Estyn | Dros ddysgwyr, dros Gymru
For learners, for Wales

A report on

Ysgol Craig Y Don

Clarence Drive
Craig Y Don
Llandudno
Conwy
LL30 1TR

Date of inspection: February 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Ysgol Craig Y Don

Name of provider	Ysgol Craig Y Don
Local authority	Conwy County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	T2
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	304
Pupils of statutory school age	241
Number in nursery classes	30
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 22.9%)	19.7%
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 11.1%)	5.4%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	6.6%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	7.9%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/11/2016

Start date of inspection	03/02/2025

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

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

Summary

Ysgol Craig Y Don is a caring learning environment where staff and pupils show high levels of respect towards one other. Leaders provide purposeful strategic direction and create a strong culture of teamwork. They focus sharply on improvement priorities that enhance pupils' experiences, particularly in relation to their well-being, knowledge and skills.

The school delivers a rich and engaging curriculum that helps pupils explore and understand their community, Wales, and the wider world. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, which contribute to pupils' enthusiasm for learning and strong levels of engagement. They provide activities that encourage curiosity, independence, and teamwork. This allows pupils to develop valuable skills, although overall pupils do not receive enough opportunities to apply their writing and numeracy skills to a suitably challenging level in their work across the curriculum. Many pupils develop Welsh listening skills appropriately, and respond suitably to simple instructions, but are less confident in speaking Welsh. Teachers enrich pupils' learning with beneficial outdoor activities, which provide hands-on experiences that enhance creativity and physical development.

The school has effective links with external partners. Strong relationships with the community help staff to enrich pupils' experiences. Leaders maintain effective communication with other agencies to support pupils' well-being needs and to support those who have additional learning needs (ALN). Despite the school's work to promote good attendance, the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school remains too high.

Recommendations

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

R1. Provide suitably challenging opportunities for pupils to apply their writing and numeracy skills in their work across the curriculum

R2. Improve pupils' confidence in speaking Welsh

R3. Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Staff provide a highly effective, nurturing, and supportive environment that benefits all pupils. This is a strength of the school. Most pupils have very positive attitudes toward their learning, speaking enthusiastically about their work and engaging positively in activities and topics. They settle quickly as part of the morning routine by selecting from a range of activities, move around the school considerately, and develop healthy and productive working relationships with staff and peers.

Staff have worked together closely to develop a curriculum that provides pupils with a suitable breadth and depth of learning across all areas of learning and experience. This approach helps to develop their understanding and perspective of their local area, Wales, and the wider world. Staff develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. Teachers provide pupils with stimulating activities that capture their interest well. In most cases, tasks build upon prior learning, and many are based on engaging, authentic, real-life experiences. This is a notable feature of the school's work. The school has strong links with external partners that enrich pupils' experiences, such as providing ski lessons and beach safety sessions.

Younger pupils develop a range of suitable skills from an early age by engaging in purposeful activities that stimulate their interest. Teachers ensure that pupils have beneficial opportunities to apply their oracy, digital, and creative skills when completing independent tasks and collaborating on whole-school projects. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across the curriculum are less consistent. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors, for example, when developing creative skills in the mud kitchen. Most pupils work collaboratively and show perseverance when problem-solving, using specific strategies such as discussing different approaches with their peers successfully.

Generally, teachers have high expectations of pupils. This encourages pupils across the school to develop positive attitudes towards learning and high levels of engagement. Most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work, consistently using a fluent cursive handwriting style by Year 6. However, the level of challenge for older pupils when applying numeracy skills in their work across the curriculum is not always demanding enough. Staff provide useful verbal feedback during lessons and experiment with different approaches

to support pupils to improve their work. In the few strongest examples, pupils edit their own written work thoughtfully, enriching their vocabulary in response to feedback.

Most pupils develop a positive attitude towards learning Welsh. Many develop suitable listening skills, understand simple instructions and begin to convey basic information about themselves. In the few strongest cases, pupils act out dialogues with confidence when playing different roles but overall, pupils' Welsh speaking skills remain underdeveloped.

Pupils take on various roles of responsibility throughout the school, which enhances their understanding of leadership appropriately and helps to develop their self-esteem and decision-making skills. A notable example of this is the work of the Criw Cymraeg in encouraging and supporting local businesses to use Welsh signage. Additionally, most pupils have good knowledge about healthy eating and drinking and understand the importance of exercise for their well-being.

The school's provision for supporting pupils with ALN is effective. Leaders and staff cooperate well to identify pupils' needs and monitor the effectiveness of any additional support. Pupil profiles focus suitably on key information about their individual needs and personal targets, and this helps staff to plan effective interventions that improve skills, well-being, and outcomes. Teachers, external agencies and support staff collaborate to share expertise, provide appropriate challenge, and plan achievable pathways for development. As a result, most pupils with ALN make good progress over time. The school's provision for pupils with social or emotional difficulties is strong. Trained staff provide effective support to help pupils develop useful strategies to regulate and express their emotions.

The headteacher has high expectations of herself and others to provide the best experiences for all pupils. She sets a clear strategic direction for the school, ensuring that responsibilities are clear and shared appropriately. Leaders use monitoring activities purposefully to assess the school's performance regularly and identify areas for development. Consequently, leaders have made notable improvements in provision and pupils' progress within a short period of time.

Spotlight: Implementing improvement priorities in a manageable way

Leaders identify areas for improvement accurately. They consider various approaches to improve aspects of the provision, considering the likely impact on pupils' skills. They identify clear actions and articulate them clearly to all staff. They prioritise thoughtfully and consider the most urgent matters. In addition, they think carefully about the capacity of the workforce to make timely changes. They ensure that they focus on specific aspects in a manageable way, arrange suitable training and support where appropriate and allow

time to embed new practices before moving on to address other priorities. As a result, staff operate effective with a strong team ethos. They embrace new approaches with enthusiasm and resilience, which has a positive impact on pupils' experiences.

Leaders ensure that performance management targets and professional learning opportunities align closely with the school's current priorities. They facilitate whole-school training, which has led to developing consistent approaches in important aspects of the provision. For example, staff have successfully implemented agreed approaches to promoting positive behaviour and fostering independent learning that have had a positive impact on pupil well-being.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's context, strengths, and areas for development. They receive valuable opportunities to familiarise themselves with the school and learning environment, such as participating in learning walks with members of the school council. Despite the school's ongoing efforts, including working with the local authority and external agencies to address poor attendance, the number of pupils who are persistently absent remains too high.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern

The school's arrangements for site management do not give any cause for concern

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking

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

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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references 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 (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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Publication date: 07/04/2025