



*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 Dolbadarn  
Llanberis  
Gwynedd  
LL55 4SH**

**Date of inspection: December 2012**

**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:

<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

Ysgol Dolbadarn serves the village of Llanberis and the Nant Peris area. The area that it serves is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

There are 156 on roll, including 22 of nursery age. Children are admitted to the school part-time in the September following their third birthday and full-time in the September following their fourth birthday.

Education is provided through the medium of Welsh to all pupils. About 64% of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken.

About 5% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is lower than the average for the local authority and Wales. Twenty-five per cent of pupils have been recorded by the school as having special educational needs, which is higher than the average for the local authority. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Pupils are taught in four mixed classes and two single-age classes by six full-time teachers. The headteacher has been responsible for the school since January 2012.

The school was last inspected in November 2006.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Dolbadarn in 2012-2013 is £3,611. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Gwynedd is £9,577 and the minimum is £2,839. Ysgol Dolbadarn is in 71st place of the 102 primary schools in Gwynedd in terms 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 school's current performance is good because:

- it compares well with that in similar schools;
- pupils make good progress in their literacy skills;
- the school is an inclusive and caring community in which pupils feel safe and safe;
- the school provides a good range of interesting learning experiences; and
- teaching is consistently good.

### Prospects for improvement

The school has good prospects for improvement because:

- the headteacher provides strong and effective leadership that succeeds well in engendering the support of staff, governors and parents;
- planning for improvement focuses clearly on raising standards;
- all members of staff contribute effectively towards developing and implementing improvement plans; and
- the school is prepared to undertake enthusiastically the development of appropriate co-operation methods with a large number of partnerships.

## Recommendations

R1 Ensure that more pupils achieve higher levels in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2.

R2 Develop pupils' self-assessment skills in key stage 2, so that they understand better what they need to do to improve their work.

R3 Use information about pupils' attainment more effectively to target specific groups in order to raise standards.

### 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

In assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, all pupils achieved the expected levels, namely outcome 5 (level 2) or better in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity and many achieve outcome 5 in language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development. Results compare well with the average for the family of similar school and schools in Wales. The percentage that attained outcome 6 is better than the family and the average for schools in Wales in all aspects.

In comparison with schools that have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, the school was placed at the median in terms of the Foundation Phase indicator. It was in the top 50% in language, literacy and communication skills and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity but in the bottom 25% in mathematics skills.

In key stage 2 in 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level, namely level 4 or higher, in Welsh, English, mathematics and science in combination, compares well with the average for schools in Wales and the family of similar schools. In the individual subjects, pupils' attainment in Welsh, English and mathematics was a little higher than the average for the family and schools in Wales and compared well in science. The pattern has been consistent over the last four years.

On the whole, over the same period, the percentages of pupils who have achieved level 5 in Welsh and English (except for Welsh in 2010) compare well with the averages for schools in the family and schools in Wales, but have been lower in mathematics and science.

In comparison with schools that have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, the school is placed among the lower 50% of similar schools in terms of the core subject indicator, mathematics and science. The school was among the top 50% in Welsh and English. The pattern has been similar over the last four years.

There is no significant difference when comparing the performance of boys and girls in the Foundation Phase or in key stage 2.

Pupils who have additional learning needs achieve well and make good progress in line with their ability and previous achievement.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2 are keen and enthusiastic learners and make consistent progress. They are able to work together effectively in pairs and in group work to support each other's learning. In their lessons, and when discussing their work, they recall previous learning well and show a good knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt in a number of subjects. By the end of key stage 2, most have developed their thinking skills well; they acquire information appropriately and apply it successfully to new situations.

