



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Ysgol Ysbyty Ifan  
Ysbyty Ifan  
Betws-y-Coed  
Conwy  
LL24 0NY**

**Date of inspection: February 2012**

**by**

**Mr Goronwy Morris**

**for**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	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 Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court  
Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW

or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

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## Context

The school is situated in the small village of Ysbyty Ifan near Betws-y-Coed. The school serves the village and the surrounding rural area. It is a Church in Wales voluntary controlled school. The school provides education for pupils between three and 11 years of age. They are taught primarily through the medium of Welsh and almost all pupils speak Welsh at home. Children are accepted into the school's nursery class on a part-time basis at the beginning of the term following their third birthday and on a full-time basis at the beginning of the term following their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection, there were 28 pupils on the school's roll. They are taught by two full-time and two part-time teachers.

Not one pupil has been registered by the school as being entitled to receiving free school meals. This is substantially lower than the average for the county of Conwy and Wales. Five pupils (22%) have been registered by the school as having special educational needs.

In 2011-12, the individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Ysbyty Ifan is £6,436. The maximum per pupil in Conwy primary schools is £13,941 and the minimum £2,935. Ysgol Ysbyty Ifan is the 10<sup>th</sup> out of the 61 primary schools in Conwy in respect of the school budget per pupil.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The current performance of Ysgol Ysbyty Ifan is good because:

- most pupils achieve well;
- behaviour and attendance levels are high;
- the school provides a range of interesting learning experiences that, on the whole, meet the needs of most pupils;
- the school ensures a caring, inclusive community where pupils feel happy and safe; and that
- there is effective provision to promote pupils' wellbeing and their development as rounded and responsible individuals.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision and successfully conveys that vision to the staff, pupils and governors;
- the school knows its own performance well; and
- the willingness of the school to work together effectively in professional learning communities.

## Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 ensure improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2;
- R2 raise standards in English in key stage 2;
- R3 ensure that pupils of higher ability receive tasks that fully extend them; and
- R4 provide more opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners.

### ***What happens next?***

The school will draw up an action plan that will show how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the implementation of the plan and report on its progress to Estyn.

## Main findings

**Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?**

**Good**

### **Standards: Good**

Overall, the school's performance in both key stages is good in comparison with the national average and the performance of similar schools.

In the Foundation Phase, over the last five years, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 2) at seven years of age is higher overall than the family of schools averages and the figures for Wales. The percentage of pupils attaining level 3 in Welsh is higher than the average for the family of similar schools and for Wales in each of the last five years. No pupil has achieved level 3 in mathematics or science over recent years.

In key stage 2, the percentage of 11 year old pupils that achieve the expected level (level 4) in English, Welsh, mathematics and science combined has been higher than the figures for Wales and the family of similar schools over the last five years. In Welsh, the achievements at level 4 have been considerably higher than the family of schools' average. Achievement in English fluctuates but tends to be lower than that of the family of schools.

The percentage of pupils attaining level 5 in Welsh is consistently higher than the family and Wales averages. No pupil has achieved the higher level in English over this period. The percentage of pupils who achieved level 5 in mathematics and science varies.

In lessons and over a period, most pupils make good progress in relation to their ability and previous performance. Good progress is also evident in pupils' achievement in their work, their books and in lessons. They recall previous learning well and show good knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt in several subjects. Pupils with special educational learning needs make the expected progress in line with their age and ability. In some aspects of their work, pupils of higher ability do not achieve as well as they could. There is no significant pattern with regard to the differences between the achievement of girls and boys.

Pupils throughout the school listen to their teachers very well and willingly offer answers or comments when discussing their work. They make very good progress in their use of Welsh from the time they start in the school. The speaking skills of those pupils who come from non Welsh speaking homes develop very quickly. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use the language fluently and effectively in all types of formal and informal situations. They can discuss various subjects very effectively using a wide vocabulary and a good grasp of natural syntax.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase make good progress in their Welsh reading skills. They have an interest in books, read at a level appropriate to their age and ability and discuss their reading activities confidently. In key stage 2, many pupils have a reading age that is higher than the expectations. Most develop to be independent readers and read aloud correctly and meaningfully. The best change the intonation very effectively displaying obvious maturity. They use their reading skills effectively to gather and present information from a variety of sources.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils come to write independently in their own words. The more able construct a series of sensible sentences varying the form of the sentence. In key stage 2, many of the pupils make very good progress in their ability to write to several purposes. They plan their work carefully and can make improvements when redrafting. By the end of the key stage, most pupils' work shows good awareness of the features of the different formats of writing to several purposes. Most pupils make good progress in punctuating their work and paragraph appropriately. They use their writing skills effectively in other subjects, making increasing use of specialist terms. The standard of accuracy in Welsh written work is good.

