

Ysgol Bryn Castell

Community Day Special School



'Together we can achieve ...'

Prospectus 2025-26

Bryncethin Campus, Abergarw Road, Brynmenyn, CF32 9NZ

Phone 01656 815595

Fax: 01656 815599

<http://www.ysgolbryncastell.co.uk/>

Headteacher

Helen Ridout

Chair of Governors

Phil Aubrey

Dear Parents/Carers,

Ysgol Bryn Castell is a community day special school, which provides education for pupils aged 7 to 19 years old with complex emotional, social and behavioural special educational needs alongside specific learning difficulties and other additional learning needs.

We are a caring, small school that is able to offer an independent package of support for your son/daughter, to enable them to achieve and enjoy their schooling. For many pupils, their admission to YBC can represent the start of a positive learning experience, which many pupils may not have encountered for a significant period of time.

At YBC we encourage all pupils to get back into learning; we want them to take responsibility for their learning, and to become resilient, resourceful and reflective young people.

We want to create a school environment where children are safe and secure, where they enjoy their learning and have the opportunity to develop their talents. We want to provide a stimulating curriculum that encourages curiosity and values independent thought. All our staff are committed to these aims and continually strive to provide the highest quality education we can for your child.

All staff value the quality of teaching and the strong pastoral care of our pupils and are dedicated to doing their best for all the children in the school. They look to develop a constructive relationship with Parents/Carers so that we can genuinely work together to help and support all pupils to achieve their best.

I hope you find the content of this prospectus informative and look forward to welcoming you to the school at one of our events. Additional information in our Annual Report to Parents and on the school website <http://www.ysgolbryncastell.co.uk/>.

Helen Ridout
Headteacher

The School Day

Monday - Thursday

08.50 - 09.10 Registration

09.10 - 9.30 Session 1

9.30 - 10.00 Session 2

10.00 - 10.30 Session 3

10.30 - 11.00 Session 4

Break

11.15 - 11.45 Session 5

11.45 - 12.15 Session 6

12.15 - 12.45 Session 7

12.45 - 13.15 Session 8

Lunch

14.05 - 14.10 Registration

14:10 - 14:40 Session 9

14.40 - 15.10 Session 10

15.10 - 15.20 Hand-over/ taxis

Friday Afternoon

14.05 - 14.45 Session 9/10 including Registration
Hand-over/ taxis

Term dates 2025-26

Autumn Term 2025



Start: Monday 1 September 2025

Half-term: Monday 27 October 2025 - Friday 31 October 2025

End: Friday 19 December 2025

Spring Term 2026



Start: Monday 5 January 2026

Half-term: Monday 16 February 2026 - Friday 20 February 2026

End: Friday 27 March 2026

Summer Term 2026



Start: Monday 13 April 2026

Half-term: Monday 25 May 2026 - Friday 29 May 2026

End: Monday 20 July 2026

Attendance

Regular attendance at school is not just a legal requirement - it is essential if pupils are going to learn and progress well. It is hoped that parents will work with staff to make sure pupils miss as little school as possible. On all occasions of absence, parents **must** phone school on the first day of sickness.

All attendance is carefully recorded in school and, by law; we must know the reason for any absence. Some reasons are regarded as acceptable and are called "authorised absence"; others are not and are regarded as unauthorised absence/truancy.

What does "authorised absence" mean? The school can authorise absence only in the following circumstances: -

- **Sickness** - on the evidence of a letter or a telephone call from a parent/carer or, for longer absence, a doctor's note;
- **Religious observance** - on the day set aside for this purpose by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs
- **Lack of suitable transport** - if this has not been provided and the school is not within walking distance (for those qualifying for transport);
- **Public performance** - where participation has been agreed in advance with the school;
- **Annual holidays during term time** - subject to approval by the Headteacher and the total time not exceeding 10 school days. Parents/carers are strongly encouraged **not** to take pupils on holiday during term time;
- **Exceptional circumstances** - at the Headteacher's discretion.

Parents should understand that the school would usually need evidence to enable the decision to be made to authorise an absence. The school is not permitted to authorise shopping trips, waiting for workmen, looking after relatives etc. Dental and doctor appointments should also be made outside school hours, unless it is an emergency.

Any absence that is not authorised can make parents liable to prosecution because they have a duty to ensure their children attend school. We will always contact parents when such absence occurs. The absence record will also form part of the pupil's annual report.

It is essential that your child benefits from the education on offer at Ysgol Bryn Castell, every day. Please help us to ensure you child does not waste a single opportunity.

