



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

A report on

**Ysgol Bro Gwydir
Heol Watling
Llanrwst
Conwy
LL26 0EY**

Date of inspection: February 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Bro Gwydir

Ysgol Bro Gwydir is situated in the centre of the town of Llanrwst in Conwy. Most pupils come from the town and a few from the surrounding rural area or nearby villages. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work. There are 351 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 44 part-time nursery pupils. Pupils are divided between 12 mixed-age classes. The catchment area's additional learning needs resource centre is located at the school, and 12 pupils attend the centre for five mornings a week.

Around 10% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is lower than the national percentage of 19%. Around 33% of pupils speak Welsh at home. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 28% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is higher than the national percentage of 21%. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher and deputy were appointed to their posts in September 2012. The deputy headteacher was in charge of the school at the time of the inspection. The school was last inspected in November 2011.

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

Nearly all pupils' standards of wellbeing and attitudes towards learning are excellent. They show high levels of motivation, interest and pride in their work. Nearly all pupils have high standards of behaviour and self-discipline in lessons and around the school.

The strength of the working relationships between pupils and staff is an exceptional feature of the school's work and makes an extensive contribution to the effective learning environment. Teachers provide a wide range of rich and stimulating learning experiences that develop individuals to become confident, independent learners. As a result, most pupils make sound progress, achieve well and use their skills to a high standard by the end of key stage 2.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide extremely effective leadership and a clear strategic direction for the school's work. A culture of improvement permeates the school, and continuous review and planning for improvement are at the heart of the school's ethos. An exceptional feature is the way in which responsibilities are distributed very effectively. This has led to a strong teaching community in which staff learn from each other very effectively.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all pupils are challenged to achieve to the best of their ability
- R2 Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their data handling and ICT modelling skills across the curriculum 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 how strategic planning improves pupils' outcomes and wellbeing, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, many pupils' basic skills correspond with what is expected for their age, except in Welsh, which is a new language to the majority of pupils. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make sound progress in their learning and achieve well.

Most pupils who attend the resource centre make good progress over time, in line with their abilities. They make sound progress in terms of achieving their literacy and numeracy targets.

Most pupils listen well to adults and other pupils. Pupils' oral skills develop quickly in the foundation phase, for example when pupils in the reception class discuss Arctic animals. By Year 2, they talk confidently in Welsh about their work and experiences, for example when discussing the damage that the three little pigs have done to the classroom. In key stage 2, most pupils develop their oral skills effectively in Welsh and English. By Year 6, they discuss their work intelligently and contribute effectively to group discussions, and express an opinion clearly and maturely, for example when discussing the contents of a book. Most pupils take pride in the Welsh language and use it naturally when talking to each other.

Most pupils' reading skills in the foundation phase are developing well. They use an appropriate range of phonic strategies confidently to build unfamiliar words. By Year 2, nearly all pupils are able to use their reading skills confidently, for example when reading the steps to follow when conducting a scientific experiment. Most pupils in key stage 2 make sound progress in their reading in Welsh and English. They use their skills competently to gather information from