



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

**A report on**

**Canolfan Addysg Y Bont**

**Ffordd Cildwrn  
Llangefni  
LL77 7NG**

**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 Canolfan Addysg Y Bont

Name of provider	Canolfan Addysg Y Bont
Local authority	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Special
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	125
Pupils of statutory school age	96
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 maintained special sector is 46.2%)</i>	45.5%
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 maintained special sector is 99.8%)</i>	100.0%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	
Date of headteacher appointment	September 2011
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	07/10/2014
Start date of inspection	09/05/2023

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](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.

## Overview

Canolfan Addysg y Bont is a happy, warm and welcoming community where pupils make significant progress in their personal and social skills over time. Provision for well-being is a very strong feature of the school's work and this has led to good levels of attendance, very positive attitudes to learning and the excellent behaviour of its pupils.

Teachers plan beneficial and purposeful learning experiences and this ensures that most pupils make strong progress over time in their literacy, numeracy, social, creative and physical skills. One of the school's main strengths is the consistency in the way in which teachers develop pupils' communication skills. Leaders have invested a great deal of resources and time in ensuring that staff are competent and able to ensure clear and effective communication with pupils. As a result, most pupils foster successful communication skills in line with their abilities or difficulties. This is a strong feature.

Staff place a significant emphasis on developing independent living skills. Regular visits are arranged to the local shops, where pupils enjoy buying food and products for their cooking lessons and other lessons. Many pupils enjoy and benefit greatly from activities in the school café, 'Caffi'r Ddraig'.

The headteacher, governors and staff uphold a strong culture of continuous professional development in order to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the specialist needs of all pupils. The strong focus on staff's professional development has led to a great deal of consistency in strong teaching practices, strategies to promote good behaviour and positive working relationships.

## Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen self-evaluation procedures by measuring the impact of actions on pupils' standards and the quality of teaching
- R2 Expand learning experiences further by making appropriate use of external and specialist resources

## 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 a case study on its work in relation to the impact of professional development on the quality of provision.

## Main findings

### Learning

Canolfan Addysg y Bont provides specialist education for pupils with additional learning needs aged between 3 and 19 years old. Pupils have a wide range of profound learning, developmental or physical difficulties. Because of this, the school provides four different curricular pathways to meet the needs of all pupils. These pathways include a pre-formal curriculum for pupils with profound and multiple needs; an informal curriculum for pupils with significant communication difficulties and a semi-formal or formal curriculum for pupils who are increasingly more able. Over time, nearly all pupils make notable progress from their starting points and this is a significant strength.

Most pupils make sound development in their communication skills during their time at the school and this is a strong feature. They use a varied and purposeful range of communication methods to answer questions, share information and express their views. For example, some pupils who are following the pre-formal pathway in the 'Dwynwen' special care unit develop their ability to communicate their wishes and preferences by aiming their eyes at a screen. Others make significant progress in their ability to communicate satisfaction and other feelings by smiling and laughing. Many pupils who follow the informal and semi-formal pathways make good development in their communication skills by using signing to re-tell a story correctly and confidently. Pupils who use picture exchange communication methods develop increasing confidence to express their wishes by making choices about activities in the classroom and expressing their views on discussion topics. Pupils with well-developed oral communication skills use their skills successfully while working and playing with peers and when working with adults. For example, many of the school's oldest pupils discuss confidently the advantages of using different types of transport and the difficulties they could face when using public transport. Over time, all pupils make significant progress in their personal communication skills from their starting points and this contributes significantly to their satisfaction and success at school.

Many pupils develop commendable and valuable social skills as they move through the school. They develop as affectionate and friendly pupils who greet each other and the adults around them warmly. Pupils of 'Y Bont' are good friends, get along well and respect each other. They enjoy sitting together during snack times and circle time. Some pupils treat their friends with natural care and empathy, for example by pulling out a chair so they can sit at the table or ensuring that they have something to eat. Many pupils are extremely friendly with the teaching and support staff and demonstrate a significant closeness to them. Most are welcoming towards visitors and many are very willing to talk or communicate with them through a variety of methods.

