| Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home  | 26.2%                     |
| Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language   | 0.0%                      |
| Date of headteacher appointment  | 01/01/2006                |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)  | 01/02/2015                |
| Start date of inspection   | 02/05/2023                |

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from 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 Pontrhydfendigaid is a wonderful school with a happy, caring and welcoming ethos where the well-being of all pupils is a clear priority. Pupils make a significant contribution to the pleasant, hard-working ethos that is characteristic of the school and take pride in their school and community. They are well behaved and treat others with natural courtesy and respect. The school has a robust culture of safeguarding and, as a result, pupils feel safe during their work and play and enjoy their time at the school.

Most pupils make sound progress in developing their literacy, mathematics and digital skills from their starting points. However, there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills fully across the curriculum.

Teachers work together productively to provide a curriculum that offers a wide range of exciting and interesting experiences that reflect the school's local context in full. As a result, pupils are inspired and their attitudes to learning are extremely robust. Teachers have an excellent working relationship with pupils that is full of care and respect. They have sound subject knowledge, ensure that learning activities have a suitable pace and provide stimulating learning areas and experiences that foster pupils' natural curiosity. However, feedback from staff does not always identify the next learning steps for pupils effectively. Assistants promote pupils' progress skilfully by providing appropriate learning experiences and support programmes.

The headteacher has a clear and robust vision for the school. This vision focuses on ensuring the well-being of pupils and providing them with the best possible learning experiences. She shares her vision effectively with everyone in the school community. The school's other leaders provide the headteacher with strong support and, overall, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The governors are firm advocates of the school and show a good awareness of the school's activities. They support leaders and staff purposefully.

## Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that staff feedback identifies the next steps in pupils' learning effectively
- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in full in their work across the curriculum

## What happens next

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

## Main findings

### Learning

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals, make sound progress from their starting points.

Across the school, most pupils speak confidently, listen well to each other and adults and respond enthusiastically to their work. From an early age, many of the youngest pupils' Welsh communication skills develop effectively. Most pupils speak maturely with a natural range of vocabulary in a wide range of contexts. They respond well to others during discussions and build on each other's ideas. For example, pupils across the school use an excellent range of vocabulary relating to the school theme while talking about their work.

Many pupils' reading skills develop well from an early age. Most of the youngest pupils recognise individual letters and simple, familiar words. By Year 2, many pupils handle books and their content confidently. Older pupils develop their reading skills skilfully while researching specific areas. By the end of their time at the school, many read clearly and with good expression.

Most pupils develop their writing skills appropriately as they gain confidence in their work. Many pupils in the reception class begin to record their ideas by making marks, forming legible letters and writing simple words. By Year 2, most pupils write in a range of different genres, choose vocabulary carefully and use capital letters and a full stop correctly, on the whole, for example when recording historical facts about St Dwynwen and Mari Jones. As their skills develop, a majority of pupils spell correctly, on the whole, use interesting adjectives and punctuate appropriately. However, many older pupils do not use higher-order punctuation skills consistently in their work. Across the school, pupils use their writing skills across the curriculum for different purposes effectively.

Most pupils' mathematics skills are developing soundly. The youngest pupils are beginning to recognise numbers and use their numeracy skills in different context, for example by counting and sorting insects. By Year 2, they develop a good range of mathematics skills and make sound progress, for example by switching between units of measurement and weighing ingredients to make soup. As pupils move through the school, they build on their skills beneficially. For example, many pupils in Years 3 and 4 use their number skills when multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100. By Year 6, many pupils use their number skills to identify and calculate various angles. However, there are not enough appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in full across the curriculum.

Most pupils develop their digital skills appropriately as they move through the school. From an early age, they begin to use these skills constructively in a rich range of learning experiences across the curriculum. For example, the youngest pupils use an art package to create a diagram of the life cycle of a butterfly confidently. Most older pupils use their digital skills well to support independent research, for example by creating a comprehensive website following their trip to the peak of Pumlumon.

