



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

**A report on**

**Ysgol y Waun**

**Lloyds Lane  
Chirk  
LL14 5NH**

**Date of inspection: December 2022**

**by**

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

## About Ysgol y Waun

Name of provider	Ysgol y Waun
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Non-denominational
Number of pupils on roll	330
Pupils of statutory school age	247
Number in nursery classes	39
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 23.0%)	22.4%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 16.1%)	4.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	4.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	03/02/2014
Start date of inspection	05/12/2022

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to 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 Y Waun is a caring and inclusive school at the heart of its community. Despite being across two separate sites, the school provides a collective family feel where all pupils and families are made to feel welcome. Nearly all pupils settle quickly to school life and make rapid progress in all areas of learning. Progress in literacy skills, particularly the development of writing skills, is very successful with most pupils writing exceptionally well by the time they leave the school. This is due to the high-quality teaching and support pupils receive from all staff across the school. Most pupils make good progress in their maths skills, but they have limited opportunity to apply these skills in real-life situations.

The headteacher, all leaders and staff have developed a positive culture of teamwork. They ensure that pupils are well-cared for and that all pupils have their needs met appropriately. For example, the nurture class on The Lloyd's Lane site provides beneficial support to those pupils who need it. Across the school pupils develop positive working relationships with adults and they trust them to act in their best interests at all times. Most pupils further develop their sense of safety and well-being through regular activities in the school's forest area. As a result, nearly all pupils show respect and behave well across the school.

Leaders and staff work collaboratively to ensure that provision across both school sites is well-led and managed. They undertake a range of suitable activities to identify school strengths and areas for improvement. However, their evaluations of learning do not always identify clearly enough the areas that the school needs to focus on.

Governors and leaders monitor pupil attendance carefully and staff work closely with families providing additional support and advice when needed. Overall, the school has a generally suitable approach to health and safety and safeguarding its pupils.

## Recommendations

- R1 Address the health and safety concerns identified during the week of inspection
- R2 Refine self-evaluation processes to ensure that school development planning and grant planning targets are well focused
- R3 Improve provision to support pupils' application of their numeracy skills across the curriculum and in real-life situations

## **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 its work in improving the quality pupils' writing skills, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Most pupils start Ysgol Y Waun in the nursery class with personal and social skills at the expected level for their age. However, many pupils begin school with literacy and numeracy skills below expected levels. During their time at the school, most pupils including those with additional needs and those eligible for free school meals, make strong progress in their learning, particularly in literacy. Pupils with complex emotional and learning needs make good progress because of targeted support.

Younger pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well. They are keen to talk to visitors, ask questions and seek help with their work. As they move through school, pupils continue to make good progress and by the time they reach Year 6 they are confident to talk about their work in detail and are articulate speakers. Most pupils learn new vocabulary quickly and give clear definitions for their work. For example, when learning about evaporation, pupils explain that water changes into a gas when going into the air.

Across the school, most pupils have a love of reading. From a young age they enjoy sharing books with other pupils and are keen to share their own opinions about the content. Younger pupils develop phonic strategies for decoding words effectively and many pupils use these well to develop fluency in their reading. As a result of the impact of the pandemic, a few pupils reading skills have not reached the expected level by the time they reach Year 2. Nonetheless, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils make strong progress and maintain an enthusiasm for reading. For example, they enjoy blogging about the books they have been reading, they know who their favourite authors are, and summarise stories well. More able readers understand some of the techniques the author has used and then use this effectively in their own writing. For example, after reading about the sadness of 'Alba the Hundred-Year-Old Fish', they write their own story about climate change and use similar techniques to evoke emotion in the reader.

Most pupils make excellent progress in their writing skills, often from a low starting point. Younger pupils enjoy opportunities for mark making. As they move through the school, most pupils use a range of beneficial tools and strategies that enable them to improve their writing. Most older pupils write effectively across a range of genres communicating meaning well, for example when writing emotional letters about climate change and creating websites about the wonders of the world. More able pupils write extensive pieces of text, organising their writing effectively, including a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures. These texts engage the reader well.

