



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

A report on

Ysgol Bod Alaw

**Abergele Road
Colwyn Bay
Conwy
LL29 7ST**

Date of inspection: February 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Bod Alaw

Name of provider	Ysgol Bod Alaw
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	313
Pupils of statutory school age	225
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	39
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 23.7%)</i>	11.3%
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 13.2%)</i>	5.8%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	46.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	05/02/2024

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

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

Overview

The extremely caring, friendly and supportive ethos that is a prominent feature of provision at Ysgol Bod Alaw permeates all aspects of its work. Pupils behave well and treat each other and adults respectfully and politely. The school's culture of safeguarding is strong and pupils feel happy and safe while they work and play. They are extremely proud of their school and speak enthusiastically about their experiences.

As a result of purposeful planning, many pupils make good progress in their language, numeracy and digital skills. They apply their skills confidently across the curriculum. The school's arrangements for developing pupils' physical skills are an obvious strength. Pupils enjoy the wide range of experiences they are given and make strong progress in this aspect.

The school provides a stimulating curriculum that engages pupils' interest successfully and reflects the local context effectively. Staff establish a supportive and fond working relationship with pupils and the learning areas are productive and lively places. On the whole, teachers use a good range of purposeful teaching methods that promote pupils' motivation and progress. However, activities do not always challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability, particularly more able pupils.

The headteacher is a passionate leader who aspires for the best possible learning experiences and well-being for all pupils. The headteacher is supported by a hard-working and highly conscientious team of staff who place an emphasis on ensuring that pupils enjoy their activities and are eager to learn. Governors provide the school with robust support and have a comprehensive understanding of their duties and responsibilities. They are dedicated and tireless advocates for the school in providing support to staff and leaders and ensuring that the school uses its resources appropriately.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure an appropriate level of challenge to support pupils to develop their skills to the best of their ability, particularly more able pupils

What happens next

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

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, the spoken Welsh skills of a majority of pupils are below what is expected for their age and stage of development. Many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals, make sound progress during their time at the school. Most develop very quickly to become skilled and confident Welsh speakers.

Most pupils listen carefully to staff presentations, follow instructions purposefully and work effectively with their peers. Their oral skills develop well in both languages and they apply their skills successfully in a variety of contexts. Most of the school's youngest pupils develop their vocabulary well. For example, they use descriptive language purposefully when performing a short play, playing the role of characters from Rala Rwdins. By Year 2, many pupils use correct grammatical patterns in their work and in less formal contexts. At the top of the school, most pupils use vocabulary and terminology purposefully in both languages. For example, the oldest pupils use purposeful vocabulary such as '*gorchuddio*' ('to cover') when working together and making decisions about the materials they need to build a shelter in the forest area.

The reading skills of many pupils across the school are sound. Most of the youngest pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of letters and sounds and make strong progress in their Welsh reading skills. By Year 4, pupils use a range of strategies to identify and read less familiar words successfully in Welsh and English. They discuss the main features of books and characters and show a sound understanding of the content. At the top of the school, many pupils use a variety of techniques to discover meaning. For example, they use evidence from the text fluently to predict what will happen next.

Most pupils in the foundation learning phase develop their fine motor skills robustly, which supports them successfully to develop their early writing skills. For example, they develop and warm-up important muscles by stitching and weaving materials to create bird feeders. This supports them successfully in forming letters with increasing accuracy. Most older pupils have sound writing skills in both languages. They make strong progress in the development of their spelling and have a good understanding of grammatical rules and syntax. Most of the school's oldest pupils apply their writing skills in a variety of contexts across the curriculum. For example, they make imaginative choices of adjectives and idioms to enrich their work when writing an additional chapter for *The Twits* by Roald Dahl.

Many pupils' numeracy skills develop soundly and they apply them purposefully across the curriculum. The youngest pupils identify numbers that add up to 10 confidently. They build on these skills regularly and, by Years 4 and 5, pupils experiment with using a range of multiplication methods. The oldest pupils handle data intelligently. For example, they repeat measurements and calculate the mean to improve the reliability of data in their scientific inquiries.

