



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

A report on

**Ysgol Nant Y Groes
Greenfield Road
Colwyn Bay
LL29 8ET**

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by

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

About Ysgol Nant y Groes

Ysgol Nant y Groes is situated on the outskirts of the seaside town of Colwyn Bay in Conwy county borough. In 2015, Ysgol Babanod Glan y Môr merged with Ysgol Pendorlan to create the school. Although the headteacher had led both schools since September 2013, he was appointed to the post of headteacher of Ysgol Nant y Groes in April 2015. English is the main medium of the school's life and work.

There are 315 pupils on roll, including 31 part-time nursery pupils. Foundation phase pupils are taught in six single-age classes, while key stage 2 pupils are taught in six mixed-age classes. There are also two resource classes for pupils with additional learning needs at the school, namely one for foundation phase pupils and the other for key stage 2 pupils who receive speech and language support.

Thirty-two per cent (32%) of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national percentage of 19%. The school has identified 40% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is significantly higher than the national percentage of 21%. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Very few pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school has identified that very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Very few pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes.

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

The school responds successfully to the development of pupils' wellbeing. This is at the heart of all of the school's work. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is sound and has a positive effect on their attitudes towards learning. Very effective intervention for a few pupils with low attendance has ensured that the attendance of nearly all has improved.

Teachers plan a wide range of learning experiences that engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. As a result, nearly all pupils show a positive attitude towards their learning. Nearly all pupils are very caring towards each other and treat others with respect.

Maintaining and raising standards is at the heart of the school's work. In general, by using a range of suitable evaluation activities, leaders have appropriate knowledge of standards and teaching. However, leaders have not been quick enough to address the inconsistencies in the school and have not acted quickly enough to ensure that the foundation phase has been implemented thoroughly in all classes.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate and needs improvement

Recommendations

- R1 Improve monitoring processes and act more effectively on results in order to ensure consistency and improvement in provision and standards
- R2 Ensure that the principles of the foundation phase are established firmly
- R3 Raise standards in Welsh and ICT across the school
- R4 Strengthen the role of the governing body to operate more strategically in the school's work

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

On entry to the nursery class, many pupils have basic skills that are lower than expected for their age. During their time at the school, many make sound progress from their starting points. They build on previous learning effectively and apply their thinking and problem-solving skills occasionally across a range of areas of learning. Pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes and in the resource classes make sound progress against their targets.

Across the school, most pupils have good communication skills. They listen attentively and discuss their work enthusiastically, by using suitable syntax and vocabulary that is appropriate for their age and ability. A few more able pupils in the foundation phase use wider vocabulary, for example when discussing and comparing the weather in Africa and Wales. Most pupils show an interest in reading and make appropriate progress in their skills. More able pupils discuss the content of stories confidently and refer to specific events in the text. By the end of Year 2, many pupils develop their ideas sensibly in a wide range of written forms. In general, they punctuate their work purposefully, but this is inconsistent. A few pupils use adjectives effectively in their work, for example when responding to the story of 'Harry and the Bucketful of Dinosaurs'. However, unsuitable overuse of ready-made worksheets limits pupils' ability to develop their independent writing skills across the areas of learning.

Most pupils in key stage 2 communicate clearly. At the top of the school, they discuss their work intelligently and maturely. A notable example of this is the way in which pupils discuss different strategies that were used to calculate their answers in mathematics work. Most read correctly and show an appropriate awareness of the text, and refer to specific parts to express an opinion. They gather relevant information from different texts successfully, for example when researching facts about China. Across key stage 2, many write confidently in a wide range of forms. However, the standard of written work is not consistent across the classes. Sentence structure is unclear and phonetic spelling hinders the quality of work of a very few pupils. Pupils' literacy skills are developed successfully across a range of curricular subjects, for example when writing a script for a puppet show as part of their scientific work.