Throughout their time at the school many pupils develop their mathematical and numeracy skills suitably, particularly the development of their basic number skills. Most older pupils collaborate well with others to solve problems. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills, across the curriculum and in real life situations are limited. As a result, these skills are less well-developed.

Most pupils' digital skills are appropriate for their age. Younger pupils use technology well to develop their language skills in the role play areas and by taking photographs to show their work to others. As they move through school, most pupils use a range of software to support learning across the curriculum. Older pupils have positive attitudes towards using digital technology. As a result, they are confident in exploring the use of new software and develop their ability to think logically and try new ideas to solve problems. They are not afraid to make mistakes and the most able pupils see this as an essential part of developing their digital skills. For example, Year 6 pupils understand that debugging and looking for mistakes is an important part of coding.

Across the school, most pupils have positive attitudes towards learning the Welsh language. From a young age, many pupils develop their vocabulary well and have increasing confidence to ask and respond to familiar questions. In Year 1 and 2, many pupils recite rhymes and songs using familiar Welsh phrases. With support, they use basic phrases to describe the location of their Teddy. Older pupils, build on their previous learning appropriately and by Year 6 many pupils can write a portrait about themselves, including their likes and dislikes, using a good range of set phrases.

Throughout the school most pupils develop their creative skills well. Nearly all pupils sing songs to a high standard and take pride in their artwork. Older pupils use the books they are studying and the work of famous artists, such as Lowry, as an inspiration for their work. They are confident to perform in front of others and take part in school talent shows. Most pupils develop their physical skills appropriately across the school, for example in daily morning warm up exercises and during forest school activities.

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

Nearly all pupils are polite and demonstrate caring attitudes towards each other. They behave well across the school and demonstrate respect for the contributions of others, for example by allowing others to speak or by remaining calm when others disagree with them. Nearly all pupils are ready to learn at the start of lessons and they move easily between different parts of their lessons or activities, showing good levels of self-control.

Nearly all pupils discuss their work confidently and are willing to listen to the views and ideas of others. They are enthusiastic, remain on task to complete their activities and work well both independently and with their peers. Pupils are proud that teachers celebrate their talents regularly through the learning environment, for example on the 'achievement board'.

Most pupils value feedback on their work and have positive attitudes towards making improvements. Older pupils know the value of improving their work and of re-drafting pieces of their writing, often showing great pride in their finished pieces. This helps pupils to participate fully in their learning and make strong progress in their skills, particularly in their writing skills.

Pupils across the school understand their role within the local and wider community. They develop well as ethically informed citizens and seek out opportunities to help

others. For example, the war in Ukraine prompted older pupils to collect donations to support those affected by the war. They have a sound understanding of fairness, equality and sustainability and show care and concern about global issues, such as the effects of plastic and pollution in our oceans.

Many pupils are ready to take on leadership roles and to play a full part in the life and work of the school, for example as members of the School Council, Eco Council, Digital Leaders and the Criw Cymraeg. Many of their activities contribute to worthwhile improvements to the school and in developing pupils' confidence and opportunities to take on responsibilities. For example, the School Council created a reading challenge which funded the purchase of additional reading books for the school. Members of the council represented the school in a Remembrance Day parade, developing their sense of responsibility and empathy appropriately.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. Many enjoy the exercise sessions at the start of the school day and appreciate why it's important to keep active and healthy. Most understand the dangers that may arise in their everyday lives and know what steps to take to stay safe. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of staying safe online. For example, Year 6 pupils outline the dangers that may arise as a result of unsuitable use of the internet.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school provides a nurturing environment, where all pupils feel valued. All staff know their pupils well and offer exceptional support to meet their needs. They have extremely positive working relationships with pupils, and they manage their behaviour positively and consistently. As a result, nearly all pupils behave well.

Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils and the school's curriculum challenges pupils of all abilities well. For example, in guided reading lessons, staff plan effectively to develop pupils' higher order reading skills of inference and deduction, and a phonics programme supports pupils with early reading skills well.

