



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 Gynradd Tanygrisiau
Blaenau Ffestiniog
Gwynedd
LL41 3SU**

Date of inspection: July 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 Gymraeg Tanygrisiau is located near the town of Blaenau Ffestiniog in Gwynedd and serves the community of Tanygrisiau.

At present, there are 59 pupils of three to 11 years of age on the register, which includes five part-time nursery age pupils. There has been a pattern of consistent decrease in the numbers on the register over the last three years.

Twenty-one per cent (21%) of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is a little higher than the national figure, but a considerable reduction on the figures of previous years. Twenty-seven per cent (27%) of the pupils on the register have special educational needs, including 5% of pupils with a statement.

Seventy-one per cent (71%) of the pupils speak Welsh at home. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds

At the time of the inspection, there was considerable instability in terms of the school staffing situation. The school's headteacher had been on sick leave since the middle of March 2011 and a part-time temporary headteacher was operational from the beginning of April 2011 until the end of the summer term 2011. During the inspection, the two key stage 2 classes were being taught by supply teachers. Uncertainty concerning the management of the school in September 2011 was continuing, and the school was also facing further reductions in the staffing level for September 2011.

The individual school budget in 2010-2011 per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Tanygrisiau is £3,444, which compares with a maximum of £8,442 and a minimum of £2,717 for primary schools in Gwynedd. The school has the 54th highest budget per pupil of the 103 primary schools in Gwynedd.

Summary

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

Current performance

Ysgol Tanygrisiau's current performance is adequate because:

- pupils' achievements in the National Curriculum assessments are good;
- attendance and standards of behaviour are very good;
- the pupils show positive attitudes towards school work and towards one another; and
- there is appropriate provision for satisfying the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

However:

- there is not enough progress in the pupils' writing skills in Years 5 and 6;
- there are too many pupils in key stage 2 whose reading age in Welsh and English is significantly lower than their chronological age;
- there is not sufficiently detailed planning for developing literacy skills across the curriculum and to ensure an appropriate challenge for pupils of higher ability; and
- there is no consistency in showing pupils what is needed to improve the quality of their work.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are judged as adequate because:

- instability about the management of the school hinders the school's strategic direction and the ability to address the aspects that need improvement;
- the role of the governing body as a critical friend has not been developed sufficiently;
- not enough attention is paid to areas to be improved in the school's self-evaluation report; and
- there is continued uncertainty about staffing in key stage 2.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 improve writing standards in key stage 2;
- R2 continue to raise reading standards;
- R3 improve the provision for physical education and the quality of teaching, especially in terms of differentiating for the needs of different groups of pupils of differing abilities in a class;
- R4 ensure that the schemes of work across the curriculum clearly show the progression in terms of skills;
- R5 improve assessment for learning, especially in terms of ensuring consistency across classes and improving the quality of marking;
- R6 ensure stability on the level of the leadership of the school in order to be able to set a clear strategic direction; and
- R7 improve the governors' understanding of the school's performance and their ability to operate as critical friends.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. Progress against the recommendations will be monitored by Estyn.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

In lessons, pupils apply themselves to the learning activities and generally work productively and make continuous progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, but pupils of higher ability do not achieve as much as they should in the classes.

In key stage 1, pupils make good progress in their literacy skills. Many of the pupils read aloud confidently and meaningfully. The progress in the ability to write independently is very good. By the end of the key stage, seven-year-old pupils can write a sequence of sentences for different purposes, showing a firm grasp of basic punctuation. The best pupils undertake extended writing, showing very good progress in the ability to vary the sentences and use a good range of vocabulary.

In key stage 2, pupils read materials of increasing challenge aloud and meaningfully in Welsh and English. The pupils who have received additional support with reading have made clear progress. However, the results of standard reading tests show that the reading age of too many key stage 2 pupils is lower than their chronological age in Welsh and English.

Key stage 2 pupils make progress in their ability to write in an extended way in their own words for a range of purposes. On the whole, they use punctuation correctly and organise their work into paragraphs. However, there is not enough progress in written work in Years 5 and 6 in terms of the range and quality of the writing. The shortcomings in the quality of presentation of the work and the standard of handwriting characterise the work of a significant minority of pupils.

Pupils in both key stages can speak about their work with increasing confidence. However, there is not enough progress in lessons in terms of the pupils' ability to contribute orally in a more extended way and exchange ideas.