Across the school, most pupils make limited progress in their Welsh language skills. In the foundation phase, most pupils follow simple instructions. They use elementary vocabulary, for example when responding to the register and choosing their lunch. In key stage 2, a majority of pupils answer simple questions correctly, but a lack of vocabulary and syntax hinders the confidence of a majority of pupils to communicate confidently. Many write a simple description of themselves with support by using basic sentence structures. Pupils' understanding of Welsh traditions and culture is limited.

In general, many pupils have sound numeracy skills. In the foundation phase, most pupils make appropriate progress in their mathematical skills. They handle money correctly and develop a good understanding of place value and measurement.

However, they do not use them in activities across the areas of learning. In key stage 2, most pupils have a sound understanding of number strategies and, by Year 6, they apply their numeracy skills to a good standard in a variety of activities across the curriculum, for example when designing and making a kite, and when calculating the cost and profit of selling cakes at the school fair.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills in the foundation phase are limited. Most use computer programs confidently to reinforce their mathematics skills. Very few pupils use technology equipment to film and record their work, for example when performing the story 'Handa's Surprise'. Many pupils' ICT skills in key stage 2 are developing gradually. They use word processing programs appropriately and prepare very rudimentary multimedia presentations.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils across the school have positive attitudes towards learning and show an interest in their activities. They work together effectively with their peers and respect others' opinions. However, the understanding of a minority of pupils across the school of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work is limited.

Nearly all pupils enjoy the school's life and work and feel safe in its inclusive and caring ethos. Most know who to approach if they have any concerns. Most pupils behave well both inside and outside the classroom. Nearly all pupils are polite towards each other, staff and visitors. They are very caring towards each other and treat others with respect in the dining hall and on the school playground. This is supported effectively by the 'playground buddies'. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe on the internet.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep fit and eat and drink healthily. They take part in a wide variety of activities, both during and outside school hours, for example the cooking and sports clubs. This makes a very positive contribution towards their understanding of the importance of a healthy body and mind.

Pupils contribute well towards a number of charities, for example Children in Need and the local food bank. This has a positive effect on their awareness of the needs of others in the community and the wider world. The school council and eco committee are enthusiastic and contribute purposefully towards improvements in the school. An example of this is that way in which they have played a prominent part in designing a new playground for the school. Pupils' express their views about what they would like to learn and contribute fully to the class themes.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

The quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting learning experiences and tasks that engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. 'Wow' days at the beginning of a new theme spark pupils' imagination, and visits at the beginning of a unit of work enrich learning successfully. The school is in the process of adapting its schemes of work, and elements of a creative curriculum are beginning to permeate the school's work. The literacy and numeracy

framework is well embedded in the school's plans and there is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to use their skills across the curriculum. However, although the school has a detailed scheme to develop ICT skills over time, it has not implemented the scheme in full.

Teachers set appropriate learning objectives and share success criteria regularly. However, learning objectives are not always specific enough and do not include pupils fully in the process. The principles of the foundation phase are in place and there are purposeful tasks in the areas that support learning appropriately. However, tasks do not always respond fully to pupils' needs. Where teaching is most effective, teachers have a sound understanding of the requirements of the curriculum. Lessons have a good pace and teachers question skilfully, which enables pupils to elaborate and explain their answers. However, at times, over-direction from teachers limits pupils' ability to become independent learners and to guide their own learning. There is effective co-operation between teachers and assistants, who succeed in providing valuable support to individuals and specific groups of pupils. This ensures that many pupils make purposeful progress in lessons and intervention activities.

Teachers mark pupils' work purposefully and pupils have a good understanding of the marking method. In general, comments from teachers and peers are constructive and guide pupils to improve their work.

Teachers who teach in the resource class provide education of a good standard. They plan tasks that respond fully to pupils' needs. Stimulating activities have a positive effect on nearly all pupils' achievement. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and make use of the outcomes. Provision to develop pupils' understanding of their local area is sound; for example, they visit Porth Eirias beach and learn about the history of the evacuees who settled in Colwyn Bay. However, there are few opportunities for them to learn about the wider culture of Wales. Staff use the Welsh language occasionally during lessons by giving instructions and praising pupils' efforts. However, the school does not promote regular use of the Welsh language in formal and informal situations in full.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is an inclusive and friendly community in which values such as respect, courtesy and care are promoted very successfully. Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe at the school.

