



*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 Foel Gron  
Mynytho  
Pwllheli  
Gwynedd  
LL53 7RN**

**Date of inspection: June 2012**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	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 Foel Gron is a school that is under the voluntary control of the Church in Wales and it is situated in the village of Mynytho. It serves the village and the surrounding rural area. It is maintained by Gwynedd local authority.

The school describes the area that it serves as one that is mixed in terms of social background and is neither prosperous nor suffering from economic disadvantage.

There are 30 pupils aged between 3 and 11 on roll, including five part-time nursery children. Pupils are admitted to the school full-time in the September following their fourth birthday.

Fifty-six per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken as a first language. Welsh is the main teaching medium. Six per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. About 13% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals and this figure is lower than the county and national averages. Twenty-eight per cent of pupils have special educational needs, and no pupils have a statement.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Foel Gron in 2011-2012 is £4,954. The maximum in terms of school budget per pupil in primary schools in Gwynedd is £7,732 and the minimum is £2,674. Ysgol Foel Gron is in 17th place of the 102 primary schools in Gwynedd in terms of its school budget per pupil.

The school was last inspected during the summer term of 2006.

The current headteacher was appointed permanently in September 2010 following a period of being in charge for two years.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

This school is good because:

- most pupils across the school are making robust progress;
- pupils participate fully in lessons and show clear progress in their ability to work independently;
- the school has demonstrated success in developing pupils' bilingualism;
- teaching is consistently good throughout the school;
- the school is a happy and caring community in which almost all pupils feel safe.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher knows the school very well and has a clear vision;
- staff work effectively as a team;
- the school's self-evaluation system has identified correctly specific aspects to be developed; and
- the school development plan identifies clear priorities and suitable strategies to be implemented and that are already in place.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

R1 raise the standards of writing of the most able pupils across the school;

R2 plan more specifically for ensuring progression within the skills across the curriculum; and

R3 increase the contribution of the governing body and staff to the self-evaluation process.

### What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

The results of children's foundation assessments on entering the school show that most of them have a good level of ability in basic skills, except in Welsh where the language is new to almost half of them. Nearly all pupils make good progress through the Foundation Phase in all of the learning areas and excellent progress in Welsh.

The percentage of pupils who attain the expected level (level 2) in Welsh, mathematics and science in key stage 1 in 2011 is higher than the average in similar schools and the average for schools in Wales. The school's performance has been uneven over time because of the small cohort of pupils and the effect of pupils with special educational needs on the data.

The percentage of pupils who attained the expected level (level 4) in key stage 2 in 2011 in Welsh was higher than the average for schools in Wales and the average percentage of the results for the family of similar schools. Performance in English was also higher than the family average and similar to the average for schools in Wales. Results for mathematics and science were close to the average in similar schools but lower than the average for schools in Wales.

In general, the school did not compare as well as similar schools in terms of the percentages who attained beyond the expected level in every area in 2011, except in mathematics in key stage 2. Results in the Foundation Phase have been consistently lower than the averages for schools in Wales and the family of similar schools averages over time.

The current work in pupils' books and what was seen in classes during observations shows clear progress in standards in skills in general across the school. Most pupils use their skills appropriately across the curriculum.

Most pupils across the school listen attentively during lessons. They are eager to contribute to discussions and to respond to teachers' questioning effectively. The majority of pupils in the Foundation Phase pronounce and intone comprehensibly, using a wide range of vocabulary. By the end of the Foundation Phase, nearly all pupils can converse confidently and clearly in different contexts. Throughout key stage 2, most pupils ask relevant questions and respond to the contributions of adults and other pupils sensibly. They speak confidently in a variety of contexts, and present information clearly and effectively.

The standard of reading of most pupils in both languages is appropriate to their age and ability. In the Foundation Phase, pupils are familiar with a range of reading strategies and can use them purposefully. By the end of the Foundation Phase, most read aloud fluently and understand what they are reading. In key stage 2, most pupils show an understanding of a wide range of texts and can respond meaningfully

to the content. They can read a wide range of materials fluently across the curriculum and they can select relevant parts from books and from the internet for use in their work.

