



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

A report on

**Ysgol Dolbadarn
Llanberis
Gwynedd
LL55 4SH**

Date of inspection: October 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Dolbadarn

Ysgol Dobadarn primary school is in the village of Llanberis in Gwynedd local authority. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work, and English is introduced as a subject in key stage 2. There are 177 pupils on roll, including 14 nursery-age, part-time pupils.

The average proportion of pupils that are eligible for free school meals over the last three years is approximately 8%. This is significantly lower than the national average of 18%. About 56% of pupils speak Welsh at home. The school has identified about 31% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. This is significantly higher than the national average of 21%. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A Language Difficulties Unit, which is part of Gwynedd education authority's provision, is located in the school.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in January 2012, and the school was last inspected in December 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

The robust leadership of the headteacher and members of the senior management team provide the school with an extremely clear strategic direction for developing the school. Leaders have very high expectations that are based on providing education of the highest possible quality to seek to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential. All members of staff have a sound vision to promote Welshness, foster respect and encourage pupils to do their best.

Staff work together highly effectively as a team, and they receive very good support from the governors. As a result, nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make very sound progress, achieve well, and work independently. They perform at outcomes and levels that at least correspond to that expected, and by the time they reach the top of the school, the majority make progress that exceeds this.

Nearly all pupils show obvious pride in their school. Most communicate with visitors and adults particularly very effectively. They are very polite and friendly, considerate and relate very well to each other.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Excellent
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Excellent

Recommendations

- R1 Develop further the higher information technology and communication (ICT) modelling skills of pupils in key stage 2

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the various opportunities that exist to include the pupils' voice when planning their learning experiences. The case study will be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

On entry to the school, most pupils have basic skills that are appropriate for their age. During their time at the school, nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make very sound progress, achieve well, and work independently. They perform at outcomes and levels that at least correspond to that expected, and by the time they reach the top of the school, the majority make progress that exceeds this.

Most pupils listen attentively, speak clearly, and express their ideas confidently. In the foundation phase, most pupils discuss their work with adults and other pupils knowledgeably and enthusiastically. Most pupils in key stage 2 communicate clearly in both languages and offer answers, comments and express an opinion extremely maturely. At the top of the school, they discuss the events of the Holocaust very sensitively and intelligently. They show pride towards the Welsh language and choose to use the language to socialise during play time as well as in their lessons. At the top of the school, most reach a very good standard of bilingualism and change easily from one language to another when discussing their work.

The reading skills of nearly all pupils are developing very successfully. By the end of the foundation phase, most read fluently and correctly and strive maturely to build words that are unfamiliar to them. Many read with expression and clear meaning. Most pupils in key stage 2 read intelligently and maturely in both languages. They make extremely effective use of their reading skills to glean relevant information from books and various texts and from appropriate websites to enrich their work across the curriculum. For example, they have researched the economic, environmental and social effect on a specific area following a tsunami.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their writing skills highly effectively. They spell correctly and punctuate purposefully, in the main. By the end of the phase, most make very good progress in their proficiency to use varied vocabulary and language to write stories, letters and poems. For example, they have written an interesting letter to share the experiences of life in Llanberis with a character called Ceri the Koala in Australia.

By the time they reach the top of the school, most pupils write mature pieces of writing of a high standard in a wide range of contexts. They structure their work correctly in Welsh and English, and show a firm grasp of syntax and punctuation. Many create creative and imaginative pieces, and make excellent use of effects and comparisons to enrich their work. For example, they have described the effect of an earthquake on a local community very poignantly. Most pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is very neat.

In the foundation phase, nearly all pupils use their numeracy skills successfully in other areas. They collect information and record their results in simple tables and diagrams, for example when collecting and recording data to identify different birds that nest near Llyn Padarn. They present their findings skilfully in a bar graph. They develop an understanding of weight by using units of measurement correctly to make biscuits, for example.

In key stage 2, nearly all pupils' numeracy skills are very robust, and the most able pupils achieve very highly. Most pupils use measuring skills exceptionally effectively to discover the costs of using electricity and comparing the prices of different suppliers. They use and interpret data extremely intelligently, for example when evaluating the different skills of Gareth Bale, the footballer, in a game, and present and analyse his contribution in the form of a pie chart. They solve number problems very effectively, for example to identify the code patterns to interpret hidden messages during the Second World War.