Pupils achieve well in the assessments at the end of key stages 1 and 2. In general, the results for the period 2008 to 2010 compare favourably with those of similar schools, especially in key stage 1. However, in science and English in key stage 2, especially in reading and writing English, the results for 11-year-olds have been lower than the average for pupils in the family of similar schools in two of the last three years.

The percentage of pupils who reach a higher level than expected (level 3) in key stage is high. In key stage 2, the achievements of 11-year-old pupils are at the higher level (level 5) in general and compare favourably with the figures for similar schools.

Apart from Welsh writing in key stage 1, the achievements of boys in the end of the key stage assessments compare favourably with those of the girls. Pupils who are entitled to free school meals achieve well.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of keeping healthy. They feel safe and happy in school. They are very proud of their school and the close community that is a feature of it.

Pupils take interest in their school work and they work conscientiously and harmoniously in the lessons. They are courteous and friendly, and behave very well.

Pupils' attendance levels are high and are consistently among the 25% highest in comparison with those of pupils in similar schools.

The members of the school council play an active part in the life and work of the school, including in raising the awareness of their fellow pupils of the need to eat healthily and to keep fit. They contribute to decisions and represent the viewpoints of their fellow pupils well.

By taking part in and contributing to a host of social events and activities, the pupils have a strong awareness of the area and the local community.

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

The school provides an appropriate and balanced range of learning experiences for pupils. The regular use of the local area and its inhabitants attracts the interest of pupils, developing their knowledge and understanding of their locality well.

The school makes good use of the local authority's schemes of work in the current period of staffing instability to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. However, the short-term planning is not detailed enough to develop skills and to ensure that the work provides an appropriate level of challenge for the range of ability in the classes. Because of the staffing circumstances, the learning experiences do not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum fully in Years 5 and 6 as pupils have not had physical education classes recently.

The Welsh dimension permeates all of the school's life and work. The learning experiences are enriched by visits from poets and artists in residence, as well as regular opportunities to study the local environment and the history and folklore of the area.

Through activities such as the local project on the River Barlwyd, good attention is paid to issues concerning sustainability. There are also good opportunities for pupils to help to recycle waste materials in the school. Key stage 2 pupils had an opportunity to attend a local conference on fair trade. A beneficial contact has been

established with a school in Abbeylara in Ireland. However, provision for learning about global citizenship has not been developed sufficiently.

Teaching: Adequate

The teachers have good subject knowledge and the good relationship between them and the pupils fosters positive attitudes to work. The teachers take good advantage of the team of learning assistants who give appropriate support to pupils and help them to complete their tasks. At times, pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to think more deeply and contribute more extensively, especially in a whole-class situation. In general, the expectations are not high enough in terms of what pupils of higher ability can achieve.

The teachers share learning goals with the pupils, who help to measure their own progress. Targets and success criteria are shared with pupils, but the targets are not always specific enough or reviewed regularly. As a result, pupils do not have a clear enough understanding of what they need to do to improve the standard of their work. There are some examples of good practice in marking. However, in general, there is too much variation in the marking in terms of giving pupils guidance on what to do to improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy community that gives priority to pupils' welfare and safety.

The staff have a good knowledge of social deprivation and specific welfare problems. The school works closely with families and external agencies, such as an educational psychologist, behaviour support officers and the language and speech service. It also takes advantage of support from the health and welfare service, the police, the school nurse and social services. These agencies and services provide beneficial support for pupils according to the need to improve their attainment and their welfare.

There is appropriate provision for pupils' spiritual development in joint worship sessions. The school promotes the moral and social development of all pupils appropriately by fostering values such as fairness and respect.

The learning experiences promote pupils' personal development well. The pupils are very proud of their local community and contribute extensively to different charities such as Heart Research.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The school has thorough systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs. The support for these pupils ensures that they make progress against their personal targets. The regular progress reviews include consulting appropriately with parents and carers.

The school has not identified more able and talented pupils in order to arrange specific provision for them.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a welcoming community that nurtures positive attitudes and provides equal opportunities.

The extensive building offers plenty of room and a safe environment. Full use is made of all the facilities, including the school library, the hall, outside areas, such as the school garden and the Foundation Phase outdoor play area. The interesting displays are used well to create a stimulating atmosphere through displaying pupils' work and their participation in the local community.