Many pupils develop valuable independent learning skills over time, depending on their difficulties. They know when to ask for support but also strive to complete tasks independently. Many understand class routines and comply with day-to-day arrangements without fuss. For example, older pupils go to the sink naturally and spontaneously to wash their hands before a cooking session. Younger pupils develop

beneficial independence by taking breakfast orders from their friends and preparing food in the school café.

In their lessons, most pupils listen carefully to teachers and support staff and respond to questions and comments appropriately and in a variety of suitable ways. They listen to the staff's instructions and, in most cases, listen attentively to the contributions of their peers. For example, pupils who are following the semi-formal and formal curriculum pathways listen well to each other's ideas to improve their block buildings, when undertaking a creative joint project on Italy or when discussing decorations for a birthday cake.

In line with their ability and communication methods, many pupils develop sound reading skills. They enjoy sensory stories and social stories and re-tell these stories through a variety of media. Pupils read a list of ingredients successfully in the form of pictures or words and link these correctly to the products when purchasing them from the local supermarket. A few pupils read aloud confidently and discuss what they read by using suitable vocabulary. Older pupils who are following vocational courses read information such as transport details and information about towns on websites to plan a weekend leisure trip.

Many pupils develop beneficial gross and fine motor skills over time. They do this initially by developing methods for making marks and shapes in sand, rice and clay, before moving on to use a range of writing implements, such as paintbrushes, pencils and glue. Many pupils develop to become skilled at using eating utensils, brushing their teeth, wearing fancy dress outfits and putting on their coats to go out to play. They make good development in their physical skills while working in the school garden and at the community allotment. During physical education sessions, pupils develop valuable gross motor skills by moving through a sensory circuit.

Pupils who are following the formal and semi-formal pathways make reasonable progress in their writing skills over time. Older pupils succeed in presenting written information in the form of PowerPoint presentations about the advantages of various sports activities while studying the healthy living course.

Pupils develop numeracy skills appropriately in line with their ability. They benefit greatly from opportunities to practise their calculation skills when visiting the school café and when shopping in the town of Llangefni. Across the school, many pupils develop digital skills appropriately through a suitable range of learning experiences. A majority are able to use suitable apps to create pictures and play literacy or numeracy games. A few pupils develop beneficial advanced digital skills, such as creating animations.

Overall, most pupils benefit from opportunities to develop their creativity in mud or sand play sessions and in their art lessons. For example, some create beautiful artwork on stones to denote acts of kindness, while others create appealing pieces of art by using twigs, paint and grass to represent a sensory story. In music lessons, pupils develop considerable confidence and enjoyment when using various instruments, such as drums and bongos. They listen to and emulate rhythms correctly and this leads to performances of a high standard.

Secondary and post-16 pupils who are following the formal pathway study a wide range of vocational courses, which lead to gaining important qualifications. These include entry level courses and independent living skills courses. All pupils transfer to further college courses either at the end of Year 11 or following a period in the sixth form. A very few pupils make significant progress over time and transfer to mainstream schools either on a part-time or full-time basis. This is an excellent feature.

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

Pupils' well-being thrives within the caring environment of 'Y Bont'. As a result, pupils feel safe at school and happy and content to be a part of it. They enjoy coming to school and benefit clearly from the company and friendship of their fellow pupils. Pupils behave exceptionally well and this reflects the quality of the close relationship between staff and pupils and the high expectations that they set. Pupils have a strong sense of trust in the staff and their care of them.

Nearly all pupils are considerate and caring towards others. They treat each other, staff and visitors with respect. They are polite and keen to talk and share their enthusiasm towards their learning and pride in their school.

As they move through the school, many pupils develop valuable skills in expressing their feelings and controlling their emotions. Most pupils make good use of communication techniques and familiar support resources to help them to feel safe and comfortable. They understand that they can go to quiet areas of their choice or use comfort resources, such as the hammock, until they feel ready to return to the class.

Many pupils have a positive attitude to learning and persevere well with tasks. They listen well and follow instructions. Most settle quickly to their work and move from one activity to another and from one area of the school to another without fuss. This reflects their understanding of the school's routine and arrangements. They respond positively to staff's instructions, such as going to tidy up straight away between sessions and helping staff to prepare for the next activity.

