



*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 Cymerau  
Ffordd Mela  
Pwllheli  
Gwynedd  
LL53 5AR**

**Date of inspection: March 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:

<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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## Context

Ysgol Cymerau is a bilingual county primary school that serves the town of Pwllheli and the surrounding area including Penrhos and Efailnewydd. It provides education for three to 11-year-old pupils.

There are 312 full-time pupils on the school register together with 45 children of nursery school age who attend on a part-time basis. The numbers have increased slightly since the previous inspection. Welsh is the main language of the home for almost three quarters of pupils. Recently, a number of pupils from outside Wales have begun attending the school and now 6% of pupils are deemed to have English as an additional language. This is close to the national average. It is expected that every pupil will be fluent in Welsh and English by the end of key stage 2.

Children are admitted into the school on a full-time basis at the beginning of the term following their fourth birthday. The school has pupils of the full range of ability and their attainment varies considerably when they begin in the school. According to the school, pupils come from a background that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged, although part of the catchment area of the school is designated as being a 'Communities First' area. Currently, 16% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is slightly below the national average.

Twenty-seven per cent of pupils have additional educational needs, which is higher than the national average, and five of them have a statement of special educational needs. The county's special education unit is located in the school for key stage 2 pupils with language difficulties.

The children are taught in 13 classes by 13 full-time teachers and four part-time teachers, as well as eight full-time support staff and four part-time support staff.

The school was last inspected in February 2005. The current headteacher was appointed to the post in January 2003.

In 2010-2011, the individual school budget for Ysgol Cymerau is £3,052 per pupil, which compares with a maximum of £8,442 and a minimum of £2,717 for primary schools in Gwynedd. The school has the 84th highest budget per pupil of the 103 primary schools in Gwynedd.

## 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:

- good provision and rich practical experiences are provided for children to stimulate them to learn in the Foundation Phase;
- pupils of all ages and different ability reach their potential with most of them attaining good standards, with elements of excellence in language;
- pupils' communication skills, particularly in reading and writing and information and communication technology, are good, enabling them to participate effectively in their work across the curriculum;
- effective attention is given to pupils' wellbeing and their additional learning needs;
- effective support is provided for pupils who have English and/or Welsh as an additional language; and good teaching stimulates pupils to participate in their learning and to benefit from an interesting and varied curriculum.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- it has a successful history of ensuring improvement in pupils' outcomes;
- the school is led effectively and it has a clear and agreed sense of purpose and direction;
- all staff work together effectively in order to improve the provision for the pupils;
- the self-evaluation processes are thorough and based on firm evidence; and
- the governors are well informed about the school's performance and, at times, have provided clear guidance which has had a positive effect on the strategic direction of the school.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise pupils' standards in mathematics and science by the end of the Foundation Phase and Year 2;
- R2 further develop the role of pupils in assessment for learning;
- R3 develop the role of the senior management team and others in the self-evaluation process by observing and evaluating learning and teaching in classes; and
- R4 implement a structured programme of managing the performance of classroom assistants.

### **What happens next?**

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

Many of the children begin in the school with lower than expected skills for children of their age. Standards at the end of the Foundation Phase, when compared with the initial assessment results when pupils were admitted to the school, show definite progress. Pupils' early reading and writing skills show firm progress. By the end of the Foundation Phase, the vast majority of pupils achieve the outcomes expected for their age in language, literacy and communication skills and in mathematical development.

By the end of key stage 1, almost all of the seven-year-old pupils are able to communicate effectively, particularly, in oral Welsh, and make full use of their reading and writing skills across the curriculum.

In key stage 2, 11-year-old pupils make good progress in their learning. They use Welsh fluently and effectively on every type of formal and informal occasion. The majority can discuss various topics very effectively in Welsh throughout the school and in English in key stage 2. They make very successful use of reading material in one language and present the information in another language. The majority of pupils are able to read meaningfully and with good expression in both languages and write to a standard that is appropriate for their age and ability. The pupils use a wide range of reading and writing skills effectively for different purposes. These include proof reading, scan-reading, skim-reading, redrafting and writing for different audiences. Their polished written work gives appropriate attention to the accuracy of spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting.

