



Report summary for parents and carers on Ysgol Pen Coch Special School

Date of inspection: November 2024

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

Summary

The culture at Ysgol Pen Coch is securely rooted in the value of “every child, every chance, every day”. The culture permeates every aspect of the school’s life and work.

The headteacher demonstrates calm and purposeful leadership, ably supported by both senior and middle leaders. Together, they collaborate effectively to maintain a school environment where pupils are happy, eager to attend, and make significant progress in their learning.

Ysgol Pen Coch offers a stimulating and nurturing learning environment for pupils. Strong, positive relationships between the dedicated staff and their pupils, built on respect and trust, foster a happy and supportive community where pupils feel valued and safe. The staff work tirelessly to help pupils reach their full potential, celebrating their achievements with enthusiasm. As a result, most pupils make strong progress across all areas of learning and demonstrate very positive attitudes towards their learning.

All pupils at the school have additional learning needs and have a statement of educational needs or an individual development plan (IDP). Leaders and staff have secured an extensive range of high-quality specialist provision, which meets the needs of all pupils successfully. Teaching staff know the pupils well, have a clear understanding of pupils’ additional learning needs and flexibly approach and adapt learning experiences in response to these needs and the well-being of pupils. Further, teaching staff have a beneficial focus on developing pupils’ skills in important areas of learning which relate well to the individual needs of the pupils.

Staff consistently and effectively use a range of communication strategies to meet the wide range of pupils’ needs. As a result nearly all pupils develop their communication skills well during their time at the school. Further, across the school there are thoughtfully planned and consistent approaches to meet pupils’ sensory needs. Staff have developed stimulating learning environments with a range of appealing resources, which enable pupils to explore and learn safely.

The school maintains a strong focus on delivering an exciting and engaging curriculum that effectively meets the needs of every pupil well. This includes valuable opportunities for pupils to develop healthy lifestyles and build positive relationships.

The school collaborates effectively with a range of professionals to support pupils to overcome individual challenges. Staff have developed a range of high-quality therapeutic approaches, which supports pupils’ well-being and progress successfully.

The school has a positive approach to supporting pupil behaviour. Leaders carefully track and analyse behavioural trends and use this information to make meaningful changes. For example, skilfully identifying the root causes of behaviours and teaching pupils the skills or strategies needed to support their communication needs and manage their emotions.

The school has established highly effective arrangements to support pupils to transition to their next school. In the very few cases where pupils need additional support to visit their new school, staff make innovative use of the virtual reality room to familiarise them with the sights and sounds of their new school.

Leaders have conducted a suitable range of quality assurance activities. There is an appropriate range of first-hand gathering exercises that take place over the year. However, it is unclear how the identified strengths are shared more widely in the school, or whether these are evaluated and shared with the governing body.

Recommendations and next steps

We have made one recommendation to help the school continue to improve:

R1 Strengthen self-evaluation processes to inform the strategic direction of the school

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

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#).

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