Most pupils' ICT skills are developing very soundly across the school. In the foundation phase, pupils create computer-based designs in the form of wallpaper patterns and save their work carefully in appropriate files. They create simple sentences confidently to offer ideas on how to catch a dragon or to describe the features of autumn leaves. They use an electronic tablet confidently to film their peers, giving instructions on how to make a cup of tea.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils create and interrogate data effectively to create multimedia presentations to reinforce their work, for example to show ways of keeping safe on the internet. They produce detailed databases to present information as a pie chart to convey how often pupils listen to Welsh language music. However, their modelling skills have not developed fully at the higher levels.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

The pupil's voice is a very strong element of the school's work and pupils take full advantage of the numerous opportunities to express an opinion. The school council has led important aspects such as creating policies relating to health and equal opportunities. Most pupils support the activities of the numerous committees very enthusiastically and raise money for several local and national charities. This has a very positive effect on their awareness of the needs of others within their community and the wider world.

Nearly all pupils show obvious pride in their school. The behaviour of nearly all pupils in lessons, assemblies, when moving around the school, and during break time, is excellent. Most pupils feel safe at school, and know to whom to turn when they need support. They communicate with visitors and adults particularly maturely and are very polite and friendly, considerate and relate very well to each other. Nearly all pupils give careful consideration to their friends' needs. For example, the "playground buddies" ensure that no child is without a friend during lunch time and play time.

Nearly all pupils across the school show very positive attitudes towards their work and persevere with their tasks especially maturely. By the time they reach the top of the school, most have a very sound understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In all classes, pupils take full advantage of the opportunities to suggest what they would like to learn within theme and offer their own learning paths. This is a clear strength and has a positive effect on their enthusiasm and perseverance.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and take part in physical activities regularly. For example, they use the local environment to go mountaineering and kayaking regularly. This contributes very effectively to developing their fitness and their social skills.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

The significant features of the highly successful teaching strategies that are used across the school have a positive and direct effect on pupils' achievement and wellbeing. The agreed system of planning differentiated learning activities that address the needs of pupils of all abilities is a very strong feature. The work is based on themes and interesting and imaginative learning experiences that include consideration of pupils' ideas as starting points. At the start of each theme, pupils' state what they already know and what they would like to learn, and at the end of the study period, they explain what they have learned. This stimulates their interest well and develops their skills and curiosity towards learning skilfully, and strengthens their commitment to their work extremely successfully.

Teachers' careful and thorough planning ensure that tasks build skilfully on previous ones and ensure that there is clear progression and continuity in pupils' independent learning skills as they move through the school. In the foundation phase, tasks challenge pupils to work independently in the learning areas very successfully. In key stage 2, learning builds methodically on this, and pupils take more responsibility increasingly for choosing the level of challenge that they want to complete in their activities. As a result, most pupils develop into very confident and mature learners.

The school ensures that developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is core to their plans. Teachers plan rich and creative learning experiences to develop pupils' skills systematically, based on their previous experiences. This offers them effective opportunities to apply them across the curriculum completely naturally, which leads to a high standard by the end of key stage 2. Pupils receive good opportunities to use their ICT skills across the curriculum. However, there are limited opportunities to develop pupils' higher ICT modelling skills in key stage 2.

Teachers and learning assistants work extremely effectively as a team and take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' language, which contributes successfully to their good oral skills. They promote the Welsh language and Welshness very successfully. For example, they encourage pupils to learn about the history of their local area by visiting the village and beyond regularly. They arrange for pupils to study the work of Welsh artists and authors and they compete in eisteddfodau regularly. These experiences enrich their knowledge and identities as Welsh people.

Teachers have very high expectations of every pupil, and the quality of their presentations and questions is very challenging and purposeful. This ensures that nearly all pupils commit fully to their tasks, concentrate for extended periods, and demonstrate high motivation. There is an enthusiastic learning environment in all classes and a healthy working relationship between individuals in all lessons.

Staff have successful strategies to identify what pupils understand as well as the ability to identify the next steps for them. Oral and written feedback is given to pupils in order for them to understand what they need to do to improve. Increasing opportunities are given to pupils to reflect on their own learning and that of their peers, and to contribute effectively to the process of setting targets to improve their work. This element is a strength at the school and contributes very successfully to pupils' progress and high achievement.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The quality of care, support and guidance provided is extremely successful and has a very positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The school has a very effective procedure for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress and wellbeing. The actions enable staff to plan and provide comprehensive support to address the needs of individuals and specific groups of pupils very successfully. This enables pupils to make very sound progress from their starting points.

