

A report on

Ysgol Yr Hendy

**Iscoed Road
Hendy
Pontardulais
Carmarthenshire
SA4 0XD**

Date of inspection: May 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for

Education and Training in Wales

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Yr Hendy

Name of provider	Ysgol Yr Hendy
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	Bilingual
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	192
Pupils of statutory school age	154
Number in nursery classes	21
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year <i>average</i> <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 22.9%)</i>	13.8%
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 11.1%)</i>	7.8%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	24.7%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2023

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May 2025

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/12/2017
Start date of inspection	13/05/2025

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

Summary

One of the most prominent features of Ysgol Yr Hendy is that all staff foster the well-being and learning of all pupils extremely effectively in an inclusive and creative learning environment. Through this, pupils have robust attitudes towards their learning where many make sound progress in their skills. Pupils in the Welsh and English streams learn and play together happily and are proud of their Welsh roots. In general, pupils across the school do not make good enough progress in developing their Welsh skills, especially their oral skills.

Teachers and teaching assistants work together successfully as dedicated team members. They plan a curriculum based on enquiry and research that contributes strongly to improving provision for pupils. Staff provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of different aspects of the curriculum in valuable activities, for example in 'Gwener Gwych' sessions. Teachers give pupils useful instructions to undertake their activities so that they can immerse themselves in their learning successfully. However, many teachers do not provide pupils with regular opportunities to make independent choices about the way in which they want to achieve and present their learning. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills in the engaging external environment.

The headteacher has an ambitious vision and her high expectations permeate all the school's activities. The continuous self-evaluation process of supporting pupils to develop their skills is a strong virtue of teaching and staff leadership skills. The headteacher is diligent in developing all aspects of the school and supports other schools to improve different aspects of leadership, teaching and learning. The governing body is committed to supporting and improving the school over time and is proud that the school is a core part of its local community. By securing additional sources of income, leaders manage finances prudently and creatively.

Recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve

- R1. Develop pupils' Welsh language skills across the school
- R2. Ensure regular opportunities for pupils to make independent choices about the way in which they want to achieve and present their learning

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The school is led by a dedicated and conscientious headteacher who has high expectations of herself, staff and pupils. Her ambitious vision permeates all the school's activities, with parents and the wider community appreciating that their children attend this school. Through purposeful strategic action, the headteacher fosters an environment of respect and regular collaboration among staff, parents and members of the governing body in order to provide valuable experiences and opportunities for pupils.

One of the school's most notable qualities is that all members of staff build strong working relationships with each pupil and that they understand their individual well-being and learning needs extremely effectively. The creative and stimulating learning environment promotes the inclusive provision and support that all pupils need to encourage them to enjoy their learning and achieve to the best of their ability. Staff promote the Welsh language and Welsh history and culture skilfully with pupils in the Welsh and English streams. This fosters a sense of belonging to a school which contributes to the positive attitudes of almost all pupils to learn and play together harmoniously.

As one effective team, teachers and teaching assistants set high expectations for pupils and provide engaging activities that have a positive effect on their learning and behaviour. They provide an interesting range of activities that support pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding in a variety of learning contexts. For example, the oldest pupils develop their numeracy and digital skills skilfully while learning about the effect of climate change on land erosion in the Mumbles area, by contrasting the results with other international areas. As a result, pupils are immersed in their learning and apply their skills effectively across the areas of learning.

From their various starting points, many pupils across the school make sound progress in their literacy, numeracy and digital skills during their time at the school. The youngest pupils commit fully to their learning by using useful resources to support them to learn in the classroom and in the stimulating external learning areas, for example by developing their oral and creative skills in the 'Llecyn Llanast' area. In best practice, teachers support pupils to embrace and use Welsh as a core part of their learning. However, many teachers do not support pupils across the age range in both streams to acquire Welsh speaking skills effectively enough over time. In addition, pupils in the Welsh stream do not develop their reading and creative writing skills effectively enough in line with their age and stage of development.