Pupils' knowledge of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is very good throughout the school. Welsh and English are used effectively to promote learners' awareness of the literary and cultural heritage as they study every type of local and national topics.

In 2010, the majority of pupils at the end of key stage 1 did well and achieved the expected level, namely level 2. The proportion of pupils that achieved this level was above the average for the family of schools and the national figure. A number of the pupils also performed above the expected level at the end of key stage 1, namely level 3, the proportion higher than the average for the family of schools and the national figure. It was the boys' good performance in 2010 that was responsible for this. In 2010, the performance of seven-year-old boys was significantly better than that of girls in every core subject. Boys and girls have attained standards that are consistently good in teacher assessments in Welsh over the past four years.

Key stage 1 performance in mathematics and science was better in 2010 than in 2009. However, in 2010, in a number of indicators, the results did not compare favourably with those of other schools within the family of schools or similar schools nationally. The poor performance of girls at the end of key stage 1 was mainly responsible for this.

The performance of 11-year-old pupils at the end of key stage 2 in Welsh, English, mathematics and science has shown continuous improvement since 2008. In 2010, girls' results were significantly better than those of boys in every core subject, and particularly in reading and writing Welsh. The girls' results in all of the performance indicators were either close to, or higher than the national average and the average for the family of schools.

The performance of boys in 2010, at 11 years of age at the end of key stage 2 was significantly lower than that of boys within the family of schools and nationally. This reduced the percentage of pupils who succeeded in attaining the expected level in Welsh or English, mathematics and science combined. As a result, this caused the school's average performance to be slightly lower than the average for similar schools. However, in key stages 1 and 2, over a four-year period, there has been no consistent pattern in boys' performance compared with that of girls.

Over the past four years, there has been no significant difference in the performance of children who are entitled to free school meals when compared with the performance of other pupils.

The pupils who have additional learning needs or have Welsh or English as an additional language make appropriate progress and fulfil their potential.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

The school is an inclusive, happy and caring community and learners' enjoyment and their active role in the life of the school are strong features. The pupils are very knowledgeable about the importance of eating healthily. They enjoy practical and physical activities, which encourage and foster their awareness of the importance of keeping healthy and fit.

Attendance rates are slightly below 95%, which is above the national average.

Pupils behave very well. There are effective links with the local community that have a positive influence on outcomes. The children benefit from an appropriate range of visits and events in the local community. They also benefit from visiting local businesses and shops regularly as part of their work in a number of curricular areas.

Through the school council and the effective use of questionnaires, together with listening to the younger children, pupils have very good opportunities to express their opinions and contribute to the life and work of the school.

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

The school provides a vast range of learning experiences for pupils of all ages and ability. Teachers work together to plan programmes of work that engender learners' interest. Learning activities are enriched further through a good range of interesting practical activities. The provision for developing communication, numeracy and information and communication technology skills has a prominent place in the

planning, and this enables pupils throughout the school to use them effectively across the curriculum. In many of the lessons, teachers incorporate activities that stimulate pupils to think.

The provision and planning for developing Welsh are very good. The school promotes the Cwricwlwm Cymreig successfully in every aspect of the life and work of the school.

The school promotes eating healthily and healthy lifestyles effectively. Throughout the school, learning experiences provide stimulating opportunities to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The school ensures that pupils take an active role in Welsh cultural activities and in the local community.

The provision for sustainable education and global citizenship is very good. The school has won numerous awards including The International Schools Award, a gold award under the Green Schools scheme and also The Healthy Schools Award Level 3. Extensive attention is given to other cultures, mainly as a result of links with China and India but also with several other countries. The school gained the British Council's 'International Schools Award' certificate. Activities are held for parents and children to promote Fair Trade goods. The school responds very well to current issues that are in the news throughout the world and which are of interest to the pupils.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. In lessons that have the best teaching, pupils are encouraged to work independently and to produce work of a good standard. Teachers have a thorough understanding of the curriculum; they explain new concepts clearly and motivate pupils effectively. There is a good pace to the lessons. In these lessons, teachers set appropriate, differentiated tasks for pupils with additional learning needs. Recently, the school has begun to develop the provision for the more able and talented pupils.