Most pupils across the school develop and apply their digital skills appropriately. By the end of Year 2, most use images and sound skilfully when creating an animation

of a character in a familiar story. The oldest pupils' digital skills develop effectively. By Year 5 and 6, they use a range of programs confidently, for example when entering information into a database about the height of mountains in Wales.

Across the school, most pupils' creative skills develop effectively. They use a good range of resources to emulate the styles of famous Welsh artists and enjoy performing in concerts and eisteddfodau. As a result, this has a positive effect on pupils' confidence as they present themselves creatively, including their ability to develop their spoken Welsh skills effectively.

Most pupils' physical skills develop well. Year 2 pupils make a sensible choice from a range of ball-passing methods and use space effectively when attacking and defending during their ball skills sessions. By Years 5 and 6, pupils move more powerfully and energetically and pass smoothly and with good accuracy. On the whole, pupils across the school show positive attitudes towards physical activities and respect the rules of activities.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils enjoy attending school and feel happy within its inclusive environment. They feel completely safe there and know that staff are available to listen to any concerns they may have and give them advice every time. Pupils and their parents value the care that is provided by staff and are confident that they respond immediately to any concerns they may have.

Most pupils behave well in the classroom and around the school and treat adults and visitors with respect and courtesy. Nearly all are polite and considerate of each other and they show obvious pride when talking about their school. This is a strong feature of the school.

Most pupils show sound attitudes to learning and develop as hard-working and enthusiastic learners. They listen attentively to presentations and work consistently well individually, in pairs and in small groups. They work together harmoniously and, on the whole, are dedicated when undertaking their tasks. However, the challenge of learning activities does not always ensure that pupils develop their skills to the best of their ability, particularly more able pupils.

Most pupils respond enthusiastically in influencing what they learn. Through the effective use of planning walls and discussions at the beginning of a new theme, pupils share their ideas and add questions about what they would like to learn. As a result, they feel that adults listen to their ideas and consider them when planning learning activities for them. This contributes firmly to ensuring that most pupils are curious and show an interest in their work. On the whole, pupils respond positively to feedback from staff. Most of the school's oldest pupils have a sound understanding of the need to read their work carefully to identify what they have done well and how they can improve their work. They understand that this is an important part of the learning process. As a result, most pupils develop to become confident and independent learners.

All Year 6 pupils are members of different committees, where they can provide comments, ideas and influence the life and work of the school. They take their

responsibilities enthusiastically and seriously. For example, the Sports Council pupils are active in organising playground activities and games during break times, while the pupils on the Eco Council are passionate about ensuring that everyone in the school community recycles waste.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of their responsibilities as global, ethical and informed citizens. They understand the importance of supporting other people in society and organise successful activities to raise money for various charities. This has a positive effect on their understanding of other people's needs, both locally and nationally.

Most pupils show a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. Through their theme work, they have a sound understanding of the effect a balanced diet and exercise has on their health. Most pupils participate enthusiastically in physical activities, including forest school and physical education sessions. Older pupils enjoy taking part in a variety of tournaments and competitions, including football and rugby.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff across the school work together effectively to develop an interesting and stimulating curriculum that meets pupils' needs well. They have established a clear vision where the school provides rich learning experiences that consider the views of parents and pupils, along with the context of the local area purposefully. As a result, learning experiences engage most pupils' interest successfully.

Across the school, the attractive learning environment encourages productive and purposeful learning communities. There is an effective working relationship between staff and pupils and they promote positive behaviour successfully. They treat pupils with kindness and respect and their happiness and well-being are clear priorities. Staff ensure regular access for pupils to undertake activities in the attractive outdoor areas, which motivate pupils and stimulate learning. For example, the youngest pupils enjoy playing freely in an environment that is full of exciting options and activities.