The bilingual skills of most pupils are appropriate. When starting at the school, very few pupils have a command of English; even so their oral skills develop appropriately in key stage 2. Most older pupils read a variety of texts in line with their age and ability. By the end of key stage 2, most read English with increasing fluency. Even so, those who are less able do not use reading strategies very successfully to grasp meaning. Although the writing skills of most pupils are developing appropriately in key stage 2, the standard of their work is not as good as it is in Welsh, mainly because the spelling skills of many of them are not sound enough. Overall, the standard of neatness and handwriting of many pupils' varies in the different subjects.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils have a comprehensive understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and they have positive attitudes towards physical education and healthy eating. The percentage of pupils participating in fitness and sporting activities is high.

Each pupil feels safe and happy at the school and knows who to approach for support and advice. They are extremely courteous, work together effectively and behave well.

Current attendance levels of 95.9% are higher than the average nationally and for similar schools.

Many pupils work well independently under the direction of teachers and are beginning to contribute towards what they are learning. The majority understand how well they are doing; even so, they are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

Many of the pupils contribute towards a number of activities in the community which has a positive effect on their development as rounded and responsible individuals. The school council makes a very good contribution towards decision making processes in the school. Running the community shop is a valuable example of the school council's work in the community.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

Teachers provide a range of learning experiences which on the whole respond to the needs of most pupils. Even so, the provision does not always challenge the more able pupils to move forward in their learning nor does it give them sufficient opportunities to be independent in their learning.

Although the schemes of work in the Foundation Phase are continuing to develop, the principles have been established and the provision offers the children varied, interesting and stimulating learning activities.

The provision for developing the key skills has recently been restructured to ensure more appropriate provision for specific groups of pupils in key stage 2.

The quality of the Welsh language provision is very good and a strength in the school. The provision for developing pupils' awareness of their culture and heritage is also a strong feature. An example of this is the school's commitment towards ensuring pupils involvement in community and cultural activities such as the Urdd and the Gwyl Cerdd Dant.

The provision for developing pupils' knowledge of sustainability and the environment is good. A good example of this is the initiative to recycle paper and clothes. The opportunities for promoting pupils' understanding of global citizenship are not so well developed.

### **Teaching: Good**

A caring relationship exists between the teachers and their pupils and the supportive ethos is evident in both classrooms. On the whole, teachers make effective use of a range of teaching methods and appropriate resources. In the best lessons, attention is focussed on developing the key skills and good use is made of thinking skills.

Where the teaching is less effective, the learning outcomes are not always clear to the pupils and there is insufficient challenge for the different abilities within the class.

A variety of good opportunities are provided to develop pupils' reading and writing skills during specific skills sessions.

Teachers offer supportive feedback during lessons. Pupils' work is marked regularly although marking is more consistent and thorough in the language books. Here the comments are more incisive and with recommendations for improvement.

Assessment for learning is becoming embedded in the school. The process of ensuring that pupils are increasingly aware of their targets is beginning to develop in their ability to assess their own and each others' work.

Very extensive use is made of the outcomes of standard tests to group pupils and to arrange appropriate intervention for them. Detailed assessment portfolios are kept in order to track progress.

Detailed assessments of the Foundation Phase Assessment Profile have been undertaken to comply with national requirements.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is a caring community where high priority is given to pupils' wellbeing. The benefits of healthy living and developing pupils physical health are promoted effectively throughout the curriculum and in a number of extra-curricular activities.

The provision for personal and social education is very good, and the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development effectively. Healthy eating and living habits are promoted effectively. The collective worship sessions develop pupils morally and spiritually and promote respect and sensitivity towards others.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safety.



Good use is made of the links with other agencies when dealing with issues such as safety and substance misuse.

Good support and guidance which conform to the Code of Practice are provided for pupils with additional learning needs. The school identifies the different needs of pupils through constant observation, discussion with parents and undertaking formal and informal assessments. Individuals' tracking portfolios are comprehensive and a useful tool for arranging effective intervention programmes.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is an inclusive and caring community where pupils feel happy and secure. There is a homely, welcoming ethos and pupils work together well. Good emphasis is placed on ensuring equal opportunities and all children have access to a broad curriculum.

Respect for diversity and racial equality are promoted through a variety of work tasks when studying foreign countries.

The building offers an appropriate learning environment for the number of pupils. The school makes the best use of the building and the site. The outdoor area for the younger children and the school garden are an attractive resource and are used effectively to promote learning.

Displays in the classes and throughout the school, reflect pupils work and the wider activities of the school. A good variety of resources are used appropriately in order to enrich the teaching and learning, including recent investment in information and communications technology.

The building and the grounds are well maintained and provide a secure environment for playing and learning. The school makes good use of facilities in the village to overcome the deficiencies on the school site.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The headteacher has a clear vision and successfully conveys that vision to the staff, pupils and governors. Staff responsibilities which were revised recently have been clearly defined and all staff work together effectively to implement the priorities for improvement. The school follows appropriate procedures for performance management. As a result, the school provides good opportunities for the professional development of the staff.

The school makes good use of performance data to identify aspects in need of improvement. This has led to providing additional support to groups of pupils and to improvements in aspects of achievement, especially in English.

The governing body knows the school well. It is familiar with analysis of performance data and contributes towards setting the strategic direction of the school through discussing the priorities in the self-evaluation report and the school development plan. Regular reports on progress in respect of the objectives in the school development plan, together with regular visits to the school, enable the governors to undertake their role as critical friends effectively.