Attendance Information

Year	Total attendance (%)	Authorised absences (%)	Unauthorised absences (%)
2021-22	68.1	13.4	18.5
2022-23	68.1	11.7	20.2
2023-24	70.3	11.2	17.6

2024-25			
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The Curriculum

YBC's curriculum recognises the importance of child development and considers the five developmental pathways, which are fundamental to the development of all learners and used to ensure learners are supported to make progress at their own pace and in their preferred learning environment:

- Belonging
- Communication
- Exploration
- Physical development
- Well-being

The pathways are child-centred and are interdependent, having equal value in supporting overall development and progress.

The Curriculum for Wales at YBC is taught through an inter-disciplinary approach that is underpinned by the four purposes. The four purposes are the starting point and aspiration for YBC's curriculum, enabling each learner to develop in the ways described in the four purposes, supporting learners to become:

- Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Monitoring and assessment of pupils' work takes place continuously. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in the setting of their own targets and in assessing to what extent these have been met. This process starts from the very beginning, when the youngest children are perhaps, simply asked to look at a piece of work they have completed. As they grow and develop and as communication skills increase they may be asked to comment and say how it could be improved.

Pupils and staff use a range of methods to record work and to monitor progress. In addition to the more usual methods of writing and drawing, models, photographs, computers, audio and videos are all used.

Learning styles vary from pupil to pupil. This is taken into account when lessons are planned and teaching styles are therefore equally varied. Although a mixture of whole class, group and individual teaching is usually appropriate, the exact balance between these depends upon the needs of the class and the individual.

Interactive learning is highly valued with practical lessons and educational visits common features of the school week for all classes. To enhance the curriculum and make it

meaningful we devise a comprehensive programme of educational visits for each class group throughout the year, so that the children have access to a range of learning experiences.

Pupils are assessed during the first few weeks after school entry to enable staff to set appropriate targets for each individual child.

The Curriculum at YBC is built around the 6 Areas of Learning and Experience.

Language, Literacy and Communication

English is an integral part of all other subject lessons through literacy across the curriculum. Termly targets are set according to the needs of individual pupils. Pupils with similar targets may then be grouped accordingly. The targets set are carefully chosen to ensure that pupils succeed, therefore developing confidence and a positive attitude to work. Pupils work towards individual or group targets in reading, writing, and speaking and listening whilst experiencing the full range of literature. A great emphasis is placed on the development of communication throughout the entire school day. A range of additional systems are used at YBC with those pupils who require extra support in learning to communicate. The development of communication skills is supported through interventions offered by our Speech and Language Therapist and through individual and group sessions with our specialist Basic Skills Special Support Officer.

Welsh is taught as a second language to all students until the end of KS4 through discrete lessons. This is reinforced through incidental Welsh throughout the school day and bilingual signs are evident throughout the school. Craft, games, ICT and animation are used as a stimulus for language, allowing pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in a risk-free setting. The school celebrates and promotes 'Welshness' through the annual School Eisteddfod in March and regular Community Based Education opportunities.

Pupils learn a modern foreign language in cross-curricular themes in discrete lessons. Food technology, games, ICT and animation are used as a stimulus for language, allowing pupils to develop their language skills in a risk-free setting.

Maths and Numeracy

Mathematics is taught during dedicated lessons and through other subject lessons through numeracy across the curriculum. Most pupils start the lesson as a whole class or 1-2 class groups with rote counting or quick recall of number facts, and this is followed by small group or individual work based upon individual assessments and targets in the key areas of mathematical thinking as set out in the curriculum and strategy.

Our foremost aim is to ensure that as far as possible all pupils develop mathematical confidence in the practical situations of everyday life and that they develop a positive attitude to the subject. The development of numerical skills is supported through individual and group interventions offered by our specialist Basic Skills Special Support Officer.

Science and Technology

We aim to develop inquiring minds so that pupils may explore their surroundings to understand the world around them and to develop their own strategies to help them solve problems. Pupils can work independently and co-operatively to share ideas, formulate hypotheses and modify their thoughts in the light of their experiences.

Pupils are given opportunities to further develop their ICT skills across the curriculum. The school uses a range of ICT equipment across subject areas such as kindles, iPads, Mac computers and animation equipment. Pupils are given the opportunity to use ICT equipment to; communicate with others (individuals and the wider community), solve problems, process information, store and retrieve information, consolidate concepts learned in other areas and develop e-safety strategies. ICT enhances learning by providing access to new experiences and promotes wellbeing through the development of e-safety self-management skills and familiarity with equipment.

