



Report summary for parents and carers on Ysgol Pendalar

Date of inspection: October 2023

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

Overview

Ysgol Pendalar is a close-knit and friendly community where staff and pupils work together happily and positively. On the whole, most pupils comply with the teachers' requests and settle quickly to activities and tasks. Many behave well in the classroom, listen carefully to staff and behave respectfully towards their fellow pupils. They engage well with their learning and work easily with teachers and support staff.

During their time at the school, most pupils make suitable progress from their starting points. Many pupils develop valuable social skills as they move through the school. However, there is a lack of opportunities for pupils to practise their communication, reading and extended writing skills.

Ysgol Pendalar has a balanced pupil-centred curriculum. Although the curriculum supports pupils' needs in general, there is a lack of opportunities for pupils to develop their independent living skills.

The quality of teaching is not consistent across the school. In a few lessons, teaching is effective. On the whole, staff meet the needs of pupils appropriately in a suitable range of activities. However, overall, teachers do not plan challenging enough learning experiences and tasks to ensure that pupils make strong progress.

Leaders have a clear vision that is shared by all staff. This vision is based on creating a school that places the pupil at the heart of all decisions. The staff are a dedicated and hard-working team. They work well together and are passionate about their work.

Although there is a strong rationale for the current improvement priorities, they do not derive directly from extensive self-evaluation processes. The priorities are based on informal evaluations by members of the senior management team and do not reflect some important areas for improvement, such as teaching. The school does not plan a timetable for quality assurance and useful activities such as monitoring the quality of teaching and provision and evaluating pupils' progress. This prevents leaders from identifying the school's true strengths and areas for development.

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen strategic leadership at all levels and ensure that responsibilities are defined clearly and allocated in a balanced manner**
- R2 Strengthen self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures**
- R3 Strengthen teaching and planning to develop pupils' increasing skills systematically**
- R4 Ensure robust opportunities for pupils to develop independent living skills and move forward to the next stage of their lives**
- R5 Strengthen the role of the governing body so that their understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement enable them to act effectively as critical friends**

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. A small team of Estyn inspectors will visit the school to monitor progress about 12-18 months after the publication of the inspection report

School context

Name of provider	Ysgol Pendalar
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Special
Number of pupils on roll	113
Pupils of statutory school age	83
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>	36.6%
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	50%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/05/2013
Start date of inspection	02/10/2023
<p>Ysgol Pendalar is situated in the town of Caernarfon and is maintained by Gwynedd local authority. It is a naturally bilingual special day school for pupils between three and 19 years old. Most pupils come from areas in the north of Gwynedd.</p> <p>The school provides a number of specialist facilities, including a hydrotherapy pool and sensory rooms.</p> <p>Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is responsible for providing physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy schemes and healthcare assistants within the school.</p>	

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