The school pays good attention to current national priorities. This is particularly so in respect of wellbeing, raising literacy standards and working with other schools as professional learning communities.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Arrangements for self-evaluation and planning for improvement are good. The process is thorough and a regular part of the school's life and work. A number of methods are used within the process, including looking at examples of pupils' work and careful analysis of formal assessment results. The process is inclusive and the school actively seeks the opinions of learners, staff, parents and governors. The school's self-evaluation report is a comprehensive document that correctly identifies the aspects in need for improvement.

There is a close link between self-evaluation and the priorities in the development plan. The plan includes clear priorities with an appropriate focus on raising standards. There are suitable strategies for achieving the objectives and a good use of specific criteria to measure success, together with specific deadlines.

The quality of the school's commitment within its professional learning community and other schools in the cluster is a strong feature, with clear evidence that this leads to improvements in the provision and the standards of specific groups of pupils. A good example of this is the close collaboration with a nearby school that is having a positive influence on raising standards in English.

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. The steps taken have had a positive effect of pupils' standards of achievement and on aspects of the provision. Even so, the recommendations in respect of raising standards in English have not been fully achieved.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school works effectively with a range of partners which has a beneficial effect on pupils' wellbeing and achievement. There is a strong partnership with parents. They are very supportive of the school and contribute towards a number of activities, including raising money to improve the educational provision. There are numerous links with the local community and this has a substantial influence on pupils' learning experiences and their awareness of their community and the importance of contributing towards it.

The good collaboration with the village nursery group which meets in the school has ensured good use of resources and prepares the children well for their time in the school.

There are good links with local employers which raises pupils' awareness of the local area and the world of work. A good example of this is the collaboration with the National Trust to improve the outdoor provision for the Foundation Phase.

There is a strong link with the local secondary school and with other primary schools in the area. A good example of this is the close collaboration in jointly moderating and standardising assessments at the end of key stage 2. Visits between the local schools have been a means of sharing good practice and has contributed toward raising writing standards.

There is also evidence of good collaboration with nearby schools in arranging joint educational visits and activities in order to share costs which enables them to use their budget more effectively.

**Resource management: Good**

Overall, the school makes effective use of staff expertise and financial resources are used and managed well. There are an appropriate number of experienced teachers who have the knowledge and expertise to present the curriculum effectively. They receive good support from conscientious support staff. This has a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Even so, at times, there is a lack of support staff in the Foundation Phase which limits the intervention available for these pupils, especially when they are involved in the continuous provision.

The school has sufficient learning resources and they are used effectively. Expenditure is carefully monitored, with specific sums earmarked for implementing the aims in the school development plan. The school offers good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

As there are only a small number of pupils at the school, the data must be treated carefully as the result for one child accounts for a high percentage of the cohort in each year.

#### Key Stage 1

In the assessments at the end of key stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 2) in Welsh, mathematics and science combined has been higher than the figures for Wales and the family of similar schools in three of the last five years. This is also true of these subjects individually, as well as speaking, reading and writing in Welsh.

In key stage 1, the school's performance in comparison with schools with similar levels of pupils entitled to free school meals fluctuates. It is amongst the highest 25% in three of the last five years and in the lowest 25% in the other two years.

The percentage of pupils who attained level 3 in Welsh is higher than the average for the family of similar schools and the Wales average in each of the last five years. No pupil has achieved level 3 in mathematics or science over the last five years.

#### Key Stage 2

Over recent years in key stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) in English, Welsh, mathematics and science combined has been higher overall than the average for the family of schools.

In Welsh, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 or higher has been substantially higher than the figure for the family of schools in four of the last five years. Performance in speaking and reading Welsh has been higher than the figures for the family and Wales for the same period. In writing, the percentage fluctuates slightly more.

In English, the number of pupils achieving level 4 has fluctuated and been lower than the family and Wales in three of the last five years.

In 2011, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English, Welsh, mathematics and science combined has placed the school amongst the highest 25% in comparison with similar schools in respect of entitlement to free school meals. Performance in Welsh, mathematics and science has been amongst the highest 25% of similar schools in three of the last five years.

Achievement at level 5 in Welsh has been consistently higher when compared with the figures for the family and Wales. The percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or higher in mathematics and science has been lower than the figure for the family of schools and Wales in three of the last five years. No pupil achieved the higher level in English during this period.

In both key stages, there is no consistent pattern of underachievement by boys in comparison with that of the girls.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

As only a small number of replies were received, there is no comment on the responses to the parent questionnaires.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

All pupils in key stage 2 (12 pupils) completed the learner questionnaires. The responses are very positive and higher than the average for primary schools. All pupils agree with all the statements in the questionnaire, except for one pupil who did not agree that all pupils behaved well at all times.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Goronwy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Janet George	Peer Inspector
Iona Huws	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

## Year groups 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 LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FPYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	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 four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	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**

### **National Curriculum**

#### **Expected National Curriculum levels**

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

#### **Core subject indicator in all key stages**

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

#### **All-Wales Core Data sets**

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.