



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 Bro Cinmeirch
Llanrhaedr yng Nghinmeirch
Denbigh
Denbighshire
LL16 4NL**

Date of inspection: November 2011

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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Context

Ysgol Bro Cinmeirch is situated between Llanrhaeadr and the village of Llanrhaeadr yng Nghinmeirch, some three miles from Denbigh. The school serves the village and the local area and it is maintained by Denbighshire local authority.

The school provides education for pupils between the ages of 3 and 11. Children are admitted to the school's nursery class on a part-time basis during the term following their third birthday and full-time to the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. During the inspection, there were 69 pupils on roll. They are taught by four full-time teachers and one part-time teacher.

Teaching is mainly carried out through the medium of Welsh and approximately 60% of pupils speak Welsh at home.

Nine pupils (11%) are recorded by the school as pupils who have special educational needs. The percentage of pupils (3.4%) who are entitled to receive free school meals is significantly lower than the average for Denbighshire and for Wales.

The current headteacher has been in post since September 2008.

The individual school budget in 2011-2012 per pupil for Ysgol Bro Cinmeirch is £4,661. The maximum per pupil in Denbighshire primary schools is £9,248 and the minimum is £2,719. Ysgol Bro Cinmeirch is the 17th out of the 52 primary schools in Denbighshire in terms of school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

Ysgol Bro Cinmeirch's current performance is good because:

- most pupils are making good progress during their period at the school;
- there is an excellent ethos that contributes very effectively to attendance and high standards of behaviour, and a feeling of staff and pupils' pride in their Welshness;
- planning, teaching and assessment are robust; and
- the whole staff work together well and effectively in a way that positively influences pupils' achievements.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision and she conveys that vision successfully to staff, pupils and governors;
- the school knows its own performance well; and
- there is excellent collaboration with partners to improve the provision.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the school should:

- R1 ensure a further increase in the proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels;
- R2 provide more opportunities for pupils to develop into independent learners; and
- R3 further develop pupils' understanding of what they need to do in order to Improve their own work.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to produce a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

The school's performance in the two key stages is good compared with the performance of similar schools.

Over the last four years, nearly every pupil in key stage 1 achieved the expected level (level 2) in each core subject. During the same period, the numbers who achieve level 3 or higher in key stage 1 have varied. In general, the numbers compare well with those of the family in Welsh and mathematics but are lower in science.

In key stage 2, during the same period, the school performance in relation to the expected level for 11-year-old pupils (level 4) tends to be higher than the average for the family and for Wales. Nearly all pupils achieved the expected level in mathematics and science during this period. Most achieved the expected level in Welsh and English. In 2011, the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or higher at the end of key stage 2 was higher than the family averages in every core subject. The numbers achieving the higher levels varied during the previous three years.

In lessons and over a period of time, most pupils make good progress in relation to their ability and their previous performance. Good progress is also seen 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 who are entitled to receive free school meals and who have special educational needs are making the expected progress according to their age and ability. Pupils of higher ability do not always achieve as well as they should. There is no significant pattern of differences between the achievement of girls and boys.

Pupils across the school are making very good progress in their use of Welsh from the time they start at the school. The oral skills of pupils who come from non Welsh-speaking homes develop very quickly. Most pupils across the school use the language fluently and effectively in every kind of formal or informal occasion. They can deal with a variety of subjects very effectively using a wide vocabulary.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase read at a level that is appropriate to their age and ability and they make full use of their writing skills across the curriculum. In key stage 2, most pupils convey their thoughts and feelings confidently in Welsh and English. They can explain what they are learning and contribute thoughtful comments in class and in group discussions. Nearly all can read meaningfully and with good expression in both languages. They use their skills confidently in researching and recording their work in several subjects. Many older pupils can write at length to a high standard, varying style in different contexts.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils enjoy the life and work of the school and feel safe there. They show good awareness of health issues and living healthily. They eat healthily in school and many take part in a good range of physical activities during and outside school activities.

Nearly all pupils are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They work hard and contribute well in lessons. They work together well under guidance. However, their skills in working independently are still developing. The behaviour of all pupils is very good in class and during break and lunch times. Pupils show respect and care for each other, and they have a good relationship with all staff. The attendance rates of nearly 96% are significantly higher than those of similar schools and national averages. Many pupils shoulder responsibilities within the school community, and they benefit directly from the school's robust links with the local community. The school council and the eco council play an active part in decision-making, and pupils' viewpoints are heard regularly.

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

Teachers work together effectively to plan a curriculum that responds to the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education. The curriculum provides a wide and varied range of rich experiences which, on the whole, meets pupils' needs effectively.

Weekly work and individual lessons are planned clearly and thoroughly. This ensures that pupils make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Although teachers prepare different work to give appropriate challenge to most of the pupils and to less able pupils, the opportunities for pupils of higher ability to extend their skills further are limited.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular experiences and promotes enterprise activities well.

A prominent place in the planning is given to developing communication, number, information and communication technology (ICT) skills and thinking skills. As a result, pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills through cross-curricular studies with a strong emphasis on developing literacy.

