



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 Llanllyfni
Llanllyfni
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL54 6SH**

Date of inspection: February 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 Llanllyfni is maintained by Gwynedd local authority and it serves the village itself and the surrounding rural area. It is an area that has suffered due to the decline of the slate industry and unemployment, and social deprivation is a feature of the catchment area. The pupils represent a wide range of ability.

At present, 81 pupils between the ages of three and 11 are on the school roll. They begin their education on a part-time basis in the September following their third birthday, and progress to full-time education the following September. The number of pupils has fallen slightly since the last inspection.

Twenty-two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure that has increased consistently over recent years. This figure is higher than the average for the local authority. Twenty-one per cent of pupils on the school roll have special educational needs, and one pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

Ninety-five per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken and almost every pupil develops the ability to speak Welsh as a first language. Welsh is the school's everyday language and is the main medium of teaching and learning.

The individual school budget per pupil at Ysgol Llanllyfni for 2010-2011 is £3,337, which compares with a maximum of £8,442 and a minimum of £2,717 for primary schools in Gwynedd. The school has the 61st highest budget per pupil of the 103 primary schools in Gwynedd.

The school was last inspected in February 2005.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- almost every pupil makes appropriate progress during their time at the school;
- pupils' increasing ability across the school to work independently and to take responsibility for their own learning is a strength;
- assessment for learning procedures have a positive influence on standards; and
- the school promotes pupils' wellbeing very effectively.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and school leaders offer clear, strategic direction to the life and work of the school;
- all of the school's stakeholders work as a team to ensure high standards;
- progress has been seen in the school's results during the past three years; and
- the school gives priority to developing the staff's teaching skills.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

R1 maintain the high standards that already exist;

R2 further develop standardising and moderating procedures in key stage 2;

R3 ensure that the best teaching practice is disseminated across the whole school;
and

R4 continue to develop the outdoor learning areas.

What happens next?

The school will prepare an action plan within 45 days to outline how it will address these issues.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, almost every pupil makes very solid progress in their learning. The standard set by the best pupils is very high, and every pupil responds successfully to the requirements of the tasks that are set for them.

By the time they reach the upper end of key stage 2, almost all the pupils answer questions in an extended way, concentrate on their tasks and solve problems effectively. They can justify decisions and offer an opinion fluently and confidently. The best pupils in Years 5 and 6 work independently, by planning and implementing their tasks, and apply the skills that they have learnt previously in new situations very confidently.

In general, most pupils use assessment for learning strategies and thinking skills successfully in the context of their learning. They can reflect on their own learning within lessons.

Most pupils read to an appropriate level in terms of their age and ability, and make full and broad use of their writing skills across various learning areas. The oral skills of pupils at the upper end of the school are excellent in Welsh and sound in English. They can discuss a variety of subjects very effectively and extensively, using broad and appropriate vocabulary.

Teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 show general and consistent progress in pupils' performance during the last three years.

In key stage 1, although the school performed below the family, local authority and national averages in the past, by 2010 its performance was very similar. The school's Welsh and science results were in the top 25% compared with those of similar schools, based on the number of pupils receiving free school meals, and the school's mathematics results were among the top 50%.

In key stage 2, there was good progress in 2010 in pupils' English results, and a consistent improvement in Welsh and mathematics. Although there was progress in science results, the progress was not as great when compared to that of the rest of the family, the authority and Wales. The core subjects are all placed in the lower 50% compared to results of similar schools.

There is no obvious difference between the performance of boys and girls in either key stage during the last three years.

Those pupils that claim free school meals make appropriate progress and pupils with additional learning needs make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans.

Although the most able pupils achieve excellent standards in their lessons, this is not reflected in the number of pupils that attain level 5 or higher at the end of key stage 2.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Most pupils have a strong awareness that eating healthily and keeping fit contribute to a healthy body and mind. They also show sound knowledge and understanding of rules associated with wellbeing and safety, and the influences that can effect a healthy life.

The pupils show great respect towards each other. They are very proud of their school and of the close community within the school.

Pupils' attitude towards learning is excellent. They take enthusiastic and effective responsibility for their own learning, and support each other very well during lessons and activities.

Attendance during the 2009-2010 school year was at 94%, and has increased consistently over the past four years amongst pupils of compulsory age. This is close to the national and county average, and places the school in the top 50% of similar schools, based on entitlement to free school meals. There were no unauthorised absences. Punctuality when arriving at the school and at learning sessions is generally good.

Pupils' behaviour is especially good. Pupils are polite, very welcoming and very keen to discuss their school's virtues. There have been no exclusions of any kind at the school for many years.

The school council is strong and the members' responsibilities are clear. The members are hard-working and responsible, and are confident that many of the council's recommendations are considered and implemented. This is an excellent element of the school's life and gives the pupils the right and confidence to take a real interest in themselves and their work.

