

# All-age

## Schools Data

**27****29****31**

No. of schools in 2023

No. of schools in 2024

No. of schools in 2025

## Pupils Data

**30,744****1,992****6,398**

All pupils

No. of pupils aged under 5

No. of pupils aged 5 to 10

**20,231****2,123****18.3%**

No. of pupils aged 11 to 15

No. of pupils aged 16 and over

eFSM (Aged 5-15)

**2.3%****29.1%****8.1%**

EAL A-C (Aged 5-15)

Able to speak Welsh (Aged 5-15)

Pupils with additional learning needs (Aged 5-15)

**Source:** PLASC – Schools' census results: January 2025

## Follow-up Data

No. in FU September 2024

ER: **3** SM: **1**

No. removed 2024-2025

ER: **2**

No. went into FU after core inspection 2024-2025

## Inspection activity

No. of core inspections: **6, 3 of which had a sixth-form**No. of interim visits: **5**Welsh-medium: **7**English-medium: **4**

Total in FU August 2025

ER: 1 SM: 1 SI: 2

## Summary

The all-age sector in Wales continued to grow in number. These schools cater for pupils from the age of three or four, through to 16, with about half also including sixth-form provision. In the strongest cases, leaders ensured that pupils' learning was carefully planned to provide continuity across the full age range; they knew pupils well, met their well-being needs effectively, and provided appropriate support for their families. Others had not yet realised the opportunities that the through-school context provides. These were often, but not always, cases where the all-age school was in its infancy. In addition to inspections, we also conducted five interim visits during the year. These provided valuable opportunities to have professional discussions with school leaders about the progress the school is making to address recommendations from their previous inspection.

## Teaching and learning

Across nearly all schools, most pupils displayed positive attitudes towards learning. Most engaged respectfully with their peers and teachers and generally behaved well during lessons. Generally, many made at least adequate progress, and a few made strong progress. Many teachers established supportive and positive classroom environments, creating conditions that enabled most pupils to learn effectively. However, in a minority of cases, particularly in secondary phases, teachers' expectations were insufficiently ambitious, leading to limited pupil engagement and reduced progress.

In many instances, teachers planned and delivered effective learning activities. These teachers had strong subject knowledge, provided clear explanations, and used questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding. Despite these strengths, a minority of lessons remained overly teacher-led, restricting pupils' independence and limiting their opportunities to develop critical thinking skills. As a result, a minority of pupils became overly reliant on teacher direction, particularly in upper school classes. Additionally, the overuse of poorly designed worksheets in a few instances hindered pupils' ability to engage deeply with learning tasks and produce extended written work.

Provision for pupils to progressively develop their literacy, numeracy, and digital skills varied significantly. In many cases, schools did not plan coherently enough for progressive skill development across the curriculum, limiting opportunities for pupils to apply and extend their skills meaningfully. As a result, while many pupils acquired basic literacy and numeracy skills suitably, their opportunities to develop further skills, such as advanced or complex numeracy tasks in their work across the curriculum, were limited. Too often, when schools planned opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in their work across the curriculum, these tasks offered insufficient challenge and progression for pupils. Many pupils acquired appropriate basic digital skills, although very few schools planned systematically for pupils to apply more advanced digital skills across different subjects. Similarly, in many cases, schools did not plan the curriculum in a progressive manner across the age-groups. The strongest aspect in this regard included a majority of schools with

well-coordinated provision to develop pupils' health, well-being and personal and social education across the age-range. Overall, most schools succeeded in providing pupils with broad and balanced curricular experiences.

## **Well-being, care, support and guidance**

Nearly all schools prioritised pupil well-being effectively, creating inclusive and caring environments where most pupils felt valued, safe, and well-supported. Pastoral care and emotional support systems were generally strong, with many schools providing effective tailored interventions to meet pupils' emotional, social, and behavioural needs.

### **Working with the community to support pupils' well-being at Ysgol Henry Richard**

Leaders identified the need to ensure that pupils and families receive information about how to stay safe during the summer holidays. Staff organised a valuable family health and well-being market called 'Llwybrau Lles'. This was an opportunity for families to visit information stands run by pupils and staff, along with a range of external partners. Emphasis was placed on pupils' interests. For example, information was provided on how to stay safe at the beach, online and in agricultural contexts. Valuable information was also presented about healthy eating, mental health and period dignity to help pupils develop their understanding of their personal health and well-being over the holiday period.

