



A report on

**Ysgol y Creuddyn
Oak Road
Penrhyn Bay
Llandudno
LL30 3LB**

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:

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 y Creuddyn is a designated Welsh-medium comprehensive school for 11-18 year old pupils and is maintained by Conwy local authority. The number of pupils has increased since the previous inspection and the school currently has 679 pupils, including 92 in the sixth form.

The school is located on the outskirts of the seaside town of Llandudno. The pupils come from a wide coastal and rural area of the county of Conwy. Eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is substantially below the national average of 17.1%. Eleven per cent of pupils live in areas that are amongst the 20% of the most disadvantaged areas in Wales.

The school receives pupils from the full range of ability. No pupil receives support to learn English as an additional language. One per cent of pupils come from an ethnic minority background, and 1.1% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is below the national average. Six pupils were disappplied from the full requirements of the National Curriculum, including those who have a statement of special educational needs. In addition, 62 pupils (10%) are on the stages of 'school action plus'. Seventeen per cent of pupils come from homes in which Welsh is the main language. Annually, 20% of the Year 7 stream join the school through the immersion scheme. The pupils that have received English-medium primary education have intensive support with Welsh and join the school's main stream, usually in Year 7 or Year 8.

The headteacher has been in post since January 2004, and the deputy headteacher since September 2010.

In 2010-2011, the individual school budget for Ysgol y Creuddyn is £4,457 per pupil, which compares with a maximum of £4,649 and a minimum of £3,884 for secondary schools in Conwy. The school has the second highest budget per pupil of the seven secondary schools in Conwy.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make good progress during their period in the school;
- almost all the pupils are happy in the school and most of them feel that they are doing well and that the teachers help them to learn and make progress;
- the quality of teaching throughout the school is consistently good; and
- pupils' health and wellbeing are promoted very well.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the school identifies and prioritises the areas for improvement effectively;
- leaders at every level understand their role and responsibilities and convey high expectations; and
- a trend of progress has been seen in the school's performance and pupils' attendance during recent years.

Recommendations

In order to ensure improvement, members of staff and the governors of Ysgol y Creuddyn need to:

- R1 raise standards, particularly in the core subject indicators and science in key stage 4;
- R2 reduce the gap between the achievement of boys and girls;
- R3 share best practices in the quality of teaching;
- R4 strengthen the contributions of parents and pupils to the school's self-evaluation processes; and
- R5 extend and strengthen the curriculum in key stage 4 and the sixth form by collaborating closer with other schools and the local college.

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
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Standards: Good

In key stage 3, for a minority of indicators, the results are above the Welsh averages and above the averages for the family of schools. In key stage 4, the results against the main indicators are above the average figures for Wales and usually above the average for the family of schools. There has been a clear pattern of improvement over the past three years.

In key stage 3, the core subject indicators (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum) have risen consistently over the past three years and in 2010 they were close to the average for the family of schools and above the average for Wales.

This year, performance in Welsh in key stage 3 continues to strengthen and is now slightly above the average for the family of schools and in the top 50% when compared with that of similar schools in terms of free school meals. In 2010, performance in English and mathematics was slightly below the average for the family of schools and amongst the lowest 25% when compared with that of similar schools nationally in terms of entitlement to free school meals. This year, performance in science is slightly above the average for the family of schools but amongst the lowest 25% when compared with that of similar schools nationally in terms of entitlement to free school meals. Performance at level 6 or above in Welsh, English and science is above the average for the family of schools but performance in mathematics is slightly below.

In 2010 and in 2009, in key stage 4, the level 2 threshold results (equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C), including Welsh or English and mathematics, have been over 10% above the average for the family of schools. During the past two years, school results have been amongst the highest 50% when compared with those of similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals. In 2010, the results for the level 2 threshold and the core subject indicator placed the school in the lower 50% when compared with other similar schools in terms of the level of free school meals but the performance is slightly above the average for the family. The level 1 threshold (equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G) is above the average for the family of schools and for Wales and has been amongst the top 50% when compared with that of similar schools in terms of the level of free school meals over the past three years. The average points score (comprising all externally approved qualifications at age 16) has increased at a lower rate than in the family of schools or in Wales and, this year, for the first time, the school is in the lowest quarter.