Nearly all pupils develop their physical skills well across the school. The youngest pupils use their skills effectively by mixing cement to create a wall in the construction area. They take part in a variety of activities that help to promote their health and well-being effectively, for example by using the purposeful play equipment during break time and through the regular swimming lessons for all pupils.

Across the school, pupils benefit from valuable opportunities to develop their creative skills continuously. For example, the youngest pupils create, analyse and dance to samba music enthusiastically. All the school's pupils have worked together purposefully to create costumes, props and perform the show, '*Y Llew Frenin*' ('The Lion King').

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

Ysgol Pontrhydfendigaid focuses clearly on ensuring the best possible standards of well-being for all pupils. Most pupils feel happy at school and take pride in the caring and inclusive environment, which is a strong feature of the school. Pupils feel free from any bullying and feel safe at school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe while working online. For example, they do not share their password with others and they have a good awareness of suitable strategies to use should a stranger contact them on the internet.

Nearly all pupils are polite, welcoming and enjoy sharing their experiences with visitors. They treat adults and their peers with natural and commendable respect and converse with each other in a mature and fun manner. They listen attentively to their peers and respect their contributions, for example as the youngest pupils select which words to include in their written work.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the purpose of rules, rewards and punishments at the school, for example by collecting stickers that promote reading or sharing language tokens to encourage them to speak Welsh. Nearly all pupils behave consistently well as they move around the school, in whole-school services, in lessons and on the playground.

Nearly all pupils show an interest in their work. For example, the youngest pupils are excited when searching for insects and building an appropriate home for the woodlice. The oldest pupils demonstrate infectious enthusiasm when presenting Welsh music and a few interesting stories during break time on their radio station, 'Radio Bontastig'.

When completing tasks independently in the learning areas, nearly all of the youngest pupils show appropriate self-control and self-motivation. For example, they use dough to emulate the shape of a rainforest animal faithfully and are very careful to ensure that the brick wall that they build is sturdy and straight. Most pupils settle quickly to complete their activities in the classroom and concentrate successfully to complete their tasks. However, pupils are not always aware of what they need to do to improve their work, mainly because teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for them to respond to feedback and improve important aspects of their work.

Nearly all pupils feel that staff listen to their views and act on them, usually. For example, the school Senedd has proposed that the school should buy chickens to establish a small business selling eggs and has suggested establishing a well-being cabin for Year 6 pupils. As a result, pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of caring for animals and the oldest pupils take advantage of opportunities to relax by playing table tennis or chatting socially with their peers.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop resilience and sound emotional understanding through appropriate well-being sessions. Nearly all develop as ethical citizens with an awareness of equality and equity, for example by studying the stories and challenges faced by Betty Campbell and Martin Luther King. At the top of the school, most pupils develop confidence and independent working skills by leading lessons, for example by presenting information to their peers about Charles Darwin's voyage to the Amazon.

Most pupils undertake leadership roles and responsibilities successfully. For example, the oldest pupils foster valuable leadership skills by supporting staff to deliver sports session to the school's younger pupils. Nearly all pupils feel that the school encourages them to take part in beneficial activities outside school hours. As a result, around half of the oldest pupils attend clubs such as the Urdd and the sports club, which promote their mental and physical well-being. Most pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of the importance of ensuring a balanced diet and regular exercise.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Teachers work together productively to develop an interesting curriculum, with a range and depth of meaningful experiences in line with the Curriculum for Wales. The school provides a rich curriculum that reflects its nature and local context successfully. Themes are planned purposefully to ensure that there is an exciting springboard for learning, purposeful inquiry questions and an emphasis on and activity as a finale, which encourages pupils to communicate with the school community. A good example is the work of the youngest pupils within their theme on buttered bread and jam, where they made and then held an afternoon tea for the community. Through examples such as this, teachers provide learning experiences that inspire pupils, which has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning.

Teachers have sound subject knowledge and are active in experimenting and planning inspiring learning activities. Many of their ideas are beginning to become embedded in their teaching and learning methods and, on the whole, teachers develop pupils to become enterprising and creative learners.