Design and Technology offers pupils the opportunity to take part in creative practical activities that involve observing, identifying, investigating, exploring, categorizing, modelling, planning, making and evaluating. Food technology provides many important cross-curricular opportunities for learning during enjoyable and often highly motivating activities e.g. the change of liquids to solids, following instructions and procedures, turn-taking, basic safety and hygiene rules. During such activities staff respect religious and dietary requirements.

Humanities

The children have opportunities to learn about other countries and cultures world-wide. We aim to ensure that pupils gain knowledge and understanding of the environment and in particular their local area by providing them with a range of concrete experiences that can then be further developed in the classroom setting. All pupils take part in Community Based Education experiences, which reinforce the appropriate behaviour and social skills within society whilst improving their knowledge of the local area.

We aim to promote spiritual awareness and to develop personal responses to issues regarding beliefs, attitudes and values. We make available to our children the opportunity to experience the rich variety of cultures. Pupils are encouraged to develop awareness of the world around them and thinking and communication skills by looking at the diverse societies and cultures around the world. Throughout the calendar year pupils will take part in festivals and significant events such as; Holocaust Memorial Day, Rosh Hashanah, Harvest festival, St David's Day etc. A collective worship is held at the beginning of each school day and is of a broadly Christian nature. The Headteacher is happy to discuss any concerns parents may have.

Expressive Arts

Pupils are encouraged to experiment with and explore materials and techniques, developing skills to make images and models using a variety of media in order to explore and make sense of the world. Pupils explore the expressive elements of sound and music using voice, percussion and electronic instruments. They have the opportunity to listen to a wide variety of music and organised sounds in order to develop various skills.

Health and Wellbeing

We provide opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of themselves and others as individuals thus promoting mutual respect and understanding. There is an emphasis on personal, social and emotional development throughout all aspects of schooling at Ysgol Bryn Castell, through the formal curriculum, less formal social situations, Community Based Education and through support offered by our Learning Recovery Department.

We develop body awareness and provide learning experiences in which movement and skill development plays a significant role. The development of social and community skills such as turn taking are given a prominent role during all aspects of physical education.

Relationships and Sexuality Education

The Governing Body believes that Relationships and Sexuality Education should not be taught as an isolated subject, but as a natural part of children learning about themselves and their relationships with each other. It is therefore taught with sensitivity appropriate to the child's age throughout their school life, within class groups, and during individual and small group discussions according to pupil needs.

Careers

Pupils within KS4 and Post-16 study Careers in discrete lessons and through cross-curricular themes, alongside individual and small group support from Careers Wales.

Pupils within year 11 and Post-16 are given the opportunity to participate in Work Experience weeks in order to develop their awareness of the world of work and further develop their personal skills.

Accredited courses

YBC offers a range of accredited courses to enable pupils within KS4 and Post-16 to achieve qualifications. Pupils are encouraged to make choices about the courses and subjects which they wish to study through discussions with Parents/Carers, Careers Wales Advisors and school staff.

Options at KS4 include;

- GCSEs
- BTECs
- Agored Cymru qualifications
- Entry Pathways qualifications

Child Protection Policy and Guidelines

All visitors should report to reception on arrival at YBC.

This School recognises its prime responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of its children. Children have a right to feel secure and cannot learn effectively unless they do so. Parents, carers and other people can harm children either by direct acts or failure to provide proper care or both.

The school reserves the right to contact Social Services or the Police, without notifying parents.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors & volunteers working in the school.

Specifically the school will follow the procedures set out by the Local Authority and endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued

You should contact either Sean Jenks or Jane Marsh if you have any concerns/worries.

Their role is to:

- Make contact with the right people in the authority
- Act as a source of support and advice in school
- Liaise with Head teacher to inform him/her of any issues and on-going investigations and ensure there is always cover for this role

If a child/parent confides in a member of staff:

- You will be given undivided attention and listened to carefully
- You will be shown concern, support and warmth
- You will be allowed to tell what you want to say
- You will not have to repeat the information to different people within the school
- The staff member will make careful records of what was said, straight away, record the time, date, place and people who were present, as well as what was said, using your own language
- You WILL NOT be asked for lots of details about the alleged event(s)
- Staff cannot make promises they can't keep, such as total confidentiality

As detailed within the Home School Agreement

The School will;

- Care for your child's welfare and safety
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum and meet their individual needs.
- Work towards achieving high standards of work and behaviour
- Promote good relationships and a developing sense of responsibility
- Keep you informed about school and your child's progress in particular
- Be open and welcoming towards Parents/Carers and value their knowledge and opinions
- Contact Parents/Carers if there are concerns about behaviour, attendance, punctuality or school uniform

