



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Ysgol Pendalar  
Ffordd Bethel  
Caernarfon  
Gwynedd  
LL55 1DU**

**Date of inspection: May 2013**

**by**

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court, Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

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**Publication date: 24/07/2013**

## Context

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 aged between three and 19 years.

Pendalar has one key stage 2 class, which is situated in Ysgol Gynradd Bontnewydd, for pupils with less intense needs.

Most pupils come from areas in north Gwynedd, and a very few come from nearby local authorities.

At the time of the inspection, there were 87 pupils – 57 boys and 30 girls – on roll.

All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. They have a wide spectrum of additional learning needs, including serious learning difficulties, intense and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that learners achieve with national averages or to analyse trends in the performance of groups over time because of the nature of pupils' needs.

A little over half of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Only a very few pupils come from homes in which neither Welsh nor English is the first language and the remainder come from English-speaking homes. Very few pupils come from ethnic backgrounds.

Thirty-seven per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals and a very few pupils are in the care of the local authority.

The school offers a number of specialist facilities, including a hydrotherapy pool, an outdoor learning environment and sensory areas.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is responsible for providing physiotherapy, speech therapy, vocational therapy, daily nursing and health care assistants within the school.

The school aims to develop all pupils to their full potential, both educationally and socially, so that they can play a full part in their community and be a valuable part of it.

The school moved to a new purpose-built building in September 2007. The school is situated conveniently on the same site as the leisure centre and is close to a primary school and a secondary school.

The school was last inspected in October 2007. The headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher have been in their posts since April 2013.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

Ysgol Pendalar is a good school because:

- standards are good across the school;
- pupils' ability to develop communication skills over time is very good;
- the school offers a wide range of experiences that reinforce and motivate learning;
- teaching is of a good standard in all classes;
- there is a caring ethos that ensures that pupils enjoy school and feel safe; and
- effective co-operation between all staff enriches pupils' wellbeing and learning experiences.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher who has been appointed recently has a clear vision for developing the school further into the future;
- the senior management team, staff and governors share the same vision;
- the school has created effective systems for moving the school forward within a short time;
- the school has identified specific aspects to be developed for the future which are in place already; and
- there has been significant positive change to the school's strategic management during the last half term.

## Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that assessment for learning strategies and thinking skills permeate the school
- R2 Develop the strategic leadership procedures that were produced recently and the role of the governing body in the self-evaluation process, setting priorities and challenging the school
- R3 Ensure that there is a close link between staff training, the performance management system, the self-evaluation report and the priorities of the school development plan

### **What happens next?**

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils make good progress, over time, in relation to their ability, age and individual needs. They make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Award) results show that pupils aged between 14 and 19 years make good progress.

Pupils from various groups achieve well against their targets. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls, pupils who receive free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority. Most pupils take pride in their achievements, and recognise their progress within their targets.

Most pupils who have intense and complex needs make measurable progress towards meeting their personal targets. They make good use of appropriate sensory resources in order to know what is happening next, for example by touching specific material when visiting the dark room. They use symbols and their senses well to make choices.

Nearly all pupils make good progress in lessons. They behave and listen well. They are able to recall previous work and co-operate effectively together. Nearly all of them also stay on task well and enjoy lessons.

Most pupils develop their communication skills very well. Less able pupils use symbols effectively in order to communicate and express themselves to others. More able pupils are able to communicate orally very well and, when it is suitable, they make good progress with their reading and writing skills.

Pupils develop good numeracy skills. They can use their skills appropriately in a variety of activities, for example by handling money when shopping and measuring and weighing when preparing food.

Pupils make effective use of information and communication technology to expand their learning, present their work and improve their communication skills. Pupils who have more complex needs make increasing and effective use of technological resources. This includes using switches, for example to control the equipment in the sensory room and equipment in cooking lessons.

More able pupils respond well to simple problem-solving tasks. They are able to work independently and, at times, they are able to use thinking skills as part of their tasks. Members of the school council make important decisions, for example improving resources in the play park. They have also costed these resources and discussed ideas about how to raise money.

Nearly all pupils, in line with their ability, show a good understanding of Welsh and English and use them effectively in various situations. The ability of second language pupils to master Welsh is developing particularly well.

Through the various opportunities that pupils have to visit local schools and colleges, in addition to experience of the world of work, they all move forward to college courses, daily service provision or work.

All pupils over the last two years have gained a recognised qualification by the time they leave school.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils show positive attitudes to living and eating healthily and take part in a wide range of physical exercises. Nearly all pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school.

Many of them contribute fully with eagerness and enthusiasm in the activities. Nearly all of them concentrate well for considerable periods in line with their ability. They also show a high standard of respect and courtesy towards others across the school and beyond it.

Pupils take responsibility for several aspects such as selling fruit at school or helping in the school's charity shop in the town. Pupils' life and independence skills develop effectively through these activities in addition to through shopping and handling money.

Older pupils use vocational experiences and key skills that are associated with them effectively in education, work and life outside the school.

Through the effective operation of the school council, a voice is given to all pupils. They have reviewed and changed arrangements during lunch times in addition to establishing a 'bydis buarth' (yard buddies) system for younger pupils.