The learning areas, including the outdoor areas, are stimulating and attractive and support pupils' learning and the wider curriculum appropriately. For example, the finale of the youngest pupils' work on the tropical rainforest was to create a similar area in their classroom. These areas support pupils to be curious while playing and learning creatively and independently.

Teachers and assistants provide many learning activities to develop pupils' personal and social education skills well. Through purposeful provision and a collaborative well-being project with local schools, most pupils have a clear understanding of

issues relating to their well-being. The school has a strong ethos of promoting and supporting pupils' well-being.

Overall, teaching, the curriculum and teachers' planning ensure an interesting range of learning experiences for pupils. Pupils' skills develop soundly in most classes, where they make good progress. However, teachers do not always provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in full across the areas of learning.

All staff have a caring and productive working relationship with pupils. They treat all pupils with kindness and respect, which creates an inclusive and caring environment throughout the school, where well-being and development are given due attention. Staff foster positive attitudes to learning among pupils and create an ethos where they feel confident to ask questions and express their opinions. All staff work together effectively to foster sound attitudes of perseverance and resilience in all pupils. This allows pupils to develop as enthusiastic and ambitious learners.

The aims of most lessons are clear and are shared with pupils regularly. Staff use a range of interesting resources to engage pupils' interest and curiosity, for example by creating a mud kitchen with vegetables and herbs or by providing a visual stimulus for pupils to describe a creature they have created in their imagination. In the best practice, teachers develop learning activities with a suitable pace. They often use questioning techniques and probing questions skilfully. Learning assistants also use their skills to contribute highly effectively to developing pupils' learning by encouraging and promoting learning purposefully.

Teachers and assistants use praise and oral feedback appropriately to celebrate pupils' successes regularly. However, across the school, pupils are not always given purposeful opportunities to discuss their progress during lessons or to improve their work following feedback from teachers.

The school has robust progress-tracking arrangements that support teachers and assistants to provide effective programmes for specific groups of pupils, including support for their well-being. Teachers provide parents with useful information about their children's progress. Pupils are an integral part of these processes by discussing their work with their parents during the progress meetings that are held.

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

The school is a caring, welcoming and inclusive community that promotes happiness, courtesy and good behaviour for all pupils. There is a fond and friendly working relationship between staff and pupils and there is an emphasis on ensuring that all pupils feel an important part of their school and have equal access to learning experiences. As a result, nearly all pupils have a positive attitude to all of the school's life and work.

The school encourages pupils to undertake leadership roles regularly. For example, pupils play a prominent role in choosing key words to represent the school's values. As a result, they develop as responsible citizens who act in a way that reflect the school's values in full, for example by persevering when working together to sell produce from their business enterprise in their community and treating everyone with

respect. Periods of collective worship provide valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on the school's values and discuss feelings and healthy relationships. This, alongside lessons in the classrooms, promotes pupils' understanding of valuable morals to be incorporated in their everyday behaviour.

The school is the focal point of its community and takes full advantage of opportunities to hold activities in the village and further afield. There are extremely rich opportunities for pupils to take part in performances and events locally. For example, they plan and perform the musical '*Y Llew Frenin*' ('The Lion King') with their peers from local schools. These experiences are fairly effective in developing the self-confidence and creative skills of most pupils, in addition to their ability to work as valuable members of a team.

The school has established effective procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils' well-being and progress. As a result, staff have a thorough knowledge of the needs of all pupils. They place an emphasis on identifying and meeting the needs of individual pupils soon after they start at the school and the school offers appropriate provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). For example, support programmes are provided for pupils, where appropriate, alongside an alternative curriculum in an appropriate multisensory room. As a result, most pupils make sound progress from their starting points. Teachers work appropriately with parents to produce individual education plans to support the development of pupils' skills, which supports pupils to know what the next steps are in their learning. The school makes good use of partnerships with other schools to provide effective support for pupils, for example by using the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) for the local schools. This enables the schools to share expertise effectively and increase the leadership capacity within the school.