In the Foundation Phase, many children's oral skills are developing very quickly, including those who come from non-Welsh speaking homes. By the end of the Foundation Phase, they use oral Welsh confidently in a range of situations. They speak clearly with increasing confidence and use an expanding vocabulary. They adopt more formal vocabulary and intonation in various situations. On the whole, the majority read simple texts accurately. They show an understanding of events or ideas within the context of the lesson and express an opinion in their discussion circle. Many use a range of strategies when reading unfamiliar words and confirming meaning. Many children's written language conveys meaning, and they use appropriate and interesting vocabulary. On the whole, simple words are spelt correctly.

In discussions, many pupils in key stage 2 listen carefully and respond sensibly by asking questions and offering comments that are relevant to others' contributions.

Many can read meaningfully in Welsh and English, using appropriate intonation. They become increasingly familiar with using various books and computer programs appropriately to glean information in their studies.

Many pupils' written work is often well organised, imaginative and clear in Welsh and English. They choose vocabulary carefully in order to ensure variety, interest and effect. They use the main features of various forms of writing appropriately, and adapt them for different readers.

Many pupils' presentation of work and handwriting across the school is good.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all pupils have a wide awareness of health issues and they achieve effectively in their personal, social and cultural development. Nearly all feel safe at school and know how to keep healthy by eating sensibly and taking physical exercise through physical education lessons and activities.

Nearly all pupils are willing learners who enjoy school life. They enjoy their lessons and take advantage of opportunities to voice sensible opinions on what they are learning. Behaviour is good across the school and all pupils are very courteous when responding respectfully to adults and peers. Nearly all pupils show care and respect for each other.

Most pupils across the school show a good level of motivation and perseverance in their work. They make regular decisions on how to do their work and present their findings.

Attendance in the last year is 94.5%, which is a little higher than the average for similar schools.

Members of the school council take a very active part in making beneficial decisions about school life. They enjoy their responsibilities and realise that they have a strong and influential voice in relation to daily activities. Their commitment to the village and to the local community is especially good.

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

Stimulating learning experiences are planned carefully in order to take full advantage of the experiences that are provided for pupils. They meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the national curriculum and religious education in full. Activities are imaginative in the Foundation Phase and they gain the interest of the full range of pupils. This is built upon successfully in key stage 2.

Schemes of work place a strong focus on developing communication, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. It is ensured that provision for skills is co-ordinated appropriately so that there is progression in pupils' experience across the school. A high priority is given to developing literacy skills, which has a significant influence on pupils' achievement. Thinking skills are developed successfully in a number of subjects.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, community events and a wide programme of residential visits for key stage 2 pupils. This contributes well to developing pupils' social skills.

Provision for developing the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension in various contexts is rich and enables pupils to make good progress. Good attention is paid to studying the environment and local history and traditions. The school has effective provision for helping pupils to develop a firm knowledge and understanding of the importance of sustainability and global citizenship.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and they use a range of methods and resources successfully to inspire and challenge most pupils. Almost without exception, teaching ensures that pupils concentrate and show interest in their work. Teachers model language well.

There are clear objectives for lessons and teachers organise a series of activities that meet most pupils' needs. They share success criteria in every lesson, giving regular opportunities for pupils to set their own success criteria. The assistance of support staff is focused clearly and contributes significantly to the quality of teaching. All adults manage behaviour positively, safely and effectively.

During lessons, oral feedback and regular marking enable pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. There are regular constructive comments in pupils' books. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to evaluate their own work or to contribute appropriately to setting their targets.

The school has clear and consistent records of pupils' achievement, and this is reflected in the accuracy of assessments at the end of key stages. The school uses a suitable range of assessment material effectively and analyses it carefully to create a clear picture of strengths and issues that need attention.

Through reports, and termly meetings, parents receive clear information about their children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

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

Across the school, learning experiences offer stimulating opportunities to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. These aspects are co-ordinated successfully by a comprehensive personal and social education programme. The joint worship sessions support pupils' moral and spiritual development extremely successfully and promote respect and sensitivity towards others.

The best care and good guidance is given to all pupils and beneficial arrangements exist to support their health and wellbeing. The advantages of living healthily and developing physical exercise are promoted effectively across the curriculum and in a number of extra-curricular activities.