The school implements the principles and ethos of Curriculum for Wales appropriately and is making suitable progress with curriculum development. The whole school community contributes well to a relevant vision that aims to support pupils to become happy, proud, confident, and independent individuals. Teachers focus learning on a whole school, termly theme where collaborative planning allows staff to focus on the development of skills and the deepening of pupils' knowledge. The teaching of literacy skills, particularly writing, is systematic and progressive across the school. As a result, most pupils make high levels of progress. For example, staff in Year 4 and 5 methodically teach pupils to write descriptions of characters, create settings and develop a problem and resolution for their story entitled 'The Night Zoo'. This results in high quality imaginative writing.

Provision for the development of pupils' mental maths skills and general problem-solving skills is appropriate. Most teachers provide daily lessons which extend and develop pupils' basic number skills well. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in real-life, authentic situations.

Teachers provide high quality lessons throughout the school. They plan interesting and exciting activities that engage pupils well. For example, in Year 3 pupils are enthused when staff provide activities that encourage them to persuade others to recycle. Most teachers have a good subject knowledge and use a range of teaching strategies effectively to engage pupils' interests. For example, a letter from a famous environmental activist motivates pupils in Year 1 to learn about ways to protect our planet.

Most teachers model learning well and use questioning effectively to evaluate pupils' understanding and to stimulate their thinking. This is highly effective, particularly in older year groups where pupils' thinking is challenged appropriately. For example, when Year 5 pupils work collaboratively to solve an escape room code, their thinking is stimulated well. Across the school, support staff provide beneficial support to extend the learning of pupils of a range of abilities. In a few cases this is less well-developed, such as when the deployment of support staff in a few classes limits the opportunities for pupils to develop their independent skills.

Across the school, assessment processes are generally strong. All staff create well-defined objectives for learning, which they make clear to pupils. Teachers conduct regular progress reviews throughout lessons to encourage pupils to check their progress and to improve the standard of their work. They provide highly effective verbal and written feedback. This is particularly effective in Year 6 where staff give pupils purposeful opportunities to improve the quality of their work following verbal and written feedback. As a result of this high-quality teaching, most pupils make excellent progress in the standards of their writing.

The school's provision for personal and social education supports pupils' well-being and mental health well. For example, the 'five ways to well-being' reminders, daily check-ins, and circle time are effective strategies used by staff to review and support pupils' welfare. Whilst this provision is generally strong, planning for aspects of relationship education is at an early stage of development. The school generally provides a range of rich and exciting outdoor learning activities. Activities in the school's forest area, for example, allow pupils to learn useful cooperation and safety skills.

All teachers plan a range of worthwhile activities to promote the Welsh language as well as celebrating the heritage and culture of Wales. For example, teachers provide pupils with opportunities to celebrate 'Dydd Santes Dwynwen,' and through the promotion of roles such as Helpwr Heddiw across all classes.

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

Ysgol Y Waun is a caring and inclusive school where everyone treats each other with mutual care, trust and kindness. Close working relationships between staff and parents and carers ensure that pupils settle quickly into school and that parents have faith that the school looks after their children well.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and complex social and emotional needs is a strength of the school. The Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) has secure systems in place to ensure that pupils with additional learning needs and those in need of extra support are identified early.

There are effective procedures to identify pupils' needs, provide support and appropriate intervention. Staff review the progress of pupils well, which results in most pupils with additional needs making at least expected progress as they move through the school. The school works with partner agencies successfully and regular 'Inclusion Team Around the School' meetings ensure the school meets the needs of these pupils well by providing further guidance and professional development for staff. The school works closely with parents, and they value their input into their children's individual plans for learning. The school runs a nurture group for older pupils, which it uses flexibly to support pupils to access the wider curriculum. This supports pupils' social and emotional development well.

Opportunities for pupils to have an active role as leaders in the school are suitable. These are effective in developing all pupils' knowledge of global issues such as climate change and improving important skills. The Digital Leaders, for example, have valuable input into the school's development of digital skills.

The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their skills for life. For example, the school enterprise day teaches pupils about different ways to make money, such as buying and selling food in order to make a profit. The school enables older pupils to make decisions about how the money is spent in school. For example, pupils in Year 6 made the decision to fund a school trip.