With time, many pupils learn to work well in pairs and small teams and enjoy working together. For example, in the garden, pupils share the tasks of filling pots with compost and watering the newly planted potatoes.

On the whole, many pupils develop their understanding of healthy eating and the benefits of healthy lifestyles. They understand the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. A few older pupils have a good understanding of why smoking or using 'vapes' is not healthy.

Nearly all pupils develop their physical skills well. Many of them enjoy training at the school to improve their rugby skills, football skills and other team games. However, pupils with physical difficulties do not currently benefit from hydrotherapy sessions because the hydro pool is closed.

Many pupils develop an increasing awareness of their responsibilities as responsible citizens. They make a valuable contribution to the local community through their

voluntary work. This enables them to meet new people and experience new opportunities outside school. For example, older pupils support a number of important community projects, including work at an allotment that is managed by a local charity. They are also helping to improve the red squirrel population and help to maintain the local sand dunes.

Pupils develop their understanding of environmental issues through a variety of interesting opportunities and collaborative work with others. For example, their work with the Plastic-free Wales and Keep Wales Tidy projects support pupils' understanding of how pollution affects the air, sea and waterways.

The school council and well-being council work together effectively to seek pupils' views on how to make improvements at the school. Members of these forums take their responsibilities seriously, keep minutes of meetings and are glad that the school listens to them. For example, staff listen and act on their suggestions for '*Gwener Gwych*' ('Fab Friday') well-being activities.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Across the school, teachers, teaching assistants and other staff forge a close, supportive and caring relationship with pupils. As a result, there is a wonderful sense of collaboration and mutual aspiration between pupils and staff across the whole school. Teachers and assistants have very good knowledge of their pupils' strengths and needs and are passionate about ensuring that they respond to these appropriately. There is a clear emphasis on creating and maintaining a quiet, calm and encouraging classroom environment. For example, teachers play calming music and use the interactive whiteboard to display images that inspire mindfulness and allow a relaxing classroom environment.

All teachers have very high expectations of their pupils. This includes far-reaching expectations of what they can achieve, their behaviour and their engagement. Because of their strong knowledge of the pupils, they understand well what can cause them difficulty or worry and plan proactively to avoid potential problems. Teachers and support staff celebrate pupils' successes regularly.

Across the school, most teachers plan an appropriate variety of suitable activities and learning experiences. These meet the development needs of their pupils and also respond to their interests and wishes. In most cases, teachers plan carefully to ensure that pupils enjoy activities and make progress in their social and personal skills. There is an appropriate variety of individual and group activities, alongside beneficial opportunities for pupils to work with support staff and also to work independently. For example, sessions are organised to plant potatoes and carrots in the garden. There are also cooking lessons, weekly visits to the supermarket and sensory play sessions. In most cases, teachers prepare and make use of high quality, colourful, resources to engage pupils and support learning. However, there is not enough consistency in teachers' use of the school's outdoor areas and specialist rooms, such as the independent living flat, to enrich learning experiences further.

Overall, teachers use various means of communication to ensure that their pupils understand what they present. They use questioning skilfully to ensure the



engagement and participation of all pupils in their classes. Individual questions often challenge pupils to think more deeply and solve problems. Teachers and support staff assess pupils' progress against their targets often and these continuous assessments are a core part of their work. A notable element of this is that teachers re-visit elements of the assessments regularly to check whether pupils are succeeding in maintain standards or skills over time.

Most learning support assistants provide an excellent service. They are passionate about their work and take pride in their contribution to the school's work. They lead learning sessions very ably and work with small groups and individuals. Most are suitably qualified to develop pupils' communication skills and manage their behaviour and engagement proactively and positively. This is a strong feature.

The school provides a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum that has been tailored carefully to meet the requirements and needs of all pupils across the age range. Leaders include the valuable contributions of teachers, pupils and parents when they plan the curriculum. Pupils follow one of four appropriate learning pathways within the school. This strategy ensures that pupils have access to beneficial activities that reflect their individual interests and needs and motivate them to make good progress in their learning.