Pupils are making good progress in general on the basis of their previous achievements in key stage 2 and key stage 3.

In key stage 3, girls' achievements in English are better than those of boys and the difference is wider than the averages for Wales and the family of schools. In the

other core subjects, there is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. In key stage 4, in a number of indicators, boys' achievements are lower than the averages for the family of schools and for Wales. Their achievement is significantly lower than that of girls at the level 2 threshold and the level 2 threshold that includes Welsh or English and mathematics. Other groups of pupils, including pupils that are entitled to free school meals and pupils with special educational needs, are making appropriate progress.

Over the past two years, no pupil has left the school without gaining at least one recognised qualification and almost everyone continues in education, training or employment. This is above the national average. In the sixth form, the school's performance at the level 3 threshold (equivalent to two A levels at grade A* to E) is above the average for Wales and the local authority. For the wider average points score (comprising all externally approved qualifications at age 18), pupils' performance is significantly above the average for Wales.

Most pupils are making good progress in lessons by building effectively on what they have learnt in previous lessons in developing new knowledge, skills and understanding. In many lessons, pupils show motivation and work very skilfully in small groups or in pairs. In a very few lessons in which there insufficient challenge, pupils' progress is inadequate.

Pupils have a firm grasp of speaking skills in Welsh and English. They use subject vocabulary correctly and provide extended answers orally and in writing. Almost every pupil reads well in Welsh and in English and uses translingual skills easily and fluently. In many subjects, pupils write well for a range of different purposes and audiences. The pupils who receive additional assistance through the immersion course make excellent progress in their reading, writing and oral work.

The information and communication technology skills are good and pupils are confident when using the latest computer software and programmes. Every pupil in the sixth form is pursuing the Welsh Baccalaureate course at a higher level and everyone has gained an accreditation in one key skill at least.

Wellbeing: Good

Almost every pupil feels safe in the school, and they feel that the school deals well with any bullying. Many of the pupils participate in a variety of physical activities that are held by the 5 x 60 club. Most pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle, and the 'Bwyd o Bwys' group promotes this message very effectively.

The pupils have a positive attitude towards their work. They arrive at their lessons punctually and most pupils work hard in them. The attendance rates have improved over the past three years and are now amongst the highest 25% when compared with those of similar schools in terms of free school meals. There is very good behaviour in every part of the school. There have been no permanent exclusions over the past three years and the temporary exclusion rates are very low.

Every year the school contributes to charity work, however, only the sixth form has the opportunity to work closely with the local community through the Welsh Baccalaureate.

There are several fora that provide opportunities for pupils to participate in decisions within the school. The role and effectiveness of the school council is developing and pupils participate in the appointment of new members of staff. Although they express views on a range of issues, as yet they are not influencing how and what they learn. Recently, links have begun to be strengthened between governors and pupils, and a sixth form prefect attends governors' meetings.

Sixth form students undertake the role of prefects to promote the Welsh language and promote good behaviour, and have established the 'Buddies' scheme.

Pupils treat each other and members of staff with respect and show tolerance towards different viewpoints. They are courteous and welcoming to visitors to the school. Pupils acquire the skills to prepare them for life after school or for the next stage of their learning.

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

The school curriculum generally meets the statutory requirements and ensures valuable experiences that build effectively on previous learning. Since 2008, the choice of traditional and vocational courses has expanded in key stage 4 and the sixth form. This has ensured more varied and suitable experiences for individual learners. The school offers the Welsh Baccalaureate at a higher level for all sixth form pupils.

Broad, varied and beneficial extra-curricular experiences are provided for learners in every key stage and this enriches the learning.

Appropriate and detailed opportunities are planned in many of the lessons in order for pupils to develop their literacy and communication skills. The work of promoting numeracy and information technology and communication skills across the curriculum is developing gradually. Appropriate opportunities are provided for those pupils who need further support with literacy and numeracy. As a result, these pupils are making good progress. Most of the departments provide varied and suitable opportunities to develop pupils' thinking skills.