Parents/Carers will undertake to;

- See that my child goes to school regularly and all absences are properly notified
- Keep the school informed of any concerns or problems that might affect my child's work, attendance or behaviour
- Work with the school to try to make sure that my child behaves well
- Support my child when undertaking homework and other opportunities for home learning
- Attend Parents/Carers' meetings, reviews and discussions about my child's progress whenever possible
- Keep informed about my child's school life

The pupil will: -

- Attend school regularly
- Wear the school uniform
- Do my classwork and homework as well as I can
- Be polite and helpful to others
- Keep the school free from litter and look after all school property
- Follow the school rules

ALN POLICY

All the pupils at YBC have Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

Admissions Policy

The school admits pupils irrespective of their gender, race and/or disability provided that there are good prospects of meeting their needs without unduly prejudicing the education and the welfare of other pupils. Also, in a situation where the School felt unable to provide or make available any specialist help required either due to lack of resources or local availability then a student's special needs might inform the decision of whether or not to accept the student.

Admissions are managed through a Local Authority Panel.

Identification and Assessment

The School aims to identify pupils with any additional needs (not those identified on admission to the School) by:

- a) The screening of students promptly after admission through a baseline assessment package
- b) Subject teachers, Tutors and other pastoral-care staff being alert to evidence of the special needs of pupils and where appropriate, referring them for assessment to the ALN Co-ordinator, or where necessary, to relevant outside specialists or health professionals

In the case of learning difficulties, assessment may be made by:

- The School's ALN Co-ordinator
- Subject specialists
- Basic Skills Special Support Officer
- Educational Psychologist

In the case of medical/health problems, assessment may be made by:

- By appropriate health professionals (e.g. Doctor, Occupational Therapist Speech Therapist, Physiotherapist etc.)

In the case of emotional/social difficulties, assessment may be made by:

- An Educational Psychologist
- Subject specialists

Multi-agency collaboration

The Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCO) liaises with other supportive agencies to develop good working relationships.

We try to achieve a good relationship for information sharing, collaboration and understanding with other professionals in order to take into account the complete needs of the child. We gather information on relevant contacts and services to share with parents.

Equal Opportunities

Ysgol Bryn Castell is committed to the principle of equal opportunity for all, regardless of gender, age, religion, race, ability and socio-economic background. Any initiatives to further the principle of equal opportunities are encouraged and supported.

We promote an atmosphere of 'openness', welcoming everyone to the school. Displays around the school are of a high quality and reflect diversity across all aspects of equality and opportunity.

We encourage a high expectation of all pupils, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or social background. All pupils are encouraged to improve on their own achievements and not to measure themselves against others.

Finally, the school strives to provide an environment in which all pupils have equal access to all facilities and resources

YBC is an inclusive school that aims to enable **every child** to be the best that they can be and to leave the school with a positive caring attitude that enables them to play a positive role in the world in which they live.

Charging Policy

For full detail please request a copy of the policy, here are some examples:

School Trips

Day Trips. No charge will be made in respect of day trips that take place during school hours, or are part of the curriculum.

Residential trips (essential) - For residential trips which are essential to Curriculum for Wales or in preparation for prescribed examinations, a charge may be made for board and lodging.

Residential trips (non-essential) -For residential trips that are not essential to the Curriculum for Wales or in preparation for prescribed examinations:

- a. If the amount of school time on the trip is less than half of the total time of the trip, a charge will be made up to the full cost of the trip.
- b. If the amount of school time on the trip is half or more of the total time of the trip, a charge will be made for board and lodging.

Materials & Textbooks

Where a pupil or parent wishes to retain items produced as a result of art, craft and design, or design and technology, a charge may be levied for the cost of the materials used. In the case of Food Technology, the school usually provides ingredients.

Textbooks are provided free of charge.

Activities Outside School Hours

No charge will be made for activities outside school hours that are part of the National Curriculum or religious education, or that form an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination. For all other activities outside school hours, a charge up to the cost of the activity may be levied.

Damage/Loss to Property

A charge will be levied in respect of intentional/wilful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials). The charge to be levied will be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost, as the Headteacher may decide.

Music Tuition

The school does not levy charges in respect of individual music tuition, and group music tuition up to and including 4 persons.

Voluntary Contributions

Where the school cannot levy charges, and it is not possible to make these additional activities within the resources ordinarily available to the school, the school may request or invite parents to make a contribution towards the cost of the trip. Pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request or invitation. However, where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, then it will be cancelled.