The school is working enthusiastically towards the Green Flag. The outside space is used imaginatively to contribute towards pupils' awareness of eco issues. The eco council is very active in supervising recycling and saving energy. Pupils' knowledge of global citizenship is enriched very effectively through taking part in the Comenius scheme with schools in Spain, Belgium, Italy and Sweden. The school has gained recognition for raising a great deal of money for charities.

The Welsh dimension is core and permeates all the school's activities with pupils benefitting from visits from authors, poets, and other resident artists. Very good

attention is paid to studying the local environment, history and folklore of the area in the context of the culture of Wales.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good across the school. Teachers plan lessons well, and organise them effectively with clear learning objectives, good quality resources and an appropriate emphasis on key skills.

On the whole, introductions are lively, with good use of the voice and varied and purposeful questioning. In a minority of lessons, the introduction is too long and does not focus sufficiently on a clear explanation of the task. In the best practice, work is provided that is wholly suitable for pupils of differing ability, and relevant support is given to less able pupils. However, at times, the learning activities do not extend pupils of higher ability in full, and there are no regular opportunities for pupils to work independently.

Teachers and learning assistants work together effectively, and there is good communication between adults and children. Effective procedures are in place to assess pupils' progress and to report to parents. Pupils' work is marked carefully and include constructive comments. Various assessment for learning strategies are in place across the school. Pupils' assessment of their own work is developing throughout the school. In the best practice, there are good opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and one another's work and pupils set their own targets with support from teachers. However, often pupils do not understand clearly what they need to do to reach those targets. Teachers use the assessment information appropriately to provide additional support according to need.

Termly reports to parents give clear judgements on their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school's inclusive ethos creates a family atmosphere that promotes pupils' health and wellbeing very successfully. There is a full range of policies and procedures for promoting healthy living.

The learning experiences develop pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally in a very effective way. Joint worship sessions give regular opportunities for pupils to reflect quietly.

The school has appropriate procedures and a policy for safeguarding.

The school provides effectively for pupils with special educational needs. Needs are identified early and the co-ordinator and the assistants plan carefully in accordance with the requirements of the code of practice to provide suitable support for pupils. Good use is made of excellent advice from a wide range of various agencies according to need. The school ensures that the parents play an active part in the process of reviewing individual education plans.

Learning environment: Excellent

The school ethos reflects the welcoming, happy and all-inclusive atmosphere. An exceptional feature is the family ethos based on implementing policies that respect the rights of every individual within the school community. The atmosphere contributes extensively to the attendance levels and standards of behaviour across the school. There is a positive learning atmosphere. Very positive attitudes to equality and diversity are promoted through procedures such as collecting on behalf of charities, international aspects, curricular themes and circle time. One of the particular features of the school is the staff's and pupils' pride in their Welshness. This has a significant influence on the development of Welsh.

The equal opportunities policy is implemented extremely effectively. Every part of the building is wholly suitable for disabled pupils.

The learning environment is of a very high quality. There is a wide and varied range of appropriate resources. The building and the external facilities have been developed in an excellent way and are used extremely well in order to promote good outcomes for pupils. There are extensive displays in classrooms and communal areas which celebrate pupils' work and achievements, which are a source of pride for them. The school's buildings and grounds are maintained to a very high standard. Very effective procedures are in place for managing the building and the site for the benefit of the school and the community.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision that is shared effectively with the governors, all staff and parents. Managers and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of what they can achieve. Performance management systems have strengthened the staff's commitment to help the school reach the targets that are listed in the school development plan.

The governing body supports the work of the school effectively. It plays an important part in deciding priorities and reviewing the school development plan. The governors know the school well. They examine pupils' performance data and receive a detailed report from the headteacher every term. The governing body also receives presentations from subject leaders and from pupils. They discuss the self-evaluation report in detail on a regular basis.

The school's priorities match national priorities with a clear emphasis on developing literacy and thinking skills. Staff training and the school's commitment to professional learning communities focus strongly on these priorities. There is also a strong emphasis on developing pupils' commitment to ecological issues, sustainable development, global citizenship, and living healthily and safely. The strategies that the school follows have led to significant improvements in these aspects.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation report offers a clear and accurate picture of the quality of the school, based on a valid evaluation of pupils' achievements. It uses a wide range of evidence sources, including subject evaluations by the subject leaders, as well as the viewpoints of governors, pupils and parents. There is an agreed timetable, and clear guidance on subject reviews. The review of Welsh is of a high standard.

The self-evaluation process has identified suitable areas for improvement, with a clear link with the priorities and strategies of the school development plan. The plan outlines the improvements over the past year. The school has dealt successfully with the recommendations of the last report.

The school works well as a learning community. Effective networks of professional practice with other schools and partners are developing very well. Preparation is done jointly with other schools for the foundation phase. Primary schools and the local secondary school have jointly moderated assessments at the end of key stage 2. Another professional learning community is devising activities for more able and talented pupils.

Partnership working: Excellent

The school has a number of strategic partnerships that contribute very effectively to the quality of provision and the standards achieved by pupils.