Pupils' behaviour is good across the school and beyond. Their attendance is good, considering the complex and intensive needs of some of them.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

The school offers a wide range of learning experiences which are planned well in order to meet pupils' individual needs. These include activities outside the school, for example visits to a café, swimming in the local leisure centre, horse-riding and visits to the forest school.

The use that the school makes of music and art in order to help individuals to develop feelings and to express themselves is one of the school's strengths. The school provides opportunities for pupils to study the work of artists such as Kyffin Williams and Picasso.

Staff across the school provide extensive opportunities for children to develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. Opportunities for individual pupils to develop their communication skills, in line with their ability, are a strength.

The school's provision ensures the best possible opportunities for pupils to be able to develop naturally bilingually over time.

Older pupils have an opportunity to gain relevant qualifications in a range of subjects. They include WJEC entry level in 'Personal Achievement' and AQA units, for example cooking, gardening and information technology skills. They also have suitable opportunities to undertake work experience, for example in a café, nursery and a hairdressing salon.

Provision for learning about sustainability is good. Pupils have experiences that are linked to recycling paper and clothes, making compost and growing vegetables. The school has won a silver 'Eco Schools' award and a gold 'North Wales Wildlife Gardening' award.

Pupils learn about global citizenship through a full range of activities, for example raising money for a special school in Tanzania, a visit from a teacher from a school in Patagonia and 'Fair Trade' week.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching across the school is good. Teachers, assistants and other staff co-operate effectively to make sure that pupils have access to all activities and make good progress. Staff have a good understanding of the needs and ability of all pupils. They use the information effectively to plan lessons and activities that are suitable and challenging.

As a part of the school's process for short-term planning, staff use purposeful sheets that offer specific aims and objectives that are linked to pupils' needs effectively. This procedure also offers opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of sessions and the best way of further forward planning.

Staff use a wide range of learning methods and resources that promote pupils' interest, and that ensure achievements and development of skills in line with their ability and needs. This includes good use of technological equipment, for example switches, electronic tablets and interactive whiteboards.

All staff ensure a specific focus on developing skills within lessons. There is a wide range of communication techniques, including signing and use of symbols, which enable pupils to communicate in line with their ability. Staff also take full advantage of every opportunity to develop pupils' independence. However, there is not enough focus on developing thinking skills across the school.

The school has a wide range of systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. This includes wide use of photographic and video evidence. This is a means of showing measurable progress that can be shared with parents.



The feedback that is given to pupils enables them to understand the progress that they are making and the way of improving it. However, assessment for learning strategies have not permeated across the school.

Annual review reports and end of year reports offer relevant information to parents.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school has an effective pastoral system that promotes its pupils' health and wellbeing well.

The school plans purposefully for promoting staying healthy. This includes offering pupils opportunities to distribute fruit every day, grow and taste vegetables, make use of the hydrotherapy pool and attend cookery, climbing and cycling sessions.

There is a wide range of activities that add effectively to pupils' experiences and the morning session ensures that pupils settle in immediately to the school situation.

A purposeful personal and social education programme is provided, and this places appropriate emphasis on various aspects such as sex and relationships education, health, safety, hygiene and staying healthy.

Specialist services co-operate effectively as a team around the child to ensure the most appropriate provision for all pupils. This also ensures support and guidance of a high standard to staff, pupils and their families. This is a strength at the school.

The school has good links with external agencies such as Careers Wales, the police liaison officer and the social and medical services. The school includes parents fully in its processes. The individual education plans are of good quality and very effective use is made of them across the school.

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour is evidence of the effectiveness of this provision. The school has strategies in place to respond promptly to any cases of misbehaviour or bullying. Although the school collects relevant information about individuals' behaviour, the process of analysing the information has not been formalised sufficiently.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school has a supportive and inclusive ethos in which all pupils have an equal right to all the school's provision. The happy and safe atmosphere is based on respect and close co-operation between staff and pupils. The school celebrates pupils' success in line with the motto 'Llwyddo gyda'n gilydd' (Succeeding together). This helps pupils to become confident and to respond positively to their work at school.

The learning environment is good and maintains and supports teaching and learning. The school has an extensive range of appropriate resources for responding to pupils' individual needs and the requirements of the curriculum. Stimulating displays on the school walls celebrate pupils' work effectively.

The outdoor area, which includes a memorial garden, a vegetable patch and play areas, has been developed appropriately and the areas are safe and pleasant. There are clean and appropriate changing rooms and all the school's buildings and grounds are very well maintained.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Leadership: Adequate**

The headteacher, who is new to the post since half term, gives clear leadership to the life and work of the school. In a short time, she has shared her vision effectively with the senior management team, staff and governors. Robust strategies have been created to develop the school for the future.