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

All of the teachers provide a broad and balanced range of stimulating learning experiences to meet pupils' needs. They prepare the pupils very well for becoming responsible members of the community. They plan a range of interesting activities and pay valuable attention to pupils of all ability. The teachers also pay excellent attention to developing key skills and creative skills, problem solving and thinking skills across the curriculum.

This is a naturally Welsh-medium school and all of the pupils are confident when speaking Welsh. Welsh is the language of most lessons but some subject elements are introduced in English during key stage 2 to ensure fair provision for both languages.

The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is a very solid feature of school life. The teachers ensure that pupils are aware of their traditions and heritage and arrange a variety of trips to strengthen their understanding. They use the local area and people to provide rich learning activities which allow the pupils to develop a good knowledge and understanding of the environment and the area's history. The school succeeds in developing the pupils' pride in their area and an awareness of it in the context of the whole of Wales.

The school was awarded an Ecoschools Green Flag. This successfully promotes processes such as recycling, saving energy and eating healthily. The school offers a variety of global citizenship experiences through geography activities and links with European countries that enrich their experiences across the curriculum.

Teaching: Good

The teachers have good subject knowledge and plan a range of interesting activities which stimulate the pupils. The teachers and classroom assistants work effectively together across the school.

Almost without exception, the relationship between the teachers and pupils encourages courtesy and respect. Teachers' expectations are high and they provide differentiated tasks that build effectively on the pupils' previous experience and challenge them. The provision for developing the skills of the most able pupils is very successful. Learning aims and success criteria are shared with the pupils in the majority of lessons.

There is a supportive ethos and a diligent atmosphere in every class. On the whole, useful examples are seen of detailed marking and constructive responses to pupils' work, which helps them to understand how to further develop their written work. Teachers allow the pupils to identify improvement targets and record them successfully in a variety of ways.

The school has effective assessment systems in place that summarise pupils' progress and allow planning for the next stages of the pupils' development. A simple tracking system is used effectively to monitor pupils' progress throughout the school, including the able pupils and those who are likely to underachieve before the end of the key stage. However, the procedures for standardising and moderating pupils' work at the end of key stage 2 have not yet been developed effectively enough.

Assessment for learning strategies are given a prominent place in teachers' plans and they make regular and very effective use of them to raise standards across the curriculum.

Reports to parents meet statutory requirements, and the appropriate information is included. Parents and carers receive very good information about their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is an organised and caring community that promotes very high expectations. The procedures for promoting pupils' confidence and personal and social skills are extremely effective.

The school ensures that members of staff have good information about social deprivation and specific wellbeing problems, and that they work closely with families and external agencies to assist and support pupils where necessary. This is an obvious strength in the school.

The provision for personal and social education is excellent. The school's daily practices promote important values, such as honesty, tolerance and fairness.

The school also promotes well the development of a sense of responsibility, as the pupils interact with each other as they complete tasks in the classroom and take part in extra-curricular activities.

The school has a specific and regular programme of asking pupils for their views about aspects related to wellbeing, and school leaders and staff consider and act on these views, for example through the school council or questionnaires.

The arrangements for pupils with additional learning needs ensure that they make appropriate progress against their targets. The most able and talented pupils are given extremely good attention in order to meet their needs. The school is proactive in terms of working effectively with key agencies to support pupils.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures in place for safeguarding children. There is clear guidance for every member of staff and they are aware of the procedures.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. It also develops pupils' health and wellbeing very effectively.

Learning environment: Good

The school operates as a close community that respects every member. The pupils and staff greet each other naturally and politely and a strong sense of satisfaction and happiness are very prominent features. Every pupil without fail is accepted and included in all the curricular and extra-curricular activities at the school.

The school works hard to raise money for good causes locally, nationally and internationally. This increases pupils' awareness of equality and diversity.

The school provides an effective learning atmosphere that enriches the pupils' experiences. It has sufficient resources and space for the number of pupils and the internal and external teaching spaces are kept very tidy. All of the teaching areas are accessible to everyone. The pupils and teachers make very good use of all spaces and resources.

The building's teaching areas and corridors have been appropriately and interestingly decorated to allow pupils to act in different ways, for example a quiet environment for individual work, and specific areas for practical activities.

Fairly recently, the school has started developing the external space to include a vegetable garden, a soft play area, and a separate area for playing ball games, which offers pupils more opportunities to develop their physical skills.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and shares this vision successfully with the staff, governors and pupils. In an open and professional manner, he gives a completely clear strategic direction to the life and work of the school, which has a positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing across the whole school. The headteacher, deputy, staff and governors work together effectively as a team to ensure the best for every one at the school.

The school has a wide range of management and curricular policies that are of a high standard and which are implemented effectively. All members of staff have clear responsibilities and job descriptions that are fulfilled very conscientiously. The curriculum co-ordinators offer clear guidance on their areas of responsibility and contribute effectively to the self-evaluation process.

The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations effectively, and its members have an appropriate awareness of the school's current performance. The governors visit classes regularly. These visits are a means for them to offer support to the school when planning strategically.