The partnership with parents and the community is very strong and the school has responded very positively to the recommendation of the last inspection. The school provides a very good range of information to parents. For example, parents receive three written reports a year on their children's progress. This is a very effective tool for strengthening the partnership between home and school and involving parents in the process of maintaining and improving standards.

An excellent partnership with the Cylch Meithrin ensures effective joint use of resources. This strengthens the partnership between the school and the community, ensures care throughout the day and prepares the children very well for their period in the school.

The strategies that the school has used to improve Welsh is sector-leading practice. The profile of written language that has been prepared is an excellent tool for raising pupils' standards of achievement. In working to improve pupils' standards of literacy, the headteacher has worked very closely with local authority officers to offer training to other schools. There is very effective co-operation with a number of groups of schools, including the local cluster and groups of small schools or Welsh medium schools. Teachers benefit from seeing good practice in other schools, in sharing the work of planning thematic work and resources, and taking part in training activities that match their needs.

The partnership with the library service stimulates more able pupils' interest in reading and writing.

Resource management: Good

Teachers have appropriate qualifications. They attend training courses that match the school's development priorities. They are supported well by the school's performance management systems. Full use is made of the whole staff's expertise. The school takes full advantage of the building's facilities and of the playing fields.

Teachers and pupils use a wide range of resources effectively in order to support teaching and learning.

The governors monitor the school's finances carefully. The school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Comments on performance data

Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2, in key stage 1, and at the end of Year 6, in key stage 2, must be treated with care because of the small numbers of children in a year group. This can affect school performance considerably from one year to the next.

Key stage 1

Over the last four years, the school's performance in relation to the expected level in Welsh, mathematics and science for seven-year-old pupils (the core subject indicator) was higher than the average for schools in the same family and the average for Wales.

In Welsh, mathematics, and science every pupil achieved the expected level, namely level 2, in three of the last four years.

In three of the last four years, performance in the core subject indicator has placed the school in the higher 50% of schools that are similar in terms of the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, and in the highest 25% for two years. The performance in Welsh, mathematics and science was in the highest 25% in three of these years.

The percentage of pupils achieving a higher level than expected, namely level 3 or higher, has varied over the last four years. In general, it has compared well with the family average in Welsh and mathematics but was lower in science during this period. No children have achieved a higher level than expected in science during the last three years.

There is no difference between the achievement of pupils entitled to free school meals and their peers. There is no significant pattern between the results of girls and boys at the expected level but there is a tendency for more girls to achieve a higher level in Welsh.

Key stage 2

In key stage 2, in three of the last four years, the school's performance in relation to the expected level in Welsh or English, mathematics and science, for 11-year-old pupils (the core subject indicator), was higher than the average for schools in the same family and the average for Wales.

Every pupil achieved the expected level, namely level 4, in mathematics and science in three of these years. Every child achieved the expected level in English in two of these years. In Welsh, the trend was more varied. Although pupils' performance tends to be higher than the national average, it was only higher than the family average in two of the years.

The results in the core subject indicator in three of the last four years have been among the highest 25% of those for similar schools in terms of the proportion of children who are entitled to free school meals.

Performance in mathematics and science was in the highest 25% of that for schools in three years, and in English in two years during this period. Performance in Welsh was in the lower 50% in three of these years.

In 2011, the percentage of pupils achieving higher than the expected levels at the end of key stage 2 (level 5 or higher) was higher than the family averages in every core subject. The proportions achieving the higher levels varied during the previous three years.

There is no difference between the achievement of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and their peers. There is no significant pattern in the differences between girls' and boys' results at the expected level, but more girls tend to achieve at a higher level.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent/carer questionnaires

Nearly all parents/carers agree that the school:

- is well run;
- provides a good range of activities;
- helps their child to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility; and
- gives appropriate additional support in relation to any individual specific needs.

All agree that their child:

- likes school;
- was supported to settle in well when starting at the school;
- is making good progress;
- is encouraged to be healthy and to take physical exercise regularly;
- is safe at school; and
- is prepared well for moving on to the next school.

Everyone agrees that:

- the teaching is good;
- pupils behave well;
- staff expect their child to work hard and do his/her best; and
- homework that is given builds well on what their child learns at school.

Nearly all agree that:

- staff treat every child fairly and with respect.

Nearly all agree that they:

- receive regular information on their child's progress;
- feel comfortable about asking the school questions, making suggestions or identifying a problem; and
- understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

All pupils agree:

- that they feel safe at school, that the school deals well with any bullying and that they know to whom to speak if they are worried or concerned;

- that they are learning how to keep healthy and have many opportunities to take regular physical exercise;
- that they are doing well at school, that teachers and other adults at school help them to learn and make progress and that they know what to do and to whom to speak if they find their work difficult; and
- that they have sufficient books, equipment and computers in order to do their work

Nearly every pupil agrees that:

- homework helps them to understand and improve their school work.

Although almost most pupils agree that other children behave well and that they can do their work, a minority feels that not all children behave well at play time or lunch time.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Goronwy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Rhiannon Harris	Team Inspector
Jeremy Turner	Lay Inspector
Garth Higginbotham	Peer Inspector
Gwennol Ellis	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 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	R	Y1	Y2	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:

Key stage 1	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