The school plans its curriculum, 'Cwricwlwm y Bont', carefully and in line with the individual needs of the school's pupils. The school's provision for the health and well-being area of learning and experience is a particular strength. Teachers use suitable and personal methods to deal with sensitive issues, such as personal safety, hygiene and healthy relationships.

Skills co-ordinators identify suitable opportunities for pupils to apply their skills effectively across the curriculum. As a result, the school provides a wide and varied range of valuable learning experiences that focus on pupils' personal development and communication, numeracy, digital and vocational skills. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to practise these skills within real-life contexts at the school and in the community. For example, pupils write a list to go shopping, use a debit card to pay and then cook the food once they return to school. Pupils develop their independence and resilience within these activities, which prepare them successfully for the next stage in their lives.

The school provides an appropriate range of courses for older pupils, which include work skills, art and the expressive arts. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to work together the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Options are enriched further through courses provided by the local further education college, for example cooking and an independent living skills course. All of this prepares pupils effectively for the next stage of their lives. The school also invites local colleges and representatives from the world of work and charities to an annual careers fair. Pupils and their parents benefit from the opportunities to discuss the next potential steps for their children.

Pupils' learning experiences are enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular experiences and working with partners such as Môn Actif and the Welsh Rugby Union. For example, sports activities are organised, such as gymnastics, athletics,

rugby and football. School performances and cultural trips are also organised, such as a visit to the Beatles exhibition in Liverpool.

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

The Bont is a happy, caring, hard-working and safe community that provides significant support to its pupils and their families. Staff work diligently to create a calm and orderly environment that contributes greatly to pupils' well-being and personal development. They implement proactive behaviour management strategies consistently and successfully across the school and this leads to very good standards of behaviour.

Pupils are given purposeful opportunities to influence school life by being members of the school council, the well-being group or the eco council. Staff listen to the views of these pupils and respond to them appropriately, for example by re-establishing Caffi'r Ddraig in line with pupils' wishes. Members of the groups are active around the school and the local community, for example when litter picking or taking part in the Amlwch and Llangefni St David's Day parade.

Staff ensure that pupils' individual development plans are comprehensive and thorough. They include detailed and appropriate targets in addition to sensible and useful steps to promote their learning and well-being. These plans also include a contribution by pupils and their families to create a complete picture of the individual and the best way to support them. The school works effectively with external agencies such as social services, physiotherapy staff and speech and language therapists to support pupils' development. Regular visits to the school by these specialists and their input into plans ensure that the school has useful and up-to-date information to support all individuals appropriately. Staff use this information skilfully when planning activities for each individual. Plans include a useful range of strategies that focus in detail on aspects such as communication, sensory development and life skills. The school has robust processes for tracking pupils' progress against their personal targets. Teachers use this information very effectively to measure progress, plan the next steps and provide additional support, where necessary.

As a result of leaders' commitment to train the workforce to the highest possible standard, staff at all levels provide exceptional support to support pupils' well-being and social development. This includes using robust and consistent communication practices, which have enabled the school to develop as a successful communication-friendly organisation.

Staff prepare a variety of beneficial experiences to support pupils as they transfer to the next step in their learning. The thorough and up-to-date knowledge that staff have of all individuals enables them to know when it is appropriate for a pupil to move to another class or gain experience with an alternative provider. For example, pupils in Year 10 attend local colleges for periods during the week. This develops their independent skills well, prepares them effectively for the world of work and expands their awareness of the options that are available to them in the future. As a result, pupils speak extremely knowledgeably and excitedly about the future and their aspirations.

The school provides valuable opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in line with their needs and abilities as part of their learning sessions and in group celebrations. For example, during 'Gwener Gwych' ('Fab Friday') periods, staff promote pupils' awareness of different beliefs and cultures and of important issues such as Down's Syndrome Day, the Chinese New Year and Christian celebrations. Pupils benefit greatly from a wide range of extra-curricular trips that provide them with new and engaging experiences and develop their independent skills well.