The school provides a good range of extracurricular clubs that support pupils' physical, creative and cultural development well. The school choir sing with enthusiasm and have performed for the community at the switching on of the Chirk Christmas lights. This develops pupils' confidence and connection to their local area well.

The school keeps appropriate records of pupil attendance and absence and addresses persistent absenteeism suitably. Systems to support and challenge low attendance are applied by leaders and staff consistently. The school works well with outside agencies to address issues of poor attendance.

Leaders and staff place a strong focus on supporting and developing pupils' wellbeing and their emotional development. An important aspect of the school's work to develop a positive safeguarding culture has been to implement a new approach to encourage good behaviour for pupils. Through this work, staff have helped younger pupils to distinguish between right and wrong, and older pupils have developed their awareness of issues relating to respect, responsibility and how to be safe. However, the school's provision for Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE) is at an early stage of development. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and know who to speak to if they have a safeguarding concern about a pupil. However, inspectors brought issues related to site safety to the attention of school leaders during the inspection.

## **Leadership and management**

The vision for the school 'We are learning together, achieving more', forms a basis for the school's warm and caring ethos. All members of staff support this effectively through their positive, professional working relationships. They have a secure knowledge of their roles and responsibilities and carry them out with commitment and

enthusiasm. Leaders place high value on mutual respect, trust, and care for the whole community with pupil well-being as a priority for all. The core values of happiness, respect, inclusivity, aspiration, and creativity help to create a highly positive learning culture across the school. The school's partnership with parents is positive and the school uses digital tools successfully to ensure regular communication.

The headteacher provides calm leadership whilst developing open and honest working relationships with the whole learning community. This has enabled him to identify staff strengths and to build on them providing opportunities for staff to develop as leaders at all levels. The highly effective deputy head teacher supports the head teacher well. She provides robust challenge and support to staff and coaches them to improve their teaching skills effectively. For example, her highly successful work to develop teachers' feedback skills has had a positive impact on the standards of pupils' writing, particularly in Year 6. Senior leaders hold regular pupil progress meetings with staff and identify ways to further improve learning. This consistent approach ensures that there is a clear focus on pupil progress by all staff.

The school has a suitable programme of self-evaluation and improvement processes. These activities provide senior leaders with an appropriate understanding of the overall strengths in teaching. For example, leaders provide appropriate support to staff when needed. This results in strong progress in improving standards of teaching across the school. However, actions arising from evaluations of learning are not always sufficiently focused on the impact on outcomes for pupils. As a result, school improvement plans do not always pay enough attention to the priority areas for improvement across the whole school. For example, leaders do not measure the impact of the use of the Pupil Development Grant on the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals sufficiently well. Leaders ensure that performance management procedures link appropriately with identified actions for improvement. A focus on developing staff skills in managing pupil behaviour, for example, has led to a consistent approach across the school where pupils feel happy and are engaged in their learning.

Members of the governing body are extremely supportive of the school. They are fully aware of national and local priorities, and they have a clear understanding of the school's work to develop its curriculum in line with Curriculum for Wales. For example, they link appropriately with teachers leading each area of learning and experience which helps to give them a clear idea about the progress of this work. They pay suitable regard to the impact of poverty and encourage leaders and staff to consider the cost of the school day effectively. Governors and leaders across the school promote healthy eating and drinking well through planned curriculum arrangements and through daily activities, such as ensuring healthy drinks and snacks are readily available. They ensure that school meals are healthy and help to provide pupils with a balanced diet.

There is a strong learning culture amongst all staff. Leaders ensure that staff have good opportunities for professional learning. For example, they make good use of national professional learning opportunities such as middle leader programmes and the National Professional Qualification for Headship. This has strengthened the leadership capacity across the school. The school has good links with local universities and provides appropriate support for trainee teachers through a

mentoring programme. There is beneficial collaboration with local schools and across the region such as the ALNCo's work to improve teachers' knowledge of ALN reform. The school collaborates well with a range of partners to support pupils and to upskill staff. For example, the school's work with the local authority's 'Inclusion Team Around the School' ensures that support meets pupil needs effectively whilst also providing useful training for staff.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body 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 and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to 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 classes, including learning support groups 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 and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- 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 ([www.estyn.gov.wales](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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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