The development of writing across the school is generally good and a majority of pupils produce acceptable pieces of written work across the curriculum. The development of writing across activities in the Foundation Phase in Welsh shows clear progress over a short period of time. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils write clearly and interestingly in a wide range of forms and for a wide range of purposes. However, the most able pupils do not always produce work that corresponds with their ability.

There is no significant difference between the achievement of girls and boys.

Pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals, and pupils with additional learning needs or those from ethnic minority backgrounds are making appropriate progress for their age and ability.

Although Welsh is a second language for almost half of the pupils, they all handle the language confidently very quickly after starting at the school.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all pupils have good awareness of the importance of eating healthily and promote this by running a daily fruit shop. They participate regularly in keep-fit and physical exercise activities such as the 'Dal i Fynd' club, and development in their fitness and self-confidence can be seen as a result.

The behaviour of nearly all pupils is very good and they show respect and care for one another and for adults completely naturally. All pupils feel safe at school, and they know to whom to turn if they have a problem. They are very aware of issues involving wellbeing, health and safety.

Pupils are nearly all enthusiastic learners who enjoy their experiences at school and contribute well to matters such as sustainability and humanitarian work. They can co-operate effectively in discussion groups and pairs. They show enjoyment and pride in their work, and persevere with their tasks for extended periods. Foundation Phase pupils are beginning to make decisions about the content of themes. They contribute frequently by expressing opinions and considering how to improve their work, and key stage 2 pupils are able to decide on the progression of their own work. This nurtures pupils effectively to become independent learners.

Attendance is about 95%, which is good and higher than the average for the family of similar schools.

The school council and the green group make a significant contribution to school activities. Through their efforts they have influenced activities such as the entrepreneurial plans for 'Blodau Foel Gron', plans to paint the toilets, and decisions regarding choosing a school uniform and buying new equipment for the yard. They are proud of their success in raising money for good causes in Wales and overseas.

Pupils take part in concerts and assemblies, in the village and in the community beyond it. Across the age range, they nearly all benefit from these opportunities and gain confidence as a result.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Learning experiences: Good**

The school offers a wide range of experiences and a good variety of activities. Learning is enriched effectively by using the wider community. Through thorough joint planning, teachers ensure consistency and appropriate progression in curricular areas. Planning responds to the challenge of raising the standards of boys' written work but opportunities for extending and challenging more able pupils are limited.

There are adequate opportunities for developing skills across the curriculum, but planning in order to ensure increasing progression in these skills is not purposeful enough. The school has a detailed strategy for developing reading and good attention is paid to problem-solving skills and thinking skills across the curriculum in key stage 2 and increasingly in the Foundation Phase.

Very good attention is paid to the Welsh dimension by studying the area's local environment, history and folklore and local and Welsh resident poets and artists are invited occasionally.

The robust provision for aspects of the healthy school and sustainable development has been embedded fully into the life of the school and the curriculum, and purposeful plans are made for expanding pupils' knowledge about foreign countries and issues.

**Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is generally good across the school with some excellent elements. Some excellent elements are seen in the way in which teachers offer open-ended questions in order to challenge pupils consistently. Teachers' enthusiasm and effective interpersonal skills motivate pupils and capture their interest and attention.

Among the good elements of teaching, teachers have good subject knowledge and an understanding of the principles of the Foundation Phase. They plan a wide range of interesting activities, but the tasks for developing pupils' writing are not always challenging enough for able children.

Teachers make effective use of praise and they encourage pupils to develop their thinking skills constantly. Adults and teachers give good support to pupils while they are working. Lessons are planned purposefully and appropriate resources are provided. Adults in classes set a polished linguistic pattern that influences improving pupils' language.

Assessment for learning receives good attention throughout the school. Pupils have a prominent role in learning and they contribute consistently to lessons. An active

role is given to pupils to determine their success criteria and to assess their own progress and that of their peers. This is done very effectively as pupils measure their learning thoroughly against specific objectives.

Marking is constructive and responds to written work by giving ideas about how to move learning forward. Teachers review pupils' previous progress and understanding at the beginning of lessons in order to build on this, ensuring that pupils have time to think about how they achieved their answers.