The school upholds a strong culture of safeguarding where the well-being and happiness of children are given a clear priority. Staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe and child protection procedures are robust and understood by all. Staff receive safeguarding training regularly, including clear guidance on how to respond to any concerns in an appropriate and timely manner. The school has a clear awareness of what affects pupils' attendance. Staff work effectively with external agencies to support families and promote the importance of attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance rates are good.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has a clear vision that is based on ensuring that all pupils make consistent progress in their key skills within the caring and inclusive environment at 'Y Bont'. A firm priority is given to ensuring that pupils have valuable experiences to develop their life skills in the local community. The school has appropriate strategic objectives that place a decisive focus on meeting the needs of all pupils. Staff at all levels of a comprehensive knowledge of the needs of the pupils in their care. They track the progress of all pupils regularly and use this information very effectively to plan the next steps in their development.

There is a strong sense of teamwork across the school and staff are passionate about their work. The headteacher has distributed leadership responsibilities sensibly. The assistant headteachers support the headteacher well and work together purposefully to strengthen and build on the school's vision. They play a prominent part in leading improvements in provision and the learning experiences that are provided for pupils. For example, they have led successfully on introducing a stimulating curriculum that meets pupils' needs through various learning pathways.

Leaders' commitment to the professional development of staff at all levels, including valuable opportunities to develop leadership skills, is a strong feature. Teachers share their specialist knowledge regularly in professional learning meetings and planning workshops. Assistants are given extensive opportunities to develop professionally, for example by delivering intervention programmes and leading on whole-school strategies. The investment in professional development across the school has led to a very effective self-sufficient system.

National and local priorities are given a prominent place in the school improvement plan. Leaders place a clear focus on developing the communication skills of all pupils, including their Welsh language skills. Leaders give due consideration to responding to the effects of poverty on educational attainment by ensuring that all pupils are given equal opportunities.

The headteacher and governing body manage the school's budget effectively. Strong priority is given to ensuring that staffing levels are appropriate to meet the individual needs of pupils and ensure that they have the resources that they need. The school has faced a very challenging period due to problems with the roof of the building. The leadership team, including members of the governing body, has worked relentlessly to overcome this challenge and ensure a minimal effect on provision and pupils' well-being.

The governing body is passionate about the school and works diligently to support it. Members have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors take advantage of regular opportunities to promote healthy eating and drinking by monitoring provision during breakfast and lunchtimes.

As part of the quality assurance process, leaders conduct a range of appropriate monitoring activities, including scrutiny of pupils' work, evaluating teachers' plans and conducting learning walks. Specific members of the governing body hold beneficial meetings with staff to discuss pupils' progress against their individual targets and how to improve provision further. Following their visits, they share their findings with the remainder of the governing body and challenge leaders, where appropriate. The school's self-evaluation arrangements for measuring the effect of activities on pupils' standards and the quality of teaching are developing appropriately. However, these outcomes are not used regularly enough when planning for improvement.

Staff at all levels foster a productive relationship with families and the school's wider community. A notable example is the regular communication workshops that staff hold for parents. During these sessions, they share their expertise with parents and present a variety of methods they use to develop pupils' oral communication and signing skills. Ensuring consistency in approaches between the school and home has a positive effect on pupils' ability to communicate without feeling frustrated. Parents are given suitable opportunities to influence some aspects of the school's work. For example, they recently completed a questionnaire to provide ideas about the content of the school curriculum.

The school works with a wide range of partners both locally and further afield to ensure that provision for learning and well-being meets the needs of all pupils. A good example of this is the regular co-operation with the 'Gorwel' centre, where the school's older pupils are given rich opportunities to develop their skills and real-life experiences. The school works productively with other special schools and external advisors to provide training and guidance and share their good practice.

Leaders' commitment to developing the professional practice of staff at all levels is a strong feature. An effective and specialist range of professional development opportunities are provided for staff both inside and outside the school. Staff are given valuable opportunities to observe their peers and share their expertise and knowledge regularly. The school works productively with other special schools and external advisors to share good practice and plan jointly.

Staff at different levels are given valuable opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Staff share their specialist knowledge regularly in meetings and in planning workshops with learning teams. As a result, professional learning has a positive

effect on standards and staff practice, for example the practices and principles of a communication-friendly school.

## 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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