



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol Beca**

**Efailwen  
Clunderwen  
SA66 7UX**

**Date of inspection: November 2023**

**by**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh**

## About Ysgol Beca

Name of provider	Ysgol Beca
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	49
Pupils of statutory school age	44
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 23.0%)</i>	16%
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 16.1%)</i>	6%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	52.3%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	23/06/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	11/06/2018
Start date of inspection	06/11/2023

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 Beca is part of a federation with Ysgol Bro Brynach. The caring, friendly and inclusive ethos contributes to the wonderful environment that is typical of the school. Most pupils are very well behaved and treat each other and adults respectfully and politely. The school's culture of safeguarding is sound and pupils feel safe at school while they work and play.

Teachers plan in detail to develop literacy and numeracy skills and, as a result, most pupils make good progress. Planning for pupils' digital skills is not as well developed. As a result, they do not make as much progress in their digital skills.

Staff work together effectively to ensure that the curriculum provides a wide range of exciting and rich experiences. Pupils' views are given careful attention at the beginning of the planning process, so most are very enthusiastic towards their learning experiences. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to influence the direction of their learning once the thematic work has begun. Staff provide engaging and stimulating experiences through '*Gwener Gwyllt*' activities, which develop pupils' skills effectively. Pupils respond with curiosity and motivation and particularly enjoy their learning. Staff foster a fond and supportive working relationship with pupils and identify their needs well. There is a pleasant and hardworking environment at the school and there is a constant buzz to all its activities. Overall, teachers use a range of teaching techniques skilfully.

The acting headteacher has a clear vision for the school which has been shared purposefully with staff, parents and pupils. The vision is based on giving all pupils an opportunity to thrive within the environment. She is supported with dedication and passion by the staff. Although there have been inconsistencies in the leadership of the federation over an extended period of time, staff and governors have succeeded in gaining a suitable understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors are very supportive of the school and show a good awareness of their roles and responsibilities. They support leaders and staff appropriately.

## Recommendations

- R1 Continue to develop effective leadership across the federation
- R2 Ensure that planning enables pupils to make sound progress in their digital skills
- R3 Ensure consistency in the arrangements for embedding the role of pupils in their learning across the federation

## 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 effective use of the outdoor areas to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

## Main findings

### Learning

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress in developing many of their skills from their starting points.

Most pupils' speaking skills develop well and they apply them effectively across the full curriculum. Many pupils speak confidently in both languages when discussing their work with their peers. On the whole, they communicate respectfully with others and value their ideas and opinions. However, pupils talk to each other in English when undertaking their learning experiences or socialising.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills and apply them purposefully across the curriculum. Year 2 pupils, for example, read methodically and clearly and discuss the characters in stories confidently. In Year 4, they read skilfully in both languages and enunciate clearly and meaningfully. They enjoy reading and show a good awareness of the features of books, using correct technical terminology when referring to them. At the top of the school, pupils convey meaning successfully by varying their inflexion and tone of voice when reading in Welsh and English. They express their views about characters and books with increasing maturity.

Most pupils' writing skills develop well during their time at the school and they apply their skills purposefully across the curriculum. For example, Year 2 pupils record their feelings effectively by writing a diary. They build on these skills as they move through the school. The oldest pupils use a range of written effects successfully when creating pamphlets to persuade people to visit Wales.

Most pupils make good progress in their mathematics skills during their time at the school. Year 2 pupils, for example, read simple scales on balancing scales skilfully. They build successfully on this understanding to read the temperature on a range of thermometers, before placing them in order according to their reading. Year 5 pupils investigate the properties of 3D shapes and use their findings to draw nets of 3D shapes by using a purposeful online program. Pupils apply their skills confidently across the curriculum. For example, they repeat measurements and calculate their mean to strengthen the data reliability of their science investigation.

Many pupils' digital skills develop appropriately. They apply these skills across many areas of the curriculum. The youngest pupils develop their early coding skills by programming a roamer to follow a particular path. They develop their confidence further as they move through the school. For example, the oldest pupils create interesting animations that emulate the story of the Rebecca Riots.