The school's buildings and grounds are maintained well.

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

Detailed reports on data are produced, which show clearly the trends over time in the school's performance. There has been a clear pattern of improvement in some aspects of pupils' achievements at the end of key stage 2.

The acting headteacher succeeds well in supporting the school and its work in a period of considerable staffing instability. Good support has been given to the supply teachers who are responsible for the classes in key stage 2 at present.

A comprehensive and balanced review of the provision has been produced, which gives a clear direction for developing the school in the short term. However, uncertainty on the managerial level of the school continues and hinders ability to identify and address aspects where improvement is needed.

Every member of staff has a specific job description, which ensures that they all understand their role in implementing the school's plans.

Appropriate steps have been taken to strengthen the contribution of the governing body in setting whole-school priorities. However, the governors do not have sufficient understanding of how good the standards and quality are across the school, especially in terms of data trends and comparisons with similar schools. As a result, they do not operate effectively as critical friends.

The school gives appropriate attention to national and local priorities. It promotes pupils' bilingualism in line with the aspirations of Iaith Pawb. By holding a breakfast club, the school is addressing economic and social deprivation. Appropriate intentions have been identified for raising literacy standards.

Improving quality: Good

An appropriate programme is in place for monitoring subjects and whole-school aspects over a period of two years, which is part of a suitable self-evaluation strategy for the longer term.

The self-evaluation arrangements include annual class observations to monitor the quality of the teaching and learning. The school also makes effective use of the local authority's monitoring reports and questionnaires to collect the viewpoints of parents and pupils about the life and work of the school. There is not enough detail in the school's self-evaluation report and the instances of identifying aspects for improvement or further development are rare.

There is a clear link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation process and the priorities of the school development plan. The school development plan identifies appropriate intentions and includes appropriate steps and time limits, although there is not enough use of quantitative criteria to help to measure progress. Implementation responsibilities have been allocated appropriately to different members of staff. Progress during the year against the intentions of the current development plan have been reviewed in detail and are a useful basis for setting priorities for next year.

Leaders provide appropriate opportunities for the staff to benefit from continuous professional development. The procedures include agreeing on goals and setting specific development needs. The school works with nearby schools and has begun developing networks of professional practice in the core subjects.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with parents and other schools. It plays a prominent part in the local community. Pupils regularly visit different places within the village and beyond and benefit from visits from members of the local community.

Pastoral arrangements with Ysgol y Moelwyn prepare the pupils well for the transition to the next stage of their education. The school also co-operates effectively with Ysgol y Moelwyn and other primary schools in the area in order to prepare resources and ensure consistency in the assessments of pupils' work. The school regularly welcomes pupils from Ysgol y Moelwyn who undertake work experience.

There are strong links with the local authority and teacher training institutions, and the school provides work experience placements for students from Coleg Meirion Dwyfor.

Resource management: Adequate

The school makes appropriate use of the expertise of staff and classroom assistants and it has plenty of learning resources. It meets the statutory requirements concerning teachers' workload.

The school was in considerable financial debt for a period and it faces a situation of further reductions in staffing for September. Recent savings have led to a small proportion of funds in reserve.

The school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Learner questionnaires

All the learners feel that they are doing well at school and receive enough support from teachers and other staff. Nearly all the learners feel safe in school and that the school teaches them how to keep healthy. However, a third of the boys indicate that there are not enough opportunities to have regular physical exercise. Most of the learners indicate that the school deals well with any cases of bullying and that they know to whom to turn if they are worried. A minority of the pupils feels that behaviour is good in the lessons, and half of the pupils indicate that behaviour is not good at break and lunch times.

Parent/carer questionnaires

Fourteen responses to the questionnaire were received. The responses are very positive. The parents/carers all agree or agree strongly that their children like school and are making progress. Parents/carers also say that their children feel safe at school and that the behaviour and quality of teaching is good. They receive information regularly on their children's progress, understand the school's complaints procedure and feel comfortable in asking a question or expressing a concern about any issue. Nearly all of the parents feel that the school is providing specific support for learners' specific needs, that learners are treated fairly and with respect, and that the school is run well.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Iolo Dafydd	Reporting Inspector
Huw Watkins	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Marc Lloyd Jones	Peer Inspector
Iwan Morgan (part-time acting Headteacher)	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