In the very few sessions in which the teaching is not so good, the introductions are too long and the pace of the lesson is slow. The questions are closed and pupils' levels of participation decline.

The teachers set appropriate targets for the pupils to improve the standard of their work, including pupils that are underachieving. They are given additional support in order to move forward.

In the language lessons, pupils have good opportunities to check their work against specific success criteria. There are some opportunities for pupils to assess their own written work and each other's work in subjects across the curriculum but this does not occur consistently throughout the school. The practice of including success criteria for key skills has not been developed sufficiently.



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

The school is a safe and happy community and the provision for pastoral care is strong. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding children. There are clear procedures for dealing with bullying and discrimination on the basis of race or disability.

The staff have detailed knowledge about social deprivation and the problems of individual pupils. The school is willing to listen and to help. The provision for personal and social education has been planned effectively.

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is effective. Pupils' learning needs are identified at an early stage by teachers and there are good links with specialist agencies in order to provide support and to encourage the development of these pupils.

The individual education plans are of a good quality, including those for pupils that have English as an additional language. Progress reviews are held regularly and include opportunities for pupils to measure their own progress in relation to the targets that have been set. Suitable differentiated activities are planned for the more able and talented pupils.

The transition arrangements between Year 6 and the secondary school are effective, particularly for pupils with additional learning needs.

The school works effectively with a number of external agencies to safeguard, support and care for the pupils.

### **Learning environment: Good**

A very positive learning atmosphere penetrates all aspects of the life and work of the school. The positive ethos, together with appropriate policies and procedures, ensure that the school is inclusive and respects diversity. Every child is given equal opportunities in terms of the curriculum and life of the school. All members of staff have received appropriate equality training and the school addresses any related issues or complaints that arise.

The buildings and the rooms are appropriate for implementing the curriculum and provide a stimulating and positive learning environment. The school makes effective use of the space that is available to it, both inside and outside the buildings. The school buildings and grounds are also well maintained.

There is an appropriate range of learning resources, the information and communication technology resources being very good. Effective use is made of the resources to promote stimulating learning experiences for the pupils.

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

The leadership of the headteacher, together with the support of the management team, has a positive effect on the running and organisation of the school. There is an agreed vision in terms of the strategic direction of the school, and decisions are based firmly on evidence from effective self-evaluation. The leadership is inclusive and ensures that everyone is able to contribute to a discussion that leads to action.

The use of performance data is one of the strengths of the school. The headteacher analyses the results of the teachers' assessments thoroughly at the end of key stages 1 and 2, and draws up an action plan in response to the findings. These are considered and discussed in detail by the teachers and the governors.

The arrangements for performance management are appropriate and include setting targets for members of staff. Although appropriate attention is given to the training needs of classroom assistants, they are not included in a formal programme of performance management.

The governors are very supportive of the work of the school and are aware of their responsibilities. Members of the governing body have taken responsibility for specific areas and have held meetings to discuss them with the relevant co-ordinators. They are well informed about the school's performance and, at times, have given clear guidance that has had a positive effect on the strategic direction of the school.

All members of staff work together effectively as a team under the leadership of their key stage leaders and subject co-ordinators. This leads to continuous improvement in the provision for pupils.

Positive steps have been taken to meet national priorities in areas such as assessment for learning, the School Effectiveness Framework, addressing poverty and deprivation and increasing pupils' participation. The Foundation Phase is implemented fully in accordance with the requirements

**Improving quality: Good**

The self-evaluation report is of good quality and clearly identifies the areas for development within the school. The school has effective and thorough arrangements that have been established for a number of years, including data analysis, evaluating the provision and examining children's work. The school includes the opinions of education officers effectively as part of its self-evaluation arrangements and responds to comments by means of an action plan after each visit. However, the process of observing lessons to identify strengths and areas for improvement in learning and teaching has not been developed sufficiently.