Teachers and assistants work together effectively to provide learning activities through stimulating and engaging whole-school themes. Experiences build systematically on pupils' knowledge, understanding and interests to ensure progression as they move through the school in various contexts. The themes have been planned skilfully to ensure that there is an exciting stimulus to learning and input from the school community. For example, parents attend the school to join the school's celebrations on the themes of 'The Sixties'. These experiences encourage pupils to question, experiment and make independent choices effectively. Teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills. For example, there are robust arrangements to support the development of reading, which promotes an ethos of love for books among pupils and, as a result, many make good progress in their reading skills.

Purposeful use of visitors and visits enriches the learning experiences of all pupils further and sparks their interest and curiosity. For example, in order to help Bendigeidfran to cross the Irish Sea, Year 2 and 3 pupils work purposefully with a local engineering expert. They discuss the most suitable shape, design and materials

to build a bridge to help Bendigeidfran on his journey. They develop valuable co-operation, critical thinking and inquiry skills when reaching a conclusion about their favourite design.

Overall, most teachers use a range of probing questioning methods which recall pupils' learning effectively, confirm their understanding and encourage them to develop their thinking skills. There are clear learning objectives and pupils understand that they need to do to succeed. Teachers offer purposeful feedback and, as a result, pupils demonstrate an appropriate understanding of what they have done well and the next steps in their learning. However, teachers do not always ensure that tasks and experiences challenge pupils to achieve as well as they could, particularly those who are more able.

Staff are strong language models. Learning assistants work effectively with teachers and contribute purposefully to developing pupils' skills. For example, they support pupils' social, emotional and literacy skills across the classes skilfully. Leaders and staff monitor and track pupils' progress carefully and use this information purposefully to hold professional discussions among staff. Teachers use this information effectively to respond to the specific needs of individuals and groups of pupils and when planning the next steps in their learning purposefully. Annual reports for parents report clearly on pupils' achievements, in addition to what they need to do to develop further.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring and inclusive community that promotes the well-being of pupils and staff highly successfully. There is a beneficial and supportive relationship between staff and pupils and staff encourage pupils to do their best. This means that nearly all pupils settle quickly at the school. Staff deal with any issues that arise in a supportive manner and concerns are resolved quickly. As a result of the supportive relationship between pupils and staff, nearly all pupils are happy to come to school, work well together in lessons and play together appropriately during break times.

Provision for pupils with ALN is sound. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) has robust arrangements for identifying pupils' needs at an early stage. She ensures that staff provide purposeful support programmes that meet the needs of individual pupils well. The ALNCo provides opportunities for parents, staff and pupils to contribute purposefully to pupils' individual development plans. Purposeful one-page profiles contain useful information about pupils' individual needs and what they need to develop further. Leaders track pupils' progress in detail and evaluate the effect of support programmes on their progress effectively. Most pupils who receive additional support make good progress over time.

The school focuses carefully on supporting pupils' well-being, including their emotional needs and mental health. Staff ensure that pupils have effective access to a range of purposeful programmes which help them to deal with their feelings and emotions. An effective technique that is used by pupils to share their feelings and concerns at the beginning of the week is '*Llun Lles*' (Wellbeing Monday) and the daily use of the well-being boxes in the classrooms. Through this, staff succeed in identifying and responding quickly to any concerns that pupils have. Staff work highly effectively with external agencies, such as the Welfare Support Team and various

agencies as necessary, to support pupils who face social and behavioural challenges.

Staff provide valuable opportunities for the oldest pupils to undertake leadership roles within the school and influence school life. For example, members of the Well-being Council conduct a survey of the school's pupils and respond to the results by holding a number of fun activities during the school's well-being week. Pupils who are part of the digital crew are active in training other pupils on how to use new software to support them in presenting their work.

Through a good range of purposeful opportunities, the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Within whole-school assemblies, staff and pupils discuss the school's important values regularly and how to be good citizens within society. They discuss children's rights and the need to treat everyone with respect. As a result, pupils show a mature awareness of how to develop as responsible citizens.