The school uses Welsh as the main medium of teaching. The success of the immersion scheme ensures that all pupils are able to speak Welsh to first language standard. The provision for developing and promoting Welsh and the Welsh dimension is very comprehensive.

A good feature of the life of the school is the wide and varied range of opportunities that are available for learners to participate in the school community. Sustainable development and global citizenship are promoted successfully through a number of activities and assemblies that promote awareness and empathy.

Teaching: Good

Most teachers have a thorough and relevant knowledge of the subjects that they teach and they plan in detail. The quality of teaching is high and positive relationships between teachers and pupils contribute effectively to pupils' progress. Most of the lessons are structured well and effective use is made of a range of teaching methods and a variety of resources that meet pupils' needs.

Most of the teachers share success criteria and aims and objectives with pupils at the beginning of a lesson. They show sensitivity when talking to pupils about the quality of their work and provide useful feedback orally during the lesson. Many of the teachers ask open questions to encourage pupils to reason and expand on their oral contributions.

Most of the pupils' work is marked regularly, and most teachers note targets and specific and constructive comments on how to improve. In a minority of the books, there are examples of self-assessment and peer assessment but this is inconsistent across departments. Generally, teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 3 meet the statutory requirements. However, teachers' interpretation of the levels' criteria is inconsistent in a very small number of departments.

There is an effective system for departments to record and track pupils' progress in every key stage. They are also expected to analyse assessment data and examination results in detail. However, not every department uses this information well enough to improve standards. Parents and carers receive detailed reports and regular information about their children's progress, although there is some inconsistency.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is caring and provides valuable support and guidance for pupils.

The school promotes the health and wellbeing of its pupils well. These aspects are co-ordinated by a comprehensive and detailed personal and social education programme. Due attention is given to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have varied opportunities to discuss contemporary issues that are relevant to their everyday lives. The 'Bwyd o Bwys' group is active and enthusiastic and has a positive effect on other pupils' awareness of the benefits of eating healthily.

The arrangements for identifying pupils' educational and personal needs are effective. The pastoral team makes good use of a detailed tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and behaviour. This has a positive effect on pupils' progress and achievement. Appropriate use is made of support from outside services, including the educational welfare service, health professionals and Careers Wales.

Learners with additional needs receive a wide range of learning experiences and suitable opportunities to gain appropriate qualifications. A team of assistants provide effective support in lessons. Learning coaches provide advice and organise activities that promote the self-confidence of vulnerable pupils.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive community that promotes equality of opportunity and appreciates diversity. Every pupil has equality of opportunity to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The school has appropriate policies and procedures in place to respond to incidents of racism, if necessary.

The buildings and rooms are adequate for delivering the curriculum to the current numbers of pupils. There is a stimulating and positive environment for learning. However, the classrooms, corridors and general rooms in the old building are limited in terms of space, for example the sixth form social room and study room, and the canteen.

There are interesting displays of pupils' design and technology and art work. There are ample resources for learning in general, with very good resources in areas such as information and communication technology and the sports leisure centre. The school building and grounds are well maintained.

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

The headteacher and members of the senior leadership team have a clear and appropriate vision for the school. Regular meetings between the senior leadership team, heads of department and heads of year convey this vision effectively. The meetings with heads of department focus consistently on aspects for improvement and the agenda for improvement. Most managers fulfil their role effectively and contribute well to improving standards and provision in the school. Performance management requirements are implemented appropriately and the teaching and support staff have an opportunity to discuss their work and decide on appropriate targets.

The senior leadership team has a clear picture of the school's strengths and a good awareness of the areas for development. The headteacher uses data effectively to monitor performance, identify underachievement and to put purposeful strategies in place to raise standards. Appropriate strategies are in place to close the gap between the performance of boys and girls but as yet it is too early to see the effect on boys' achievements.

The governing body is supportive and has a good understanding of the school's performance. Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher about the school's performance. As a result, they know the school well. In general, the governing body plays the role of critical friend effectively and fulfils its statutory duties. Beneficial links have been established between individual governors and departments.

The school responds appropriately and effectively to national priorities. This includes establishing partnerships with other providers, developing 14-19 Learning Pathways and ensuring effective continuity between key stages 2 and 3.