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

The school has appropriate arrangements for identifying additional learning needs and they comply with the Code of Practice. They identify the needs of various pupils quickly and act in a timely and appropriate manner. Individual education plans identify clear targets and specific activities for ensuring progress. Members of staff work effectively with external agencies and specialist services.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is an inclusive and caring community in which pupils feel happy and safe. There is a homely and welcoming ethos here and all pupils get on well together. Staff have a good appreciation of pupils' various needs and ensure equal opportunities for all pupils to take advantage of the full range of educational provision.

Respect for diversity and racial equality are promoted successfully through varied work.

The classrooms provide an appropriate and flexible learning space and the school makes the best use of them and of the grounds surrounding them. The external space for the Foundation Phase is an attractive resource and is used very effectively to promote learning.

Colourful displays in classrooms, and around the school, reflect pupils' work and the school's wider activities. There is a good variety of resources that are used appropriately in order to enrich learning and teaching.

The building and grounds are maintained well and they provide a safe environment for play and learning.

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

The headteacher leads the school well and is supported effectively by the deputy headteacher. He ensures the strong support of all staff members for the school's aims and objectives, and this is a key element of its success.

Everyone works closely together to create a whole-school ethos that encourages and places value on team work. This is positive and creates a strong foundation on which to address raising standards and providing a wide curriculum across the school.

The main focus of strategic planning is improving the school by raising pupils' standards further. Staff meet regularly to identify areas to be improved. They are a stable team who use regular meetings appropriately to support their professional development and move the school forward strategically.

The school conducts performance management effectively and implements the legal requirements to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching in all classes.

The school targets national and local priorities well and this is having a positive effect on standards and provision at the school; this can be seen clearly in the way in which standards of literacy have risen recently. The Foundation Phase is implemented robustly.

The governing body is very supportive of the school. They receive information about the school's performance from the headteacher and discuss with teachers as part of their role in monitoring standards. Members have a thorough awareness of the school's current performance and they question the school's performance regularly.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The process of planning for improvement is effective and is a natural part of school life. The self-evaluation process has been developed well, with a clear focus on raising standards. All members of staff are aware of the purpose and effect of self-evaluation and their role in the school's managerial arrangements is developing well.

Governors challenge the school effectively as a critical friend. Subject leaders use comprehensive monitoring arrangements to produce a useful analysis of the school's strengths and aspects that need to be improved. However, they do not use their data analysis in sufficient detail to target specific groups of pupils in order to raise standards further.

The school improvement plan, that derives clearly from the self-evaluation, is having a positive effect on setting priorities. The plan's focus targets specific improvement needs very well.

Staff have good opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and their skills through shouldering leadership responsibilities and through appropriate continuous professional development. These include working successfully with other schools and partners.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school co-operates effectively with a range of partners in order to support pupils' wellbeing and achievement.

Partnerships with parents are strong. They play a prominent part in supporting pupils in outdoor activities and contribute valuably to improving teaching and learning provision. The Parents and Friends association has raised a considerable sum of money to buy new computers and a new projector, in addition to developing the external area. Pupils benefit greatly from these.

A highly effective partnership exists with the local community, especially through links such as those with Antur Waunfawr, Wales Air Ambulance and the Forestry Commission. These experiences have a positive influence on pupils' knowledge and understanding of their contribution to the wellbeing of the local community.

The school is very aware of the importance of its relationship with agencies to support children and they work together effectively with them for the sake of pupils' wellbeing and attainment. The school's pupils and staff benefit from the appropriate co-operation with further education institutions in order to give valuable experiences to students.

Good transfer arrangements are in place with the local cylch meithrin, including beneficial opportunities for children to visit the school in advance.

There are good links and effective transfer arrangements between the school and the secondary school with a variety of valuable transition activities. There is constructive co-operation with other primary schools in the catchment area in order to discuss planning for improvement and standardising pupils' work. This has ensured better quality and consistency in the school's assessments.