The school has an appropriate assessment system that is operational throughout the school and which feeds into analysing test results and the effective tracking system.

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

The school is a happy community in which staff strive successfully to promote pupils' spiritual and moral growth. The close relationship between the school and the church through assemblies and services in the school and in church develops pupils' spiritual development effectively. The headteacher fosters a close link with every family.

The school promotes values such as honesty, tolerance and fairness in pupils effectively, and develops the skills of reflection, questioning and expressing an opinion appropriately through suitable circle times.

The school co-operates effectively with providers and various agencies for children's wellbeing. Good information is provided for pupils and parents about school life and about specific arrangements.

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

The school has good procedures and systems for recording the needs, progress and attainment of pupils that are on the additional learning needs register. Pupils' needs are identified early and appropriate intervention is arranged for them. The school's procedures for reporting on the development of additional needs meet the statutory requirements fully. In addition, opportunities are given for pupils to express an opinion on their individual education plans.

### **Learning environment: Good**

There is a homely, welcoming ethos within the school and pupils get along well together. Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring equal opportunities and social inclusion in every activity across the school through a wide curriculum.

Respect for diversity and racial equality is promoted naturally through varied work concerning global citizenship.

The building is in generally good condition and the school makes the best of it as well as grassland that belongs to the Community Council, that is situated opposite the school. There are enough good quality learning materials and the learning environment is attractive and stimulating.



<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>
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<b>Good</b>
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**Leadership: Good**

The headteacher knows the school very well and has a clear vision. She has shared her vision effectively with staff, governors and parents. Specific strategies have been produced for developing teaching and raising standards.

The school has a wide range of management and curricular policies that are reviewed regularly and implemented effectively. These policies have a positive effect on the life of the school and on pupils' achievement. All members of staff are aware of their responsibilities and co-operate closely together to create an effective team.

The governing body fulfil their statutory roles effectively. By receiving regular reports from the headteacher, governors have a good knowledge of the school's current performance. They also visit classes regularly and develop an understanding of how the school operates from day to day. Although the governing body receive the self-evaluation report to check and to discuss, and are aware of the strengths and areas to be developed, they do not take a prominent enough role in the school's self-evaluation process and in setting priorities.

The school pays due attention to a number of current national priorities. The principles of the Foundation Phase have been established, along with thinking skills and assessment for learning. The school is also committed to the accreditation standards of the Healthy School and the Green School in order to promote pupils' health and fitness and their respect for the environment. Due attention is also paid to the learner's voice in every element of school life.

**Improving quality: Good**

The school has a comprehensive system in place for self-evaluation that is well established. A wide range of direct evidence is used to identify clearly the school's strengths and the aspects to be developed further. The arrangements for collecting information are thorough and include visits to classes, checking work and interpreting data. Although there are specific opportunities for staff and governors to discuss the self-evaluation, they do not play a full role in the process of creating the report. Parents' and pupils' comments are obtained through appropriate annual questionnaires.

The self-evaluation report is evaluative and identifies clearly the elements to be developed in addition to the strengths that exist. It offers comprehensive evidence for directing the school's work towards raising standards.

There is a clear relationship between the current development plan and the latest self-evaluation report. The plan's priorities are based firmly on an evaluation of the previous plan and priorities that emerged through the self-evaluation process. Priorities have been costed appropriately, the responsible person named and the action timetable along with the success criteria identified appropriately.

The school's internal professional learning community ensures that the staff develop and share relevant information regularly. Effective networks of professional practice with other schools and partnerships are developing well.

### **Partnership working: Good**

There is a strong partnership with parents and the local community. Parents are very supportive of the school and contribute towards a number of activities, including raising money to improve the educational provision. An appropriate range of agencies, and external organisations, such as health and social services, local businesses and community organisations, contribute their expertise well to support the work of the school effectively.

The school has an effective strategic partnership with primary schools in the catchment area and with the local secondary school. An effective system is in place for standardising and moderating teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 2 in the core subjects. In addition, training is arranged jointly with nearby schools to agree with national priorities, which is a very good element of planning, providing resources and ensuring quality jointly.