Pupils' views are used appropriately to adapt provision to improve their well-being. For example, effective well-being lessons are provided that respond directly to areas of need that have been highlighted by pupils by completing useful questionnaires.

Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to celebrate their Welsh heritage and culture by taking part in activities such as the Urdd Eisteddfod and going on residential trips to Cardiff.

The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and beneficial educational visits. For example, the youngest pupils visit Cwm Rheidol Butterfly House which deepens their knowledge of nature and the creatures that live in local habitats. The oldest pupils go on a walk to the peak of Pen y Bannau, which develops their physical well-being and fosters their love of the natural beauty of their area.

The school has appropriate arrangements to develop pupils' awareness of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. A range of beneficial opportunities are provided to develop pupils' fitness and physical skills through the sports club and suitable opportunities to take part in competitions, for example netball and football. The outdoor play areas on the playground are attractive and encourage pupils to take part in physical activity successfully during lessons and break times.



The school's procedures for monitoring and tracking pupil attendance are sound. Staff keep appropriate records of absences and contact parents appropriately to discuss any concerns about their children's attendance.

Staff have a sound awareness of safeguarding processes. The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are sound and comprehensive and are not a cause for concern.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher leads the school highly effectively. She promotes a pleasant, inclusive ethos that focuses on the well-being, happiness and best possible learning experiences for all pupils. As a result, pupils take pride in their school and their community and enjoy their time at the school. The headteacher has high expectations of herself and others and staff respond well to them. As a result, a strong sense of purpose permeates all aspects of school life. The headteacher and other leaders promote a culture of safeguarding successfully and, as a result, nearly all pupils feel safe at school.

Leaders support and encourage staff at the school to work together effectively in developing their practice and approaches to introducing the Curriculum for Wales. Staff work together to develop a prompt for starting a unit of work that engages pupils' enthusiasm and interest in their learning successfully. For example, pupils across the school watch a well-known animation to nurture their curiosity in rainforests and the culture and traditions of Brazil. Co-operation develops purposefully by introducing themes and leads to planning exciting events, such as the finale of the unit, for example delivering a public performance of '*Y Llew Frenin*' ('The Lion King') successfully.

Leaders have established appropriate procedures to evaluate and improve the quality of provision. They use a good range of first-hand evidence to identify the school's strengths and areas to be developed further. Leaders analyse the findings of quality monitoring activities to produce appropriate improvement plans. For example, they scrutinise pupil questionnaire data carefully and, as a result, improve provision to support and improve pupils' well-being by introducing highly effective well-being lessons. Improvement plans give due attention to national priorities and leaders have a record of implementing regular changes and improvements. For example, they have recently ensured that pupils have made sound progress in developing their Welsh oracy skills. However, monitoring activities do not always focus carefully enough on the effect of provision and teaching on pupils' progress.

Opportunities are provided for staff to take part in an appropriate range of professional learning activities, which link clearly with the school's self-evaluation findings and its priorities for improvement. These opportunities align with staff's performance management targets and develop their skills effectively. This, in turn, improves provision and supports pupils to make progress in their skills. For example, staff visit each other's classes and share the most effective practices by conducting appropriate professional dialogue.

The governing body supports the school's leaders and staff skilfully. It receives appropriate information from leaders about the school's work and supports and

challenges the school about standards and provision. By completing a range of relevant monitoring activities, members have a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking at the school.

Leaders ensure that the school has robust arrangements for managing resources. They monitor expenditure carefully, including the pupil development grant. Grant funding is used to fund staff who run support programmes for pupils from less privileged backgrounds or those with additional learning needs. As a result, these pupils have equal access to exciting experiences, for example educational visits, and most make sound progress from their starting points. Leaders ensure that expenditure has a positive effect on the school environment, for example by developing stimulating outdoor learning areas that ignite pupils' curiosity effectively.

A strong emphasis is placed on developing effective partnerships with parents and the wider community and the school does this well. For example, with support and advice from parents and local businesspeople, the school holds a successful summer fayre in which pupils sell produce they have made as part of a project to develop enterprise skills.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body/members of the management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), 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 (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- 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 (<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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