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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Report on

**Ysgol Y Garreg
Llanfrothen
Penrhyndeudraeth
Gwynedd
LL48 6LJ**

Date of inspection: October 2014

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and
Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Publication date: 09/12/2014

Context

The school is situated in the village of Llanfrothen, which is about three miles from the town of Porthmadog in Gwynedd. There are 21 pupils aged between 3 and 11 years on roll. They are arranged into two mixed-age classes.

About half of the pupils are from homes in which Welsh is spoken as a first language. Twenty-eight per cent of pupils have additional learning needs, which is much higher than the national percentage. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Y Garreg in 2014-2015 is £8,411. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Gwynedd is £10,744 and the minimum is £2,961. Ysgol Y Garreg is in the seventh position of the 97 primary schools in Gwynedd in terms of the school budget per pupil.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in April 2013.

The school was last inspected by Estyn during the Autumn term 2008.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- nearly all pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are good;
- nearly all pupils make good progress in their learning skills;
- nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of how to become healthy;
- standards of behaviour are consistently high and pupils socialise harmoniously;
- the pupil's voice has a prominent place in the life and work of the school;
- stimulating learning experiences enable pupils to make the most of their time at school;
- imaginative teaching and purposeful assessment strengthen all individuals' involvement in their learning; and
- the school is a caring community in which adults and pupils show care and respect towards each other and towards others very well.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear strategic vision for developing the school;
- the school has a strong commitment to developing and promoting improvements;
- the school is making good progress in introducing new initiatives and priorities;
- self-evaluation has led to visible improvements in standards and provision;
- the self-evaluation report is an effective tool for developing the school;
- a wide range of partners has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and attainment; and
- the school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen the role of governors as critical friends of the school
- R2 Establish clear arrangements for evaluating the effect of the development plan on standards and provision

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most pupils' standards of literacy and numeracy are good when they start school.

All pupils strive hard in lessons and make good progress in their learning. They concentrate well and persevere conscientiously on tasks; they are alert to asking and answering questions and discuss their work confidently. The willingness of pupils from across the whole age range to work independently and to make decisions about their learning is a strength. By key stage 2, most evaluate their work thoughtfully and are able to identify what needs to be done to improve it.

Considering their age and ability, most pupils across the school make good progress in their ability to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across all areas of the curriculum.

When involved with individual tasks or when co-operating in group activities, most pupils in the Foundation Phase discuss their work confidently. They show a liking for books and read with increasing accuracy and pay good attention to expression and text. By the top end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils write fluently and for a number of purposes, such as writing a letter, conveying information or telling a story. The most skilful writers submit imaginative and interesting pieces and spell most familiar words correctly. On the whole, handwriting is easy to understand and the presentation of work is tidy.

In key stage 2, most pupils discuss their learning in a clear and intelligent way, using a wide variety of extended words and phrases. They show interest and enjoyment in books and, by the end of the key stage, they apply their reading skills effectively to glean information from various sources such as books and websites. Nearly all pupils write confidently for a wide range of purposes, for example when presenting information about Pompeii, and when composing stories and poetry of a high standard.

Pupils who are learning Welsh as a second language make significant progress in their proficiency in using the language in various curricular contexts.

In accordance with their age and ability, nearly all pupils transfer their mathematical skills confidently to a variety of everyday contexts and situations.

In the Foundation Phase, nearly all pupils count a set of objects independently and read and write numbers up to at least 20 confidently and accurately. By the end of the phase, everyone uses the 'count on' strategy very effectively when doing mental work and use standard measures of length and mass accurately. They make good progress in their ability to solve numerical problems; for example as they prepare to go to a local shop to buy ingredients to make soup.

Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 apply their numeracy skills well in order to solve practical problems. For example, as key stage 2 pupils create a quotation for building a shelter, they make purposeful use of their calculation skills as well as their ability to manage money. By Years 5 and 6, nearly all pupils use decimal notation correctly and use a number of strategies to check their answers. Most of them present the information that has been collected, for example about the Earth and the planets, skilfully in the form of tables and graphs

Over recent years, there were very few pupils in the year groups to be assessed at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. As a result, the information that is collected from the data is not reliable enough to be able to report on fairly.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe in the school environment and free from any physical or verbal abuse. They have a sound understanding of how to become healthy and they appreciate that healthy foods and regular physical exercise have a positive effect on their wellbeing and development.