Most pupils' physical skills develop well and they have positive attitudes towards physical activity. The youngest pupils, for example, control their bodies skilfully with accuracy and tension when creating and maintaining a variety of shapes. The oldest pupils have a useful understanding of the effect of physical activity on their bodies, for example by measuring how the heart rate changes after completing various sports.

The school's youngest pupils develop their creative skills successfully. They collect a range of natural materials around the school grounds and create analogue clocks on the playground to reinforce their time-telling skills. At the top of the school, most pupils choose media and equipment independently when producing their own emulations of the work of a famous artist.

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

Nearly all pupils are polite, friendly and very caring towards their peers. Pupils contribute well towards creating and maintaining a welcoming atmosphere. They feel safe at school and are happy that adults treat them fairly and with respect. This supports their well-being successfully. Most pupils behave consistently well in all aspects of the school's work.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy their learning while engaging conscientiously with their experiences and persevering diligently to complete tasks. Most show enthusiasm towards their learning experiences, particularly during practical activities such as cooking and gardening.

Many pupils enjoy undertaking roles and responsibilities within the school and fulfil them with dedication and energy. The eco council encourage their peers to recycle and save energy and water which, in turn, fosters positive attitudes towards sustainability. The school council raises money diligently to buy new sports equipment, which has a positive effect on pupils' well-being and fitness. A majority of pupils are given appropriate opportunities to express their views about what they would like to learn. For example, at the beginning of themes, they discuss what they already know about a particular area and what they would like to learn. However, opportunities for pupils to suggest what they would like to learn once thematic work has begun are limited if they think of new ideas.

Most pupils respond successfully to oral and written feedback from staff. As a result, they have a sound understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work.

Many pupils understand the importance of engaging with the school community and supporting society and its people. They are keen to organise activities at the school that include and welcome the community. For example, they invite neighbours from the village to a special evening to celebrate the school's fiftieth anniversary. The

community garden is a strong feature of pupils' co-operation with the community, which supports pupils' understanding of how to grow food sustainably and the importance of acting as conscientious citizens within their communities.

Nearly all pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of being moral and humanitarian citizens. For example, they promote the Urdd's message of goodwill successfully. As a result, pupils show a useful awareness of issues relating to racism and equal opportunities for all.

Most pupils have a suitable understanding of how to stay safe while using the internet. For example, they discuss confidently how to keep their passwords safe and how to respond should a stranger contact them while playing online games.

Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of making good choices in terms of eating and drinking healthily and the effect this has on their health. They participate enthusiastically in physical activities and clearly enjoy taking part. Most enjoy representing the school in various sports competitions. They also appreciate the opportunities they are given to join their peers across the federation to take part in fun sports sessions.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Staff have a caring and warm relationship with all pupils. They treat them with kindness and respect which creates an inclusive environment in which the happiness, well-being and progress of all pupils are a priority.

The school provides a balanced, rich and stimulating curriculum that reflects its nature and local context successfully. Staff work together tirelessly to provide a wide variety of experiences that meet the needs of most pupils well. They inspire pupils and encourage them to do their best, which has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning.

Teachers provide learning experiences that have been planned skilfully. They build systematically on pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences to ensure progression as pupils move through the school. Teachers plan very effectively to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and creative skills, but planning for pupils' digital skills is not as well developed.

On the whole, many staff use the indoor and outdoor learning areas effectively. They work together closely as a team to foster strong attitudes of perseverance and resilience among all pupils. Teachers and assistants develop and reinforce pupils' skills skilfully in engaging and varied contexts. For example, staff provide a menu of activities for pupils which are based on the current theme and build on skills that pupils have already practised. Pupils undertake all activities over a period of time. The range of activities spans all areas of the curriculum and promotes strong progress in pupils' skills and confidence. Staff use a wide range of resources skilfully to engage pupils' interest and curiosity during these activities. For example, staff encourage pupils to create emulations of a high standard of a famous artist's work relating to space by experimenting and using different tools and media.