The senior management team that has been established recently has begun the task of implementing some of the strategies, but there has been little time to show their full effect. All members of staff now have a current job description. They are aware of their role and responsibilities and co-operate well together to create an effective team. Recently, it was ensured that the whole staff had an awareness and an understanding of the strategies that have been put in place. In addition, there are now arrangements for supporting continuous professional development by offering regular opportunities for relevant training that will be linked to the school's development plan. Recently, it was ensured that the school had a wide range of appropriate procedures that are now in place and having a positive effect on pupils' achievement and on school life in general. Although the senior management team has co-operated with the headteacher to create strategies for improvement and the whole staff works together as a team, not enough time has passed to be able to measure the full effect to date.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and is keen to co-operate with the new management team in order to develop the school for the future. Through the latest management developments, they now have good information about the school. Although they are aware of the school's situation and of the strengths and areas to be developed, they recognise that they need to expand their role. They do not, at present, challenge the school sufficiently.

Positive steps have been taken to meet national priorities, particularly by committing to a number of networks of professional practice. Locally, the school has committed to the local authority's strategic plans for transforming the special educational needs service in Gwynedd.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

Until recently, the school did not have thorough enough self-evaluation processes for evaluating its own performance. The school has now created an effective system for

collecting relevant evidence for self-evaluation in the future. This includes using information about pupils' achievement and the school's performance, trends in data and monitoring various aspects of the school's work. Outcomes of self-evaluation are discussed in staff meetings. Although the self-evaluation system is not fully operational throughout the school to date, a suitable range of direct evidence has been used in the short-term to create the latest self-evaluation report. The report is comprehensive on the whole and gives an honest and evaluative picture of the school's current situation.

Although leaders have held meetings in order to explain the system and raise an awareness of everyone's role in the process, the majority of the school's staff are only just beginning to be part of the process.

The link between the self-evaluation and the school development plan has not been very clear in the past and so the previous development plan did not reflect the school's priorities fully. The new headteacher, in co-operation with the senior management team, has created an action plan on the basis of the latest self-evaluation that replaces the school development plan. This document contains the elements that emerged through the self-evaluation and identifies the necessary actions and an evaluation of progress. This is an effective tool for ensuring essential changes in the short term.

The school has an appropriate system for managing the performance of teaching staff and has planned to extend this to include support staff in the future. There is not a close enough link at present between staff training and responsibilities and the priorities of the school development plan. Recently, the school has begun to develop internal networking, which has created a team of staff who co-operate effectively. In addition, a system has been started to visit other institutions in order to share good practices. The school has responded positively to most of the recommendations in the previous report.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Links with parents and the local community are good. Nearly all parents say that they receive relevant information from the school about their children's progress and about activities. Effective use is made of local organisations and employers to offer valuable experiences to pupils in the world of work.

The school has established an effective structure with a number of external agencies in order to identify all pupils' development. This contributes well to relevant strategic planning and setting specific targets.

The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to work alongside their peers in local primary and secondary schools. Pupils at Pendalar and Foundation Phase pupils at a nearby primary school visit each other on a weekly basis in order to work together and share experiences.

The school has close links with other special schools, and recent arrangements have been put in place to co-operate with them in order to ensure the quality of assessing work and provision.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school has a good range of experienced specialist teachers and assistants who are managed well and used effectively. The contribution of support staff and health care assistants and their ability to co-operate and support pupils is an excellent element of the school's work. They are effective in their support of individual pupils, groups of pupils and in teaching sessions.

Teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment time and the school complies fully with the statutory requirements of the National Agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Work Load' (2003).

There is a wide range of appropriate resources in the classrooms and around the school. They are of a good quality and effective use is made of them to meet pupils' needs, interests and abilities. The local community offers generous and regular financial support to help the school to create a purposeful learning environment.

Considering the good standards that are achieved by pupils, the quality of teaching and support, and the effective management of resources, the school provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to pupil questionnaires**

The questionnaires were completed by 16 pupils. All pupils feel that the school teaches them to stay healthy and to do well at school. They all feel that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress. They all know what to do and to whom to speak if they find the work difficult. Nearly all feel safe at school and feel that the school deals well with any bullying, and that they can talk to someone if they have a concern. Nearly all feel that they have enough opportunities to do physical exercise.

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

The questionnaire was completed by 11 parents. They are all satisfied with the school and say that their child likes school. All parents believe that the school is well-run, that teaching is good, that their child is making good progress and that children are treated fairly and with respect. All parents believe that their child feels safe at school and that the school helps their child to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility. All parents are of the opinion that pupils behave well at school and that their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs. Nearly all parents believe that they receive regular information about their child's progress and that they understand the school's system for dealing with complaints.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Meinir Rees	Reporting Inspector
Caroline Rees	Team Inspector
William Griffiths	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Glyn Roberts	Additional Inspector
Donna Roberts	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

### Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

## Glossary of ALN terms

**ADHD:** attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

**ALN:** additional learning needs

**ASD:** Autistic Spectrum Disorders, includes Asperger's Syndrome

**ATR:** additional teacher resource

**BESD, ESBD or SEBD:** Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties

**CoP:** Code of Practice

**HI:** hearing impairment

**MSI:** multi-sensory impairment

**PMLD:** profound and multiple learning difficulties

**SpLD:** specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia

**VI:** visual impairment