Teachers identify pupils' educational, emotional and social needs at an early stage and the assistants work extremely skilfully under their guidance and that of the additional learning needs co-ordinator to implement a wide range of purposeful intervention programmes of a high standard for them. All pupils with additional learning needs have a clear education plan, which includes specific, measurable and challenging targets. The school works effectively with support agencies such as the welfare officers to produce these plans. This ensures that the careful and suitable provision for pupils has a very positive effect on their progress and wellbeing.

Provision for developing pupils' creative and cultural skills is a strength at the school. Similarly, a strong tradition of competing in local and national Urdd eisteddfodau and taking part in concerts has existed for a number of years. Valuable use is made of visitors to expand pupils' arts experiences, for example when they work with local artists to create attractive pictures and collages. These opportunities enrich pupils' experiences highly effectively and lead to high standards in their creative skills, raising their self-confidence and enriching their awareness of their Welsh identity very successfully.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development very effectively by providing stimulating collective worship assemblies and through religious education lessons.

Provision for personal and social education is of very high quality and ensures that pupils develop a sound understanding of values such as honesty, fairness and respect for other religions and beliefs. This is demonstrated clearly in the gentle way in which the school offers valuable guidance to pupils to foster good behaviour practices. Pupils' friendly behaviour towards each other is evidence of the success of this caring support.

The school provides numerous opportunities for pupils to have their say through various forums, especially to contribute ideas about what they would like to learn. By doing so, staff encourage pupils to become conscientious learners who take responsibility for their own learning. They place great store on developing learners that are responsible citizens by encouraging them to develop their awareness of the needs of others and raising money for charity regularly.

The school has very robust arrangements for promoting eating and drinking healthily and for ensuring that pupils understand how to stay safe. The school's commitment to promoting activities such as walking in the local mountains and developing climbing skills offers valuable opportunities for them to develop their fitness regularly.

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

Leadership and management: Excellent

The robust leadership of the headteacher and members of the senior management team give a clear strategic direction for developing the school. They have very high expectations that are based on providing education of the highest possible quality in order to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential. All members of staff have a robust vision for promoting Welshness, fostering respect and encouraging pupils to do their best. They convey this to pupils, parents and governors very successfully.

The headteacher has allocated responsibilities extremely effectively among staff and plays a key role in developing them and promoting co-operation. Valuable opportunities are given to members of staff to lead initiatives that are based on specific aspects of the curriculum, such as formative assessment and planning language steps to ensure progression in oracy skills. This ensures that all aspects of the school's work have a positive and clear influence on pupils' wellbeing, in addition to ensuring a homely ethos and an organised community.

Regular staff meetings concentrate clearly on priorities for improvement and ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities clearly. They work together very closely and meet regularly to discuss and plan jointly.

A culture of continuous self-evaluation, which focuses in detail on pupils' outcomes, is rooted deeply in the school's daily life. There are very robust procedures for reviewing progress, identifying areas for improvement and taking effective steps for implementing them. These include a careful analysis of the school's comparative data and its outcomes, internal assessment arrangements, scrutinising books and schemes of work, and observing lessons regularly. As a result, leaders and staff know the school very well and address improvements quickly and successfully. Teachers and staff all take an active part in the monitoring, evaluation and planning for improvement process. The school has responded to the recommendations of the last inspection extremely successfully and these areas are now clear strengths at the school. The increase in pupils' attainment from their starting points is firm evidence of this.

Members of the governing body have thorough information about the school's performance by playing a prominent part in its monitoring, self-evaluation and strategic planning processes. By working effectively with the senior management team, observing lessons and scrutinising books, they have a sound awareness of the standards of learning and teaching. This enables them to hold the school to account successfully and to set a clear strategic direction for developing the school as an effective learning community.

Leaders use resources effectively to enrich the curriculum and raise pupils' standards in all areas. Expenditure is linked clearly to priorities for improvement and funding is monitored carefully to ensure the best possible use of it and to provide a high quality education. For example, the school uses the pupil development grant prudently to raise the standards of the very few pupils that are eligible to receive it. Clear progress can be seen in these pupils' reading and writing skills.

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:

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