At the beginning of each term, staff provide opportunities for pupils to influence the direction of themes by encouraging them to ask probing questions that they would like to have answered through the learning experiences. Staff also ensure that pupils are given valuable opportunities to choose how they would like to learn and choose independently how they wish to present their work. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to suggest new activities after starting themes as their curiosity and learning reveal new ideas.

The school makes effective use of its local community and its colourful history to elicit pupils' pride in their locality and ignite pupils' imagination. For example, pupils study the history of the '*Merched Beca*' or Rebecca's Daughters protests and the important place of their village in Welsh history. They also have rich opportunities to celebrate the successes of their former pupils on national and international stages. This supports pupils as they foster values such as perseverance and commitment.

On the whole, teachers use a variety of teaching methods effectively. As a result, pupils are motivated to engage in their activities enthusiastically and make sound progress in their learning. Staff are effective language role models and this helps pupils to develop their fluency well. They share the aim of learning regularly and consider previous learning carefully when planning to develop pupils' skills in different contexts. They ensure that pupils know what needs to be done and understand when they have succeeded. Adults question pupils skilfully. They often use questioning techniques that extend and deepen pupils' understanding and build on their ability to think critically. Many teachers develop suitably-paced learning activities. Where this practice is not as effective, pupils tend to lose interest in their work quickly.

All staff give pupils regular and valuable oral feedback, which enables them to identify what they do well and what they need to do to improve. For example, they refine pupils' technique when making shapes with their bodies in physical education sessions.

Teachers provide simple but effective written feedback to pupils which offers them clear guidance on the next steps in their learning. Pupils respond positively to feedback and, as a result, they often improve the standard of their work purposefully. Pupils are given regular opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers. Pupils are confident when discussing what they need to do to succeed in their tasks.

Staff use a range of information to track pupils' standards, progress and well-being effectively. This provides them with a useful picture of each individual's development and the next steps in their learning. Teachers share information with parents and carers regularly about their children's progress and well-being. This helps them to understand how they can help their children at home.

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

The care, support and guidance provided by Ysgol Beca is a clear strength. The school is a caring, inclusive and friendly community that promotes the importance of good behaviour and courtesy successfully. There is a supportive and fond working relationship between staff and pupils, and staff encourage all pupils to do their best in

all aspects of the school's work. The school knows its pupils and their families well and uses this knowledge to support pupils further with their well-being and learning needs. Parents and carers value the support provided for their children and the support they receive as families.

The school supports pupils' emotional, health and social needs successfully. This is a strong feature across the federation. Staff respond to pupils' needs skilfully and with sensitivity and empathy. For example, pupils share their feelings when they arrive at school in the morning through the use of an electronic device or by leaving a message in Bobi Becso's box. Staff respond quickly to any needs that arise and provide support, as necessary. The '*Lloches Lles*' is also a safe and supportive haven that provides valuable support for vulnerable pupils. Here, support is provided by a senior assistant who has received purposeful training to support pupils with aspects of their emotional well-being. As a result, pupils show a good awareness of their well-being and emotional needs and strategies they could use to support themselves.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is sound. Most pupils who need additional support make good progress from their starting points. The teaching team has effective arrangements to monitor and track pupils' well-being and progress. This enables them to identify pupils who need additional support at an early stage. They provide purposeful support programmes that meet the needs of individual pupils well. Programmes include support to promote pupils' emotional well-being and develop their literacy skills. There is close co-operation between the school and the home. Parents and pupils play an important role in the process of reviewing pupils' progress and setting targets for the next steps in their learning. The school works effectively in partnership with external agencies, for example the county's specialist speech and language team and audiologist team, to support pupils' specific needs.

The school provides a wide range of activities that promote the physical health and emotional well-being of nearly all pupils successfully. For example, pupils who are bronze ambassadors have received training from the county's sports department and now lead fitness sessions during break time and in lessons. There are attractive outdoor play areas which encourage pupils to take part in physical activity during break times.