During lessons, all pupils are industrious and enthusiastic; they work together harmoniously and persevere with a task well for extended periods. Standards of behaviour are consistently high and all pupils socialise and play happily together. Pupils are respectful and courteous towards each other, staff and visitors. This makes a significant contribution to creating a pleasant ethos that promotes effective learning.

A prominent place is given to the pupil's voice in the school's life and work, which strengthens their involvement in their learning and their local community. From an early age, pupils take advantage of the regular opportunities for them to make choices about their learning and to contribute their ideas to the content of termly themes. Older pupils choose their own success criteria and, through the school council and the Green School committee, they make appropriate decisions and shoulder purposeful responsibilities.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance rates have been consistently high over the last three years and have placed the school consistently in the top 25% in comparison with schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

Learning experiences offer stimulating opportunities for learning, which enable the full range of pupils to take full advantage of their time at school. Detailed and imaginative planning and organisation ensure that pupils are challenged by relevant activities, involving everyday life and gaining the interest of all pupils.

Planning in the Foundation Phase is based firmly on the six areas of learning and on ensuring that pupils have an active role in their learning. The curriculum at the beginning of key stage 2 builds systematically on pupils' current knowledge, understanding and skills and ensures that there is progression and continuity in their learning.

Provision for literacy, numeracy, technology and information and communication technology is co-ordinated. Planning is detailed and is embedded firmly in pupils' experiences. The strong emphasis on providing 'real' practical experiences for pupils contributes well towards developing their skills, as well as their ability to solve problems. The requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework have been incorporated skilfully into all the school's plans.

The Welsh dimension is promoted very effectively through a wide variety of activities in the classroom, extra-curricular activities and visits. By studying themes such as the Age of Princes, pupils have valuable opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of the cultural and historical characteristics of Wales.

There is good co-ordinated provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship. An enterprise scheme has had a very positive effect on pupils' understanding of the commercial world.

Teaching: Good

Teachers possess good, up-to-date subject knowledge and they challenge all pupils to do their best and achieve well. They expect a great deal from each pupil and encourage each one of them to take responsibility for their work and to develop as independent learners. Teachers plan in detail and produce clear objectives for learning experiences. A strong feature in both classes is teachers' ability to provide interesting and imaginative tasks that respond well to the age range and abilities of all pupils. The practice of sharing the objectives and success criteria of lessons with pupils strengthens the involvement of each individual in his or her learning and gives a clear sense of direction to the teaching and learning. The close relationship, along with the sense of trust that exists between pupils and adults, contributes strongly to creating a sense of an effective learning community.

During lessons, teachers question skilfully and intervene purposefully in order to promote learning effectively. Teachers and assistants challenge pupils' ideas and extend their understanding very effectively. They use a wide range of teaching methods, such as work in groups and pairs and whole-class presentations, effectively in order to gain pupils' interest and promote good behaviour.

Through continuous assessment and detailed analyses of assessment data, each individual's progress is monitored continuously. This enables staff to provide additional support for groups of pupils and individuals as needed.

Teachers give detailed oral feedback to groups and to individuals that enables them to know how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve. The quality of marking pupils' work is of a high standard and contributes significantly towards continuous improvement.

Reports to parents meet statutory requirements and provide clear information about pupils' progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring community in which adults and pupils show care and respect towards each other and towards others very well. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully.

The school makes appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. The variety of regular extra-curricular activities, such as football and cricket practices, provides valuable experiences to promote all pupils' wellbeing and fitness.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

There are very close links between the school and a variety of external agencies, for example educational psychologists, a service for the hard of hearing and occupational therapists. As a result, care and support of a high standard are available for individual pupils.

There are thorough and effective arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils who have additional learning needs, and the designated co-ordinator gives beneficial guidance to the school's staff and governors. Pupils' targets are identified clearly in detailed individual plans and are reviewed and updated on a termly basis in consultation with parents. This ensures that pupils receive effective support from teachers and assistants and by external specialists as needed. In addition, teachers identify more able and talented pupils quickly and provide appropriately for them.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a happy and inclusive that promotes equal opportunities well. It provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment that enriches pupils' learning experiences considerably. This feeling helps to foster responsible individuals who are prepared to help each other and others. The school's physical environment is appropriate and there is enough space and learning rooms that contain interesting and stimulating displays. This stimulates pupils' interest and promotes effective learning.