School Meals

No charge will be made to children eligible for Free School Meals. The school will charge all pupils not entitled to Free School Meals an amount determined by the local authority.

Use of the Welsh Language

The medium of teaching and day-to-day communication is English. Welsh is taught across the age and ability range as a second language to all students until the end of KS4.

Incidental references in Welsh feature in all lessons, as appropriate, and bilingual signs are evident throughout the school.

The school celebrates and promotes 'Welshness' in various ways, with the annual School Eisteddfod in March being one of the highlights.

Health and wellbeing at YBC

Physical Education

Physical Education and Sport plays a major part in the curricular and extra-curricular life of the school. We encourage all our students to develop an appreciation of health and fitness with the benefits of following an active lifestyle.

Facilities

Our superb range of facilities include a fitness suite, a sports hall and a new astro-turf football pitch. We also use facilities in the community.

Extra-curricular Activities

All pupils have the opportunity to get involved in both competitive and non-competitive activities during lunchtime and after school. The school enters teams in competitive leagues and tournaments in football, basketball, netball, and athletics.

Action Taken to Develop or Strengthen Links with the Community

The school enjoys its strong links with the local community. Regular visitors include representatives of the local community and faith groups

Pupils take part in many trips and activities to promote and develop community links; some examples are listed below;

Visits to Bryngarw	Fishing Trips
Harvest Festival	Police Liaison Officer visits
Holocaust Memorial Service	Football games
Children in Need	Football Tournaments
Christmas Celebration	Llangranog residential visit
Porthcawl Panto visit	School choir
Eisteddfod	INTO film festival
Summer fete	Go Karting
Dream day	Duke of Edinburgh
Theatre trips	

Business and Entrepreneurial Skills

This activity gives responsibility to pupils for devising and running a business that requires skills of problem solving, teamwork and creativity, as well as an awareness of financing, organising, advertising and planning. The pupils continue to be successful in running 'Y Cwpan Fach' coffee shop and several other smaller businesses. The pupils also benefit from visits from experienced members of our community to discuss and share their expertise.

Environmental Awareness and Eco Schools Programme

The school first achieved Green Flag status in March 2013 due to the hard work of both pupils and staff and this has been maintained to the present day. The pupils have learnt about a variety of ecological issues and how these can be combated. The children have made, and carried out plans to address these areas following an evaluation and creation of action plans and monitoring systems.

The importance of conservation and reduction of human impact on the environment is raised through Fair Trade Days and 'World Food Days' where pupils plan activities to ensure the whole school has opportunities to consider how they could help our planet. This is alongside numerous fund-raising events for a number of national and local charities

Our 'Y Cwpan Fach' coffee shop supports our aims by using FairTrade produce. Thank you to all of those who support this initiative.

Friends of YBC (Parents and the School)

Our 'Friends of YBC' organisation work tirelessly to organise annual events and pupils enjoy regular donations towards classroom resources, activities and visits.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school directly if you would like to contribute to the Friends of YBC organisation - we would welcome support.

Public Access to Documents

Parents are entitled to have access to the following documents, copies of which are held in the school, and are available on request from the Head teacher:

- The Local Education Authority's Statement of Curriculum Policy
- All Welsh Office Statutory instruments, circulars and memoranda
- All published Estyn (Inspection) Reports, which refer expressly to the school
- All current schemes of work used by the teachers at the school
- A full copy of the Complaints Procedure

In addition to these statutory documents the following are always available on request:

- Curriculum for Wales documents
- Governors' Policies
- Constitution of the Friends of the School
- Latest minutes of the meeting of the Governors of the school and of the Friends of the School Committee
- A copy of the prospectus (es)

Dealing with complaints about curriculum matters

Ysgol Bryn Castell strongly believes that many potential concerns or complaints can best be resolved early at an informal level. This may be in discussion with the Headteacher, member(s) of staff, officers of the Local Authority or School Governors.

A record of any complaint is kept and wherever possible it is resolved quickly and fairly. If the person making the complaint is not satisfied and wishes to formally complain, the

Governing Body will ask for this complaint to be made in writing to reduce any misunderstandings. The matter is discussed and the complainant informed of the decision and or action to be taken. If the complaint relates to something which is solely the responsibility of the Local Authority then they will deal with the matter, as outlined in the policy.

To summarise there are three levels at which a complaint may be considered. These are informal, formal to the Governing body, or formal complaint to the Local Authority. A complaint may be considered at more than one of these level.