There is a clear link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation process and the priorities of the school development plan, which generally is of a good quality. The priorities are clear but the success criteria and the effect on standards are not always recorded in sufficient detail.

The school has responded fully to the recommendations of the last inspection report.

The teachers work as part of professional practice networks within the school and more widely with other schools. Teachers from the school have given guidance on specific areas of learning within the local authority, and shared good practice, both locally and nationally.

Internally and on a catchment level, the school has held beneficial meetings to discuss and share the latest practices in the areas of learning and teaching such as assessment for learning and the Foundation Phase. The school's teachers have visited other institutions in order to share good practice. This has impacted positively on provision and standards.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has fostered a range of useful strategic partnerships.

There is a strong link with parents and they are able to contribute to the work of the school through responding to questionnaires and making suggestions and comments in a suggestions box. Parents believe that there is good communication between the school and them.

The school works closely and effectively with all the relevant local authority departments, which has a positive effect on pupils' progress and wellbeing. This includes working with Llyfrgell Gwynedd on a literacy workshop to target reluctant learners in Year 5.

There is useful collaboration with the local secondary school and with other primary schools in the area. A number of useful curricular transition activities take place jointly with the secondary school that enrich pupils' experiences and develop their skills and knowledge.

The school collaborates regularly with local further education colleges and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin to provide training placements for students who are pursuing childcare courses. Prospective teachers, who are pursuing a course at a university, have placements in the school for short and extended periods.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school manages its resources effectively. The best possible use is made of the building, which is very awkward in terms of its design. The school has sufficient resources for the requirements of areas of learning and makes effective use of them.

Teachers make effective use of their time for planning, preparation and assessment. The role of the support staff is effective throughout the school and enriches the provision for the pupils. The school provides suitable opportunities for the professional development of teachers and assistants.

The headteacher and the funding panel of the governing body plan and manage expenditure carefully to meet the requirements of the school development plan. The

school takes advantage of every opportunity to secure grants in order to improve the provision. A sum of £10,000 was secured to improve the information and communication technology provision.

In terms of pupils' outcomes and its use of funding, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

A total of 83 parent questionnaires were returned and most of them are either satisfied or very satisfied with the school, in general. On the whole, parents express a great deal of satisfaction with the school. They all feel that the school is well run and they have a very positive opinion about its work.

All of the parents stated that their children are helped to settle in when they begin in the school. Every parent feels that their children enjoy school and are happy and safe there. Almost everyone feels that their children behave well. Every parent feels that the teaching is good and that the children are encouraged to keep healthy and fit.

Almost all of the parents feel that there is a good range of activities in the school and that appropriate homework is set. Almost all of the parents state that children have sufficient additional support with their individual learning needs and feel that the children are treated fairly and with respect.

Almost all of the parents state that the school's staff are easy to approach if they have concerns or questions, but some parents feel that some members of staff are not sufficiently well informed about their children's progress. Most parents express the view that their children are prepared well for moving to the next school and know how to make a complaint if necessary.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Responses to the questionnaire were received from 102 key stage 2 pupils and the team spoke to a representative sample of pupils during the inspection. All pupils feel safe in school and almost all of them know to whom to talk if they are concerned or worried. Almost all of the pupils also feel that they are doing well in the school and all of them agree that the teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress.

Very few pupils feel that they do not know what to do or whom to ask if their work is difficult, and a similar number feel that the homework does not help them to understand and improve their work.

Almost all of the pupils agree that the school helps them to live healthy lives and feel that they have many opportunities in the school to have physical exercise regularly. Almost all of the pupils believe that there are sufficient resources to enable them to learn well. Two out of every three pupils feel that children behave well during break times and at lunch times. A similar proportion feels that the children's behaviour is good and that this enables them to do their work.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Jeff Jones	Reporting Inspector
Terwyn Tomos	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Gwennol Ellis	Peer Inspector
Dylan Roberts	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))

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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