### **Resource management: Good**

Staffing and financial resources are managed and used well. There is an appropriate number of experienced teachers who have the necessary knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively. Expertise is shared very appropriately in order to raise standards in subjects such as physical education, art and music.

Very effective support is given to the teachers by support staff. They work appropriately alongside teachers in the classroom or on duties throughout the day.

Non-contact time is administered in a way that ensures that teachers can plan jointly, prepare and assess appropriately; this is having a clear influence on the way in which learning experiences ensure progress and progression.

Resources are managed carefully to ensure that they are suitable for the needs of all pupils.

The headteacher and governors monitor and manage expenditure effectively. Money is allocated appropriately for the school's priorities.

The school provides good value for money in terms of pupils' outcomes, provision and quality of experiences.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

As this year is the first year for reporting back on the Foundation Phase, there is no data over time available.

In assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, every child achieved the expected levels, namely outcome 5 (level 2) or better in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity and many achieved outcome 5 in language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development. Results compare well with the family's average of similar schools and schools in Wales. The percentage that attained outcome 6 is better than the family and the average for schools in Wales in all aspects.

In comparison with schools that have similar levels in terms of entitlement to free school meals, the school was placed at the median in terms of the Foundation Phase indicator. It was in the top 50% in language, literacy and communication skills and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity but in the bottom 25% in mathematical skills.

In key stage 2 in 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level, level 4 or higher, in Welsh, English, mathematics and science in combination, compares well with the average for schools in Wales and the family of similar schools. In the individual subjects, pupils' attainment in Welsh, English and mathematics was a little higher than the average for the family and schools in Wales and compared well in science. On the whole, the pattern has been consistent over the last four years.

On the whole, over the same period, the percentage of pupils who achieve level 5 in Welsh and English (except for Welsh in 2010) compares well with schools in the family and schools in Wales but is lower in mathematics and science.

In comparison with schools that have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, the school was placed among the bottom 50% of similar schools in terms of the core subject indicator, mathematics and science. The school was among the top 50% in Welsh and English. Once again, the pattern has been similar over the last four years.

There is no significant difference when comparing the performance of boys and girls in the Foundation Phase or in key stage 2.

Pupils who have additional learning needs achieve well and make good progress, in line with their ability and previous achievement.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent/carer questionnaires

Twenty-two completed questionnaires were received from parents/carers. On the whole, the level of parents' satisfaction compares fairly well with the average for primary schools in almost all questions.

All parents/carers state that they agree or agree very strongly that they are, on the whole, satisfied with the school and that their children are happy and safe there. In addition, they all state that their children have support to settle in well when they begin school. They feel that pupils are respected and treated fairly and that they develop to be more mature and to shoulder responsibilities.

Most agree or agree strongly that the school is well run and that pupils' behaviour is good. They feel that teaching in classes is good and feel comfortable about raising any issue. They say that their children receive appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs.

A few feel that they do not receive regular information about their children's progress and that homework does not build well on what their children learn at school. They also state that there is not a good variety of activities, including trips and visits, and they do not understand the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints. Answers to these four questions are lower than the average for primary schools.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Learner questionnaires were completed by 77 pupils in key stage 2. The level of satisfaction compares well with the average for primary schools.

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and that the school deals with bullying well. They feel that the school helps them to learn and make progress and that they know to whom to turn if they are anxious or to ask for advice. Nearly all agree that the school teaches them about how to keep healthy and that there are enough opportunities to take regular physical exercise. Nearly all pupils feel that they are doing well at school and that homework helps them to understand and improve their work at school.

A very few pupils feel that they do not have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work. They also feel that other children do not behave well to enable them to do their work or behave well at lunch time and play time.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Merfyn Lloyd Jones	Reporting Inspector
Carolyn Thomas	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Kevin Williams	Peer Inspector
Gareth Jones	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. If it is available, the data report can be seen on our website alongside this report.

### 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