Attendance remained a concern for many schools. A majority had implemented robust monitoring systems and targeted interventions leading to improvements. Many engaged well with parents to highlight the importance of regular school attendance. Persistent absenteeism remained an ongoing challenge, particularly among secondary-aged pupils, with schools continuing to develop strategies to address this. However, attendance remains below pre-pandemic levels and most schools received a recommendation relating to improving attendance.

Provision for pupils with ALN was generally effective. In many cases, schools identified pupils' needs early and provided beneficial, targeted support. As a result, many pupils with ALN made suitable or strong progress towards their individual targets.

## **Leading and improving**

The quality and effectiveness of leadership across schools was mixed, with clear strengths and notable areas for improvement. In many cases, headteachers provided purposeful leadership with clearly communicated visions that promoted high expectations among staff and pupils. Despite this, leadership structures and responsibilities in a minority of schools were not clearly defined or consistently applied, limiting strategic coherence and accountability. These were contributing factors limiting the progressive development of pupils' skills between phases in those schools that have not yet fully realised the ethos of one all-age school. Overlapping responsibilities and unclear lines of management in these cases led to inefficiencies and reduced the effectiveness of improvement strategies.

In many schools, self-evaluation processes provided leaders with suitable awareness of strengths and areas requiring improvement. However, these processes did not consistently measure the direct impact of provision on pupil outcomes effectively enough. Improvement planning often included relevant targets, but success criteria frequently focused on completion of actions rather than clear impacts on pupil learning and progress. Consequently, while schools regularly identified areas for improvement, the effectiveness and precision of improvement actions varied significantly.

Resource management, including budget control, remained a challenge for a minority of schools. In a few cases, schools faced substantial budget deficits due to structural inefficiencies and insufficiently robust financial oversight. Addressing these budgetary challenges is crucial for sustaining improvement and ensuring that resources are deployed effectively to support pupil outcomes.

Overall, while most schools effectively supported pupils' attitudes to learning and emotional well-being, the coherent strategic planning to improve teaching practices, attendance, skill development, and leadership effectiveness was too variable.

## Follow-up

Two schools in Estyn review from the last academic year were reviewed in a panel with the local authority and were removed from the list of providers requiring follow-up activity. One all-age school has been in special measures since May 2022. It has been monitored each term where progress was found to be insufficient, and it remains in special measures.

Six all-age schools were inspected this year. Four schools did not require follow-up, but two were deemed in need of significant improvement. The main reasons for this level of follow-up were related to deficiencies in teaching, along with the limited impact that leaders have had on improving the provision.

## Overview of recommendations from inspections

There were inspections in six all-age providers, with a total of 23 recommendations given, and two providers were placed in a follow-up category.

Six providers (100%) were given at least one recommendation related to **teaching and learning**, two of which were placed in a follow-up category:

- Two providers were recommended to improve the quality and consistency feedback
- One provider was recommended to increase the use of occasional Welsh in English-medium lessons in order to encourage pupils to use Welsh more confidently
- Three providers were given a recommendation about skills development or application; one of the providers in a follow-up category was recommended to provide meaningful challenge, and the other two providers were recommended to ensure or strengthen provision to develop pupils' skills
- Both providers in a follow-up category were given a recommendation to improve the quality of teaching

Five providers (83%) received at least one recommendation related to **well-being, care, support and guidance**, one of which was placed in follow-up category:

- All five were recommended to improve attendance (one of which was in a follow-up category)

- One provider in follow-up was recommended to address the safeguarding issues identified during the inspection

Five providers (83%) were given at least one recommendation related to **leading and improving**, two of which were placed in a follow-up category:

- Three providers were given recommendations about self-evaluation and improvement planning
- Two providers were given two recommendations about leadership:
  - The provider in follow-up was recommended to strengthen the strategic leadership and provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills and to establish robust and consistent line management arrangements to ensure that leaders hold staff accountable for their work and give full consideration to the development of pupils in a school of all ages
  - The other provider was recommended to implement a coherent leadership structure in order to drive school improvement effectively and to strengthen resource management
- One, in a follow-up category, was recommended to ensure that it meets the statutory requirement for pupils to study Welsh up to the age of 16