A number of enriching visits are provided for pupils which promote their interest in Welsh culture and the local community successfully. For example, as part of the '*Yma o Hyd*' theme, teachers organise beneficial opportunities for pupils to visit places of interest, including North Wales Rugby Club. As part of the visit, pupils are given valuable opportunities to question the players. Visits raise pupils' aspirations and support them to develop important values such as perseverance and resilience.

Teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills in a range of stimulating and engaging activities. For example, pupils enjoy taking part in a variety of keep fit activities, including the weekly fitness sessions. They benefit from activities in the forest area, where they are given rich opportunities to develop their creative and physical skills while surrounded by nature.

The school provides a good range of attractive clubs and activities that enrich the curriculum and promote pupils' social skills, for example a multi-sports club, choir and netball. The school provides beneficial opportunities for its older pupils to go on residential trips to Glan Llyn, Cardiff and Pentrellyncymer, which broaden their experiences valuably.

Leaders ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding permeates the school. Staff have a sound understanding of safeguarding processes and leaders respond appropriately to any individual cases that arise in a firm and effective manner. The school has purposeful arrangements for promoting pupils' attendance and works closely with families when there are concerns about their children's attendance. The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is a passionate and conscientious leader. He has a clear vision based on providing stimulating and interesting learning experiences and ensuring the best possible well-being for all pupils. The headteacher has shared this vision successfully with parents, staff, pupils and the wider community and, as a result, there is a strong sense of being part of a close-knit learning community where

everyone's views and contributions are important. Leaders promote a robust culture of safeguarding effectively. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy in their work and play within a supportive and caring environment.

The headteacher is supported by energetic and hard-working deputy headteachers and a dedicated and enthusiastic team of staff. They work conscientiously to provide rich experiences that spark the imagination and engage the interest of most pupils. Leaders have established robust arrangements for managing staff performance and there is a logical link between their development targets and the school's improvement priorities. These priorities are supported by a useful range of tailored professional learning activities that are provided for staff. For example, teaching staff work together skilfully within the school to develop a balanced and up-to-date curriculum that is exciting and promotes pupils' progress appropriately. They build on this work purposefully by working with local schools to share best practices and evaluate and improve provision further.

Governors are highly supportive of the school and have a good understanding of its work and its community. They take pride in their roles and are robust and genuine advocates for the staff and pupils. Leaders work together closely to ensure the most suitable use of resources, including financial resources. They use the pupil development grant appropriately to provide programmes that support the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and emotional well-being purposefully. Governors complete a useful range of monitoring activities. For example, they meet with pupils to discuss and analyse data regarding the use of the Welsh language in the school. Leaders provide the governing body with regular information about the school's performance. As a result, governors have sound and up-to-date information about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use this information effectively to challenge leaders about pupils' standards, progress and well-being. Governors ensure that the school has suitable arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders have established purposeful arrangements for monitoring provision and supporting improvement planning. They, in addition to staff and pupils, use a range of first-hand evidence appropriately to evaluate provision and its effect on pupils' standards, progress and well-being. They analyse the evidence purposefully and, as a result, leaders have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. They produce effective improvement plans that focus clearly on the areas for development and give attention to national improvement priorities, for example by promoting the use of the Welsh language and reducing the effect of poverty on pupils' attainment. Leaders ensure that they monitor progress against the priorities and adapt their plans, where appropriate.

Leaders place a clear emphasis on building effective partnerships with parents and the wider community. For example, the school invites parents to the school to improve their Welsh speaking skills over a series of useful sessions. This promotes parents' ability to support their children at home effectively. Leaders have developed a good range of partnerships with the local community. For example, the library and local businesses support the school to hold a treasure hunt where pupils try to find the magic carpet that has gone missing in the vicinity of Colwyn Bay. This develops pupils' awareness of local services and enables them to promote the use of the Welsh language with the town's residents when going about their work. This is a

strong feature of the school's work, which has a positive effect on pupils, their families and the wider community.

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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