The school provides numerous opportunities for pupils to assume leadership roles and responsibilities. They undertake their roles conscientiously and with pride. For example, the '*Criw Twm Tanllyd*' work diligently to promote social use of the Welsh language among pupils. They have established a system to reward the use of the Welsh language and organise a day of fun activities for all pupils to celebrate '*Shwmae Su'mae*' day. These experiences contribute usefully towards developing valuable planning and co-operation skills.

The school organises rich opportunities to celebrate and develop pupils' understanding of their identity, heritage and culture. The school is the focal point of its community and takes full advantage of opportunities to hold activities in the local area. For example, they study the history of Rebecca's Daughters and the event's important contribution to the history of Wales. There are also valuable opportunities for pupils to take part in local events. They sing in a concert to raise money for a



statue of Twm Carnabwth and contribute to the content of the community newspaper, 'Y Cardi Bach'. As a result, pupils become increasingly aware of, and knowledgeable about, the history of their local area and take pride in its wealth of culture and tradition.

Periods of collective worship provide opportunities for pupils to develop their moral and spiritual skills successfully. These periods encourage pupils to reflect quietly on spiritual and religious aspects. They encourage pupils to consider important values, such as pride, and express this when singing the school song with commendable passion during the morning assembly.

The school has robust strategies for promoting pupils' attendance. Staff work purposefully with families and support them effectively where their children's attendance is a cause for concern. All members of staff have a sound understanding of child protection procedures and processes. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management**

In a very short period, the acting headteacher has succeeded in sharing her vision with staff, pupils and parents. This vision is based on clear and firm values that reflect the aspiration for each individual to succeed within a caring community, celebrating the unique identity of both schools in the federation. She is supported well by the governors and a team of dedicated staff who work together diligently to ensure continuous improvements. Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the federation and understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. As a result, a homely and supportive feeling cascades through the work of the school.

The acting headteacher has high expectations of her staff, pupils and herself. She works diligently to ensure that responsibilities are shared appropriately among the staff. They are responsible for specific aspects of the school's work, for example developing a curricular area or refining the assessment procedures. This contributes beneficially to ensuring that most pupils make sound progress in their skills over time, mainly in literacy and numeracy.

Although there has been instability in the school's leadership arrangements over a long period, leaders have succeeded in establishing a range of useful processes for monitoring aspects of the school's provision. They gather an appropriate range of first-hand evidence to evaluate the effect of this provision on pupils' standards, progress and well-being. For example, they monitor teachers' plans and pupils' work. As a result, leaders have a suitable understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They implement purposeful procedures which address the areas for improvement and give purposeful attention to wider national improvement priorities.

There are suitable procedures for managing staff's performance. They have beneficial development targets that link clearly to the school's priorities and the specific needs of staff. In turn, targets align purposefully with the professional learning activities that are organised for staff. Teachers have recently attended training to develop their ability to question pupils more effectively. This has

contributed positively to developing a successful environment of inquiry across the federation. There are effective opportunities for staff to experiment with different approaches to delivering the curriculum. For example, they refine their planning processes for providing stimulating experiences for pupils to reinforce and apply their skills across the curriculum through a range of rich activities.

The governors are very supportive of the federation's work. They value the benefits of working in a federation and are aware of the opportunities the arrangement provides while also wanting to preserve the unique identity of both schools. By undertaking a range of relevant monitoring activities, they have a good understanding of the strengths at both sites, along with the areas for improvement. The governing body has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking, for example by encouraging pupils to drink water regularly and eat fruit each day.

Leaders manage resources and funding appropriately and review expenditure appropriately. They link expenditure wisely to the school's improvement priorities and use grants purposefully to enrich provision for pupils. For example, part of the pupil development grant is used to provide beneficial play therapy sessions that support pupils' emotional well-being and social skills in the '*Llecyn Lles*'.

The school has an effective relationship with parents and the wider community. For example, pupils enjoy the valuable opportunities to grow vegetables in the wild garden with parental support during the '*Gwener Gwyllt*' ('Wild Friday') sessions. As a result, they have an appreciation of the rich experiences they have by working with their community. Parents appreciate the sense that they can talk to any member of staff to discuss their children's well-being and education.

## 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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