Staff work together skilfully to design a stimulating and relevant curriculum that develops pupils' skills in activities across the areas of learning, including deepening their appreciation of spiritual and moral aspects. For example, staff are undertaking an inquiry project by researching methods of planning a range of rich activities to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of different aspects of the curriculum and to improve their literacy and numeracy skills through the 'Gwener Gwych' approach. This has a beneficial effect on supporting pupils to develop and apply their skills and prepare them for the next stages of their learning.

With the guidance and support of the leadership team, along with beneficial professional learning opportunities, all staff work diligently to improve different aspects of the provision.

Spotlight: active research and inquiry as a foundation for planning and acting for improvement

All teachers, teaching assistants and governors work together purposefully to evaluate the effect of provision on various aspects of teaching and learning. As part of the inquiry process, staff gather a combination of quantitative and qualitative information in order to evaluate the effect of provision on pupils' progress as a basis for planning and acting on research. In doing so, they ensure that the proposed improvements are informed by robust evidence based on pupils' specific needs.

Evaluative evidence is incorporated skilfully as a foundation for planning for improvement. As a result, the school's development plan addresses general and incisive inquiry questions on areas that have been identified as areas that the school needs to improve. The 'Plan, Do, Review' cycle ensures that all partners develop specific aspects of provision jointly in a strategic and practical manner.

Through effective cooperation with a variety of education providers, the partners develop regular confidence and understanding of how to access reliable and high-quality national and international evidence. The evidence is used as a basis for planning useful activities, which in turn lead to relevant outcomes as part of the research. For example, they refine provision to help pupils develop pupils' numeracy skills effectively across areas of learning.

Teachers support pupils to know what they are doing well and what they need to improve effectively. The assessment methods are consistent across the school and pupils are proud of the support they receive to develop their learning. Pupils immerse themselves in their learning and persevere diligently to achieve staff-led learning activities. However, the provision does not always support pupils to make independent choices about the way in which they want to achieve and present their learning.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to influence the life and wider work of the school. Members of the Senedd work well together to design experiences jointly in the community that have a positive effect on the experience of their peers, for example when undertaking gardening activities at Canolfan Gwili. In addition, all pupils gain valuable experiences to build their confidence in a wide range of arts and sport activities, such as competing in the Hendy Eisteddfod and taking part in sports tournaments locally and nationally.

Staff track the progress of different groups of pupils in detail and use the information effectively to support pupils' well-being and learning. A notable element of the school is the inclusive provision for all pupils across the school. This contributes robustly to pupils' enjoyment of their learning and to their pride in attending the school which is at the core of their experience within the close-knit community. The 'additional learning education (ALN) panel', which includes staff and a member of the governing body, discusses the needs of individual pupils jointly with parents, in order to provide specific support for them. Most pupils with ALN and those affected by poverty, make sound progress in their skills.

Members of the governing body are committed to the school and support and challenge leaders constructively and sensibly in order to ensure continuous improvement to provision and pupils' learning outcomes. For example, they support staff to improve provision in order to support pupils to make consistent progress in their digital skills. Through the body's purposeful self-evaluation procedures, they have a thorough knowledge of pupils' progress and standards and provision as a whole. They plan beneficial evaluation activities to support leaders further, for example in managing the school's finances prudently.

The headteacher makes innovative and highly effective use of local and national sources of income and grants to support the school's staff and other schools' staff to improve different aspects of leadership, teaching and learning. By using these sources creatively, beneficial opportunities are provided for staff to hold professional conversations in order to continue to innovate in their practice and to receive valuable leadership experiences through the distributed leadership model.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are not a cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for the management of the site are not a cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's funding appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

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

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers 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, listen to them read 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.

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report refers to different quantities and proportions, e.g. ‘*most pupils...*’ or ‘*very few pupils...*’. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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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This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).