There is an extensive supply of resources that are well matched to the needs of pupils of all ages and ability. The school building and the surrounding grounds, including the outdoor area for the Foundation Phase, are used effectively by pupils and adults. The whole site is safe and is maintained well.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

Within a short time, the headteacher has provided a clear strategic vision that responds systematically to the school's development priorities and needs. She has shared her vision effectively with staff and governors and this has led to good standards and progress in pupils' outcomes and wellbeing. As a result, there is a strong commitment across the school to developing and promoting improvements that strengthen provision and improve standards.

Communication systems are effective and these contribute well to creating a school that is self-critical and developing continuously. Staff support the headteacher well and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. They co-operate together to create a homely ethos for pupils. Through regular meetings, they have valuable opportunities to discuss progress and to plan further improvements.

Appropriate strategies have been established for analysing the school's performance data and this has a positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The school is making good progress in introducing local and national initiatives and priorities. Implementation of assessment for learning methods, along with adopting the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, is already having a positive effect on pupils' standards and achievements.

Governors give the school strong support and they have an increasing understanding of pupils' standards and achievements. With the headteacher's leadership, they are beginning to identify the school's strengths and priorities for further development. Although governors have an appropriate system of checking the effectiveness of provision and pupils' standards of achievement, their role as a critical friend has not yet developed to its full potential.

Improving quality: Good

The school has effective arrangements for identifying its strengths, along with areas that need improvement. This includes collecting and analysing a wide range of direct evidence, scrutinising pupils' work and collecting the views of governors, parents and pupils. In addition, full consideration is given to comments and formal reports, such as the views of local authority officers.

Subject monitoring reports identify pupils' outcomes and teaching strengths well and identify clearly the areas for improvement. In addition, performance data is used purposefully to monitor progress and to plan for improvement.

The school is able to show that self-evaluation has led to visible improvements in information and communication technology and assessment for learning.

There is a clear link between the self-evaluation report and priorities in the school development plan. The plan, which includes an appropriate implementation timetable, as well as staff responsibilities and costs, focuses clearly on improving standards and provision. However, there is not sufficient attention in the development plan to evaluate the effect of previous priorities on pupils' outcomes and the quality of provision.

The school's self-evaluation report reflects most of the strengths and areas to be developed accurately. As a result, it is an effective tool for developing the school.

Partnership working: Good

The school co-operates productively with a wide range of partners, which has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and attainment. A good example of this is the enterprise work that has been done jointly with a local shop. There is a very close relationship with parents, who are extremely supportive of the school and contribute generously to a range of activities, including fund-raising initiatives.

The effective transition arrangements for transferring pupils to the secondary school prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education. By working together on specific initiatives, such as 'blogging', the school's pupils take considerable advantage of the specialisms of teachers at the secondary school.

The partnership that has been established recently with a group of similar schools has enabled the school to share good practices and to ensure better consistency and accuracy in teachers' assessments.

The school benefits from a constructive link with the community and pupils have beneficial opportunities to contribute to community activities, for example taking part in the St David's Day procession. This develops the sense that the school belongs to its community and promotes pupils' knowledge of their local area well.

Resource management: Good

Teachers have suitable qualifications and experience to teach all aspects of the curriculum. This is supported effectively by effective support staff. The school uses staff expertise effectively and makes good use of their particular talents to improve provision and to raise pupils' standards in subjects such as music and physical education.

Arrangements for planning, preparation and assessment periods are appropriate and contribute well to raising standards of history and geography throughout the school. The school gives due attention to the whole staff's continuous professional development, and performance management processes support this appropriately.

The school is developing well as a learning community. Staff have benefited from professional co-operation with other schools, which has led to improving methods of standardising pupils' work.

The pupil deprivation grant is spent well.

There is a good range of resources at the school that help all pupils to have full access to the school curriculum. With the support of the local authority officer, the governing body and the headteacher manage the school's financial resources carefully to support its priorities. The school has robust plans to make effective use of its funds. The finance sub-panel monitors the budget effectively.

Considering the good outcomes and the appropriate use of funds that are available to it, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

There are very small cohorts in many of the years of Foundation Phase performance data available for this school. Where this is the case, we do not include a table of performance data.

There are very small cohorts in many of the years of key stage 2 performance data available for this school. Where this is the case, we do not include a table of performance data.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to the learner questionnaire

Fewer than 10 responses were received. No data will be shown.

Response to parents' questionnaire

Fewer than 10 responses were received. No data will be shown.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

William Williams	Reporting Inspector
Jeremy Turner	Lay Inspector
Rhys Roberts	Peer Inspector
Sian Williams	Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools

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across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.