Arrangements for transferring from primary to secondary are effective and prepare pupils for the next stage in their education.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school has enough staff that have suitable qualifications to undertake their work effectively. They work conscientiously as a team to plan stimulating activities and experiences for pupils.

The performance management arrangements identify staff's development needs effectively and the provision for planning, preparation and assessment time is appropriate. This has a positive impact on the effectiveness of the school's system of planning and assessment.

Extensive opportunities are provided for the whole staff's professional development. There is a close link between the training and the priorities of the school development plan. Valid support is given to the newly qualified teacher.

The governing body sets the budget carefully, monitors expenditure regularly and financial resources are allocated specifically to respond to the priorities of the school development plan.

The school offers good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

#### Performance data

In key stage 1, all seven-year-old pupils have achieved the expected level (level 2) in Welsh, mathematics and science in combination in 2011. This has placed the school among the top 25% of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals.

However, results for writing are lower than the average for similar schools and for Wales. The school has attained a higher percentage than the average for similar schools and nationally in three of the last five years in every subject.

The school does not compare as well as similar schools in terms of percentages who have attained beyond the expected level in every area over five years, except in science in 2009-2010.

There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

The percentage of 11-year-old pupils who achieved the expected level (level 4) in 2011 in Welsh and a combination of subjects was higher than the national average and the average for the family of schools. The English results were also higher than family and national averages. In mathematics the results are higher than family but lower than national averages, and in science they are close to the average for the family but lower than the national average.

Results have been generally upward in Welsh and English over a period of five years, although uneven because of the small numbers of pupils in the cohort. In Welsh, the school has been within the top 25% or upper 50% of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals, except in 2008-2009 when it was in the lower 50%. The results have been similar in English. They were uneven but within the top 25% in 2009-2010, and in the lower 50% in 2010-2011. Results in mathematics and science have been uneven, varying between the top 25% and the bottom 25% over the five years.

There is no significant difference between the achievement of girls and boys except when the pupil cohort includes boys who have additional learning needs.

There was an increase in achievements at level 5 in 2011 in mathematics and they have been higher than national and family averages since 2009. Results in Welsh have been uneven over five years although they were higher than the average for the family and Wales up until 2010-2011. Trends in English have been generally lower than those of the family and Wales, except in 2010-2011 when performance placed the school among the top 25% of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals. Level 5 results in mathematics and science have been increasing gradually.

In general, a smaller number of girls than boys achieve at higher levels in Welsh, English and science.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

The questionnaires give a positive picture, which is around the national average or higher for primary schools in every aspect.

Eleven responses were received. All parents state that their children like school and are making good progress in their work. They say that their children received support to settle in well when starting at the school. They are also of the opinion that teaching is good and that staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best. Parents state that the school encourages pupils to be healthy and to take regular physical exercise and helps them to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility. They also say that the school offers a good variety of activities and regular information on pupils' progress.

Nearly all parents are satisfied with the school in general and are of the opinion that pupils are safe there, that behaviour is good and that the staff treat pupils fairly and expect them to do their best. Nearly all parents state that homework that is given builds well on what children learn at school. They also understand the school's system for dealing with complaints and feel comfortable in asking a question or identifying a problem.

Many parents state that their children are prepared well for moving on to the next school and that the school is well run.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Responses are positive and around the national averages or higher.

Fourteen key stage 2 learners completed the questionnaire. All learners state that they are happy and feel safe at school. They know what to do and to whom to speak if they are anxious or find their work difficult. All pupils indicated that behaviour is good at the school, that misbehaviour does not affect their ability to work and that the school deals well with any bullying. They state that teachers and other adults at the school help them to learn and make progress and that there are many opportunities for them to take regular physical exercise.

Nearly all say that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

Many pupils are of the opinion that they are doing well at school.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Glyn Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Jeremy Turner	Lay Inspector
Angharad Jones	Peer Inspector
Manon Owen	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority. If it is available, the data report can be seen 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' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 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	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	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:

Foundation Phase	Reception, 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

## **Glossary of terms – Primary**

### **National Curriculum**

#### **Expected National Curriculum levels**

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

#### **Core subject indicator in all key stages**

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

#### **All-Wales Core Data sets**

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.