The school pays due attention to a number of current priorities. It successfully implements the Foundation Phase and many strategies to develop thinking skills and assessment for learning. The school is also committed to the Dal i Fynd Scheme, Dragon Sports and the Physical Education and School Sports Initiative (PESS) in order to promote fitness amongst pupils. The school also acknowledges the importance of the learner's voice in every element of school life.

The teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment periods and, as a result of these arrangements, pupils benefit from the work of experts in the fields of music and physical education. The role of support staff is effective across the whole school. Expenditure in the school development plan is identified carefully, especially in terms of staffing.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation report is of good quality and, on the whole, it clearly identifies the majority of areas that need to be developed within the school. The school has effective and thorough arrangements that have been established for a number of years, including lesson observation, questioning pupils and scrutinising their work.

The school includes the views of governors, parents and pupils effectively within its self-evaluation arrangements.

The outcomes of the self-evaluation process have an appropriate influence on priorities in the school development plan. The plan is of good quality and is based on the evaluation of the previous plan and the priorities that emerged within the self-evaluation process. The priorities are clear, and the success outcomes and effect on standards are described in detail.

The school has responded fully to the recommendations of the previous inspection report.

Recently, the school has begun to address some of the principles of the School Effectiveness Framework. The teachers work as part of networks of professional practice within the institution and more widely with other schools. Internally, the school holds meetings to discuss and share the latest practices in teaching and learning, such as thinking skills, Assessment for Learning, Healthy Schools and Ecoschools. More broadly, the school also works closely with other schools in the cluster on a variety of projects, including visiting classes in other institutions to share good practice.

Staff continuous professional development is supported through an effective performance management system which sets relevant targets for improving individuals within the context of the school.

Partnership working: Good

The school has fostered a range of useful strategic partnerships.

A strong relationship exists with the parents and they contribute to some of the school's activities; for example, some individuals work with reading groups in key stage 2. As a result of completing opinion questionnaires, parents have actively contributed to improvements at the school and play an active role when discussing their children's improvement targets.

The school has close links with the local community, which have a positive influence on the quality of education.

The school works closely with the County Council's departments, the local secondary school and other primary schools in the area. Furthermore, the school has partnerships with a wide range of public and commercial bodies. For example, pupils and staff at the school created a vegetable garden with help from pupils of Ysgol Dyffryn Nantle and a local farm. Representatives from the emergency services regularly visit the school to offer appropriate training and experiences.

The headteacher has formalised the above partnerships through letters of agreement; this demonstrates that he has created a solid base for further developments and foresees further co-operation. This element of planning by formalising strategic partnerships is good practice and is an obvious strength.

The school's effective contact and communication with its partners have led to an improvement in the quality of teaching, for example Assessment for Learning and the Foundation Phase.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources effectively. All members of staff work well together to create an exciting and attractive atmosphere for the pupils.

The teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment time and, as a result of these arrangements, pupils benefit from the work of experts in the fields of music and physical education. The role of support staff is fulfilled effectively across the whole school.

The school provides suitable training in the form of individual courses and joint training courses. The school makes the best possible use of resources to strengthen pupils' learning experiences.

Expenditure in the school's development plans is planned and recorded carefully, especially in terms of staff needs. The school provides good value for money in terms of pupils' outcomes and in its use of funding.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Forty-one pupils in key stage 2 responded to the questionnaire. Almost every pupil feels safe at the school and knows what to do and whom to turn to if they need help with their work. Every pupil believes that they are doing well in the school, and that the teachers and other members of staff help them to learn and make progress. Almost every pupil believes that their homework helps them to understand and improve their work and that other children behave well during lessons. Almost every pupil believes that there are enough appropriate resources, including computers, at the school for them to do their work. They also believe that the school deals well with any case of bullying, and almost everyone knows whom to turn to if they are worried or concerned. They all believe that the school teaches them how to stay healthy and offers them many regular opportunities to do physical exercise. Most pupils believe that other children are well behaved during play time and lunch time.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty-seven people responded to the questionnaire, approximately half the parents who have children at the school. Most of them are generally satisfied with the school, and almost all parents believe that their children like the school and feel safe there. They believe that the school is run well. Almost everyone feels that their children are making good progress at the school after having support to settle in. They believe that the teaching is good and that the teachers and staff expect the children to work hard and do their best. They also believe that they are given regular information about their children's progress, and that homework builds on what the children learn in school. Almost all of the parents feel that pupils are supported well according to their needs, and feel comfortable about asking questions and making suggestions to the school. They feel that the school helps their children to become more mature and to take responsibility. Almost all parents are of the opinion that the school encourages their children to be healthy and to take regular exercise. They believe that the school offers a good variety of activities, including educational visits, and most of them feel that the school prepares their children effectively to move on to secondary school.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Terwyn Tomos	Reporting Inspector
Huw Watkins	Team Inspector
Jeremy George Turner	Lay Inspector
Prydwen Elfed Owens	Peer Inspector
Geraint Jones (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