Improving quality: Good

There is an obvious and appropriate link between the school's self-evaluation procedures and planning for improvement. The school has a thorough self-evaluation structure that has been planned on a whole-school and departmental level. Leaders have a clear picture and a correct understanding of the strengths and the areas that need to be improved. The self-evaluation process uses a wide range of first-hand evidence, including external and internal data and evidence from monitoring books and lessons. The improvement plan provides a clear direction for school improvement activities that include challenging and appropriate targets for the next two years.

In most departments, there is a clear link between the self-evaluation processes and the priorities of the improvement plan. Almost every department gives clear attention to pupils' relative performance as part of the self-evaluation process. Staff and governors have a suitable input to the self-evaluation report, but input from pupils and parents or carers is less obvious.

Lesson observation by heads of department is developing as a regular feature of self-evaluation. There are opportunities for teachers within departments to visit other lessons as part of their professional development. Teachers have beneficial opportunities to attend in-service training courses and comprehensive arrangements are in place to ensure continuous professional development.

The school benefits from its membership of external professional networks and of internal working groups. The school's involvement in various networks, such as the local authority's 14-19 group, has built capacity for continuous improvement. The internal groups that focus on teaching and learning and Welshness have already had an effect on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching.

Partnership working: Good

The school is working effectively with a range of partners. The partnership with a local college contributes well to extending the range of subjects that are offered in key stage 4 and to enriching the experiences of an increasing number of pupils.

The school has a positive relationship with parents. There is high attendance at parents' evenings and enthusiastic support from parents for the school's various activities. The school has developed its website in order to improve communication with parents and to provide information more effectively to them.

There are beneficial partnerships with feeder primary schools. The pastoral and curricular arrangements enable pupils to settle in quickly in Year 7. As a result of the immersion plan, partnerships with the area's English-medium primary schools are strengthening.

Resource management: Good

The resources that are allocated to the school are managed effectively and ensure appropriate staffing arrangements for teaching the curriculum effectively. Expenditure is monitored regularly by the headteacher, the administrative officer and the finance sub-committee. These arrangements ensure that funding is available to meet school and departmental priorities.

In general, the standards in the school and the quality of teaching provide good value for money. However, the majority of sixth form classes are small and do not give good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

A random selection of 196 pupils from across the school responded to the questionnaire. This sample represents a little above a quarter of the total number of pupils in the school.

Almost every pupil feels safe in the school. Most pupils feel that the school deals well with any bullying and that they have someone to talk to if they are concerned. Most pupils feel that the school teaches them how to keep fit and that there are sufficient opportunities in the school to have regular physical exercise. Most of the pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 feel that there is enough equipment in the school but a few sixth form pupils disagree.

Most pupils also feel that they are doing well and that teachers help them to learn and make progress. A few pupils feel that the homework that is set does not build well on what they have learnt in school. Many pupils feel that other pupils behave well, that teachers help them to understand and improve their school work and that the staff treat pupils fairly and show respect to them. The majority of pupils feel that the school listens to their views and most note that the school encourages them to take responsibility. Most feel that the school helps them to be prepared for the next school, college or working life. Many in key stage 4 and just over half of the sixth form feel that they have been given good advice when choosing courses.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Estyn received 142 parent questionnaires and most of them are either satisfied or very satisfied with the school in general.

Parents state that their children like the school, and that they are happy and feel safe there. Most parents believe that the pupils' behaviour is good, that pupils are respected, treated fairly and that they develop into becoming more mature and able to shoulder responsibilities. Most parents also feel that the teaching is good and that their children are making good progress in the school. Most parents feel that they receive good information about their child's progress and the majority feel that the school prepares their child well for moving onto the next school, college or work. A few parents feel that the homework that is set does not build well on what the pupils have learnt in school. A minority of parents also state that there is not a good variety of activities, including trips or visits. Most parents are of the opinion that the school is well run.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Catherine Evans	Reporting Inspector
Ceri Jones	Team Inspector
Alun Morgan	Team Inspector
Ray Owen	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Brian Jones	Peer Inspector
Meirion Davies	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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If available, the data report can be found 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' (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