



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Ysgol Baladeulyn  
Nantlle  
Caernarfon  
Gwynedd  
LL54 6BT**

**Date of inspection: November 2017**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

## About Ysgol Baladeulyn

Ysgol Gynradd Baladeulyn is situated in the village of Nantlle near the foot of Snowdon, about three miles from Pen-y-groes in Gwynedd. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 29 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including six part-time nursery-age pupils. They are divided into two mixed-age classes.

Approximately 33% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is higher than the national percentage. Approximately three-quarters of pupils speak Welsh at home. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 28% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher in charge was appointed to the post in January 2017. The school was last inspected in May 2012.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.  
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

## Summary

There is a very strong Welsh ethos at the school, and provision encourages pupils to make full use of the Welsh language in all aspects of school life. Pupils show pride towards the language and an obvious appreciation of the culture and history of the local area.

Exceptional features include the familial ethos which ensures that pupils and staff care for each other naturally, and the particularly good working relationship between pupils and staff.

Most pupils make sound progress and achieve well. Behaviour is very good and pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. The headteacher's enthusiastic leadership ensures a clear vision for the school and creates a lively learning community that promotes friendship, kindness and achievement for all.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Raise standards of extended writing in both languages across the curriculum
- R2 Improve opportunities for the school's older pupils to develop the full range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- R3 Ensure that pupils are more aware of what they need to do to improve their own work
- R4 Provide appropriate opportunities for leaders to develop their leadership roles further

## **What happens next**

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

On entry to the school, most pupils have literacy and numeracy skills that are similar to those that are expected for their age. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress and achieve well.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop to communicate confidently orally by using an increasing range of vocabulary and correct syntax. Most have natural and rich Welsh language. They show pride towards the language and use it to socialise during playtime and in their lessons. At the top of the school, most achieve a good standard of bilingualism and change freely from one language to the other, for example when responding intelligently to a news programme on the dangers of bullying on social media.

Most pupils develop as confident readers in the foundation phase. The youngest pupils recognise letters and sounds correctly and, by the end of the phase, most read correctly and build unfamiliar words successfully. More able pupils read with expression and discuss the content of their books and characters confidently. In key stage 2, many pupils read meaningfully and with effective expression in both languages. They apply their reading skills effectively across the curriculum, for example when gathering information from different sources in order to create a model to show planets' distance from the sun.

By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils write effectively for different purposes across the areas of learning, for example when writing a pamphlet on 'from the seed to chocolate'. Many write independently by punctuating correctly and using adjectives effectively to enrich their work. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils vary their sentences and use an increasing range of relevant vocabulary in Welsh and English. Many write successfully in a range of written forms across the curriculum, for example when writing about a recent visit from a former pupil to talk about her art work. However, only a very few pupils draft and re-draft their work effectively when completing extended writing tasks across the curriculum.

In the foundation phase, most pupils' numeracy skills are developing well. By the end of the phase, they show a secure grasp of number facts that are appropriate for their age, and use this knowledge skilfully to solve problems, for example when making and selling biscuits to raise money to buy clay for the class. In key stage 2, most pupils have a sound understanding of number strategies. At the top of the school, many use a wide range of methods confidently to calculate mentally and on paper to solve problems, for example when arranging a menu for a local cafe or when calculating the cost of a visit to Nant Gwrtheyrn.

Most pupils across the foundation phase develop a full range of ICT skills and use them purposefully. They develop as confident users when applying these skills across the areas of learning, for example when creating an invitation to a party on the shore of Llyn Nantlle. They input a series of instructions correctly in order to move a toy along a specific path. In general, pupils' ICT skills in the remainder of the school

build suitably on this foundation. Many pupils in key stage 2 develop their communication skills effectively, for example by contacting pupils at a nearby school by e-mail. They search safely on the internet, for example when gathering information about the planets. However, very few develop a good understanding of how to handle data or create spreadsheets to model real-life situations.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Nearly all pupils enjoy the school's life and work. They are very well-behaved and are polite and welcoming towards visitors. Most pupils' social and life skills are good. Pupils are very caring towards each other, and older pupils take their responsibilities as 'faithful friends' on the playground seriously. They show positive attitudes towards their work, concentrate well in lessons and work diligently for extended periods of time. However, pupils' skills in improving and leading their own learning have only just started to develop.

The pupil's voice is important and has a prominent place in the school's life and work. A strong feature is the commitment and enthusiasm of members of the school council when presenting the school's language vision to promote the social use of the Welsh language to village residents in the community hall. Pupils contribute extensively to the community. A good example of this is pupils' enthusiastic contribution to Gŵyl Fai Dyffryn Nantlle. Pupils take pride in the opportunity to support various charities, such as the Awyr Las charity and conducting a thanksgiving service to raise money to support a local family. This has a positive effect on their understanding of other people's needs, in addition to developing a sense of pride in their community.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and they have a good understanding of the effect that this has on the body. Pupils feel completely safe at the school and are happy to discuss problems with members of staff, and are confident that they listen to them. Most pupils have a sound understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet.

Over a period of four years, the attendance percentage has increased gradually, and the number of persistent absences has reduced significantly.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide interesting and stimulating learning opportunities for pupils. Staff establish a particularly good working relationship with pupils, which fosters a successful learning environment. There is a very strong Welsh ethos and provision that encourages pupils to make full use of the Welsh language in all aspects of school life. All staff take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' language, which contributes successfully to their oral skills.

Learning experiences are based on interesting and imaginative themes that ignite pupils' desire to learn. In the foundation phase, there is a clear emphasis on nurturing independence and developing pupils' skills effectively by providing practical and stimulating experiences. Staff make very effective use of the outdoor learning area and the local area. A good example of this is pupils' work in the foundation phase in creating artwork with natural materials outdoors. Key stage 2 teachers ensure that learning experiences build successfully on pupils' previous experiences, for example when studying the history of the slate industry.

Foundation phase teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively across the areas of learning. Key stage 2 teachers have recently adapted the planning system in order to build more purposefully on this firm foundation. This ensures that pupils are given valuable opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects. However, in key stage 2, opportunities to develop pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum do not include the full range of skills, particularly their data-handling skills.

Across the school, teachers have good subject knowledge and they lead effective and interesting learning sessions that motivate pupils to learn. They link their lessons effectively with previous learning and use a range of methods skilfully. They explain new concepts clearly and ensure that sessions have a good pace. Purposeful co-operation between teachers and assistants provides appropriate support in order for pupils to complete their tasks successfully and benefit from them.

Teachers plan effectively to develop the Cwricwlwm Cymreig, and this contributes to the pupils' sense of pride in their language, area and culture. A strong feature of provision is the valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the local area, for example when visiting a local vineyard and vegetable garden, or when learning about myths such as the sad story of Meinir and Rhys at Nant Gwrtheyrn. This promotes pupils' awareness of their heritage successfully.

Teachers provide pupils with valuable feedback during lessons on how to improve their work. However, teachers do not use formative assessment to improve pupils' work consistently enough across the school. Opportunities for key stage 2 pupils to re-draft and improve their own work are inconsistent.

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

An exceptional feature of the school is the familial ethos, which ensures that pupils and staff care for each other naturally. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe at the school. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very successfully. Valuable collective worship periods create a Christian ethos and provide valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on values such as friendship and kindness. This is reflected in the positive working relationship between adults and pupils, and between the pupils.

The school has effective systems for tracking pupils' progress during their time at the school. The school has supportive links with a number of specialist agencies, which ensure high quality support and guidance for pupils and their parents. As a result, individuals receive high quality care. Robust procedures for improving attendance have improved pupils' attendance rates over the last four years.

The school provides effectively for pupils with additional learning needs. Teachers use a variety of appropriate methods to identify pupils' needs at an early stage, and take appropriate steps to meet their needs in the classroom. The school has effective plans to support pupils who need assistance. Teachers provide appropriate individual education plans for individuals, and parents and pupils are included suitably in the process of producing and reviewing them. As a result, the school ensures that most pupils make good progress against their targets.

The school has a good relationship with parents and the community. The school has recently developed a social media site in order to provide regular information for parents about what their children are doing at school. Parents appreciate this development and, as a result, they are more aware of what they can do at home to support learning. The school takes pride in its close links with the local community. These various links enable pupils to learn about the life of the local area, for example by discussing the effect of the slate industry on the area's culture.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting eating and drinking healthily. This has a positive effect on pupils' understanding of issues relating to their health and wellbeing.

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

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher provides enthusiastic leadership, which ensures a clear strategic direction for the school and a culture that promotes continuous improvement. She has a sound vision that is based on creating a lively learning community that promotes friendship, kindness and pupils' achievement. She conveys this vision effectively to staff, pupils, governors and parents. One of the school's strengths is the strong focus on providing a variety of stimulating experiences to develop the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension. As a result, pupils value the culture and history of their local area greatly.

The headteacher has recently restructured the management responsibilities, and staff are beginning to familiarise themselves with their roles appropriately. Effective performance management arrangements, which are linked to the school's priorities, provide good opportunities to promote the staff's professional development to fulfil their new responsibilities. A good example of this is teachers' commitment to expanding their understanding of how to improve ICT provision when delivering the digital framework.

The headteacher has implemented robust strategies and has created an ethos of co-operation among staff. She leads regular staff meetings to plan and track pupils' progress. As a result, they have a strong commitment to developing and promoting improvements through positive co-operation. This has already led to improving the quality of teaching and to ensuring regular opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. However, it is too early to measure the effect of this on the standards of pupils' work in key stage 2.

The headteacher has created a culture and ethos to support staff's professional development. She ensures that there are valuable opportunities for them to share good practice across the school and by working with other schools. Teachers are working diligently with teachers from local schools to revise their schemes of work in response to the new curriculum. This enriches pupils' experiences, for example by organising visits to the Pant Du vineyard and Nant Gwrtheyrn Welsh language centre that are linked to their work on the theme of dreams.



The headteacher has established a wide range of suitable self-evaluation activities which ensure that she has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation timetable is comprehensive and includes regular opportunities to consider and analyse broad evidence of pupils' achievement. The self-evaluation report identifies the school's strengths well and ensures that staff have a sound understanding of the areas for improvement. There is a good link between the self-evaluation report and the school improvement plan, which focuses clearly on improving provision and raising standards. The headteacher and teachers monitor progress carefully and submit rigorous reports to governors that show where further improvement is needed. This has already led to improving standards of numeracy.

Expenditure links well with the priorities in the improvement plan, and funding is monitored carefully in order to ensure that it is used effectively. Recent investment has ensured new ICT equipment, which will help to raise standards. The school makes appropriate use of the pupil development grant to raise the standard of work of specific pupils.

The governing body is dedicated and supportive of the school, and members visit classes and the whole school regularly. They have an increasing understanding of strengths and areas for improvement, following constructive visits. This is beginning to develop their awareness of all aspects of school life successfully. As a result, the governors' strategic role is developing purposefully, and they are beginning to challenge the school about its performance. Their role as critical friends is developing gradually.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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