

**Report summary for parents
and carers on Ysgol
Maesydderwen**

Date of inspection: January 2025

Summary

Ysgol Maesydderwen provides a supportive environment where pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff. As a result, many pupils feel safe in school and believe that the school will deal well with any instances of bullying. The majority of teachers have strong subject knowledge and offer pupils clear explanations, helping them to develop their understanding. In these lessons, pupils engage well in their learning, behave positively, and participate in discussions with confidence. However, in a minority of cases, the quality of teaching is poor and as a result, a minority of pupils make limited progress.

In the minority of lessons, teachers' expectations are too low, and pupils are not offered enough challenge. Tasks do not support deeper learning, and teachers do not always use questioning effectively to develop pupils' thinking. Written feedback is often too broad, meaning pupils are unsure how to improve their work. In addition, opportunities for extended writing and numeracy development across the curriculum are limited. In the sixth form, most pupils contribute well in lessons and feel well-prepared for their next steps in education or employment.

The school offers a broad curriculum with a good balance of general and vocational subjects. Pupils receive helpful guidance when choosing courses, and recent curriculum adaptations aim to support those at risk of underachievement. Pupils in the 'Haven' specialist teaching facility (STF) thrive in a nurturing environment with experienced staff who tailor the curriculum to their needs. The school also provides valuable extra-curricular activities, that help pupils develop their skills and interests beyond the classroom.

The school places high importance on pupils' well-being. Most feel safe at school and know where to seek support if needed. The school's behaviour policy is beginning to have a positive impact, and reward systems help to encourage good attitudes to learning. Attendance initiatives are showing early signs of impact, particularly for pupils eligible for free school meals, though overall attendance remains very low and well below pre-pandemic levels.

In general, senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's work, but subject leaders' tend to be too generous. Overall, leadership has not had a strong enough impact on improving crucial aspects of the school's work, particularly in improving the quality of teaching and its impact on pupil progress or the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

Recommendations and next steps

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

- R1 Improve the quality of teaching to raise expectations and provide appropriate challenge for all pupils, including those with additional learning needs
- R2 Strengthen leadership to ensure leaders at all levels evaluate their work accurately and robustly, and secure the improvements required
- R3 Improve cross-curricular planning to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills progressively
- R4 Improve attendance

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. This is the most intensive level of statutory follow-up. Estyn will monitor the school's progress on a termly basis following the publication of the inspection report.

Full Report

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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