The school has appropriate systems for tracking pupils' progress, which measure attainment against their targets effectively. Teachers use information from this process successfully in order to identify pupils who need additional support with literacy and numeracy. Processes also identify pupils at an early stage and provide purposeful intervention and support for individuals and specific groups of pupils. Class teachers review targets in individual education plans regularly and progress can be seen in many pupils' work. Monitoring provision for intervention groups and regular detailed tracking ensure that many pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.

The school has a good relationship with external agencies, such as social services, the inclusion officer, language therapists and the police, which has a positive effect

on pupils' wellbeing. All pupils with emotional and social needs are supported successfully in weekly nurture groups, which have a positive effect on their wellbeing and attitudes towards learning. Intervention for the very few pupils with challenging behaviour has ensured that nearly all of those pupils have full access to the curriculum. Effective intervention for a few pupils with low attendance has ensured that the attendance of nearly all has improved.

There is a good relationship between parents and the school, and they share information about class work regularly. An example of this is the 'Chinese Food and Bingo' night. This ensures that parents play an active part in their child's education.

Provision ensures that pupils have an appropriate understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. The 'Healthy Eating Week' and weekly cooking club reinforce this well. Physical education lessons and new play areas ensure that most pupils understand the benefits of physical exercise.

There are effective transition procedures that ensure that pupils transfer smoothly to the local secondary school. The school's internal transition arrangements are very successful. A notable example of this is the way in which Year 2 pupils were led to the hall as evacuees to meet their new parents, namely Year 5 pupils, as part of the process.

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

Through regular assemblies and collective worship, and personal and social education lessons, the school develops most pupils' understanding of spiritual and moral aspects, and values such as equality and tolerance, well.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The school's vision is based on developing pupils' wellbeing and promoting high standards. Despite all of the changes over the last two years, including merging two schools and settling in a new building, the staff have succeeded in maintaining an inclusive ethos, in which pupils feel safe. The new senior management team work together effectively and are beginning to guide the school's strategic direction. Leaders plan purposeful and interesting curricular opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, but it is too early to measure their effect on standards in full. The co-ordinators are developing good management skills. They present new teaching strategies and model good practice on the classroom floor successfully. This has led to raising standards of writing. However, the school's monitoring arrangements are not structured or incisive enough. Leaders do not take early enough action to address the inconsistency in the quality of provision.

The governing body is very supportive of the school. It receives up-to-date information about the school through the headteacher's detailed reports. However, it does not have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This limits its ability to challenge the school and hold it to account for its performance.

Leaders use an appropriate range of suitable evidence to produce a self-evaluation report, including analysis of attainment data, lesson observations and scrutinising pupils' work. The report provides an honest and balanced picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

There is a clear link between the findings of self-evaluation and priorities in the improvement plan. There are a suitable number of priorities to be achieved within a realistic timescale. The plan identifies staff responsibilities clearly and activities have been costed appropriately. However, success criteria and the arrangements for monitoring progress are not clear enough. This limits leaders' ability to measure the plan's effect on the quality of provision and pupils' standards of attainment. The principles of the foundation phase have not been embedded fully across the classes.

Opportunities that are provided for the school's staff to develop professionally are sound. Opportunities respond to the school's needs and their own professional needs. The school works successfully with schools in the catchment area to share good practice and plan jointly, for example to develop pupils' writing skills. This has a positive effect on pupils' standards across the school.

The school has enough teachers with suitable qualifications to deliver the curriculum appropriately. The school makes effective use of its indoor environment and is beginning to develop the outdoor area for the foundation phase on the new site. The headteacher manages funding carefully and ensures that expenditure links appropriately with the school's priorities for improvement. The pupil development grant is used purposefully to raise standards of attainments and ensure the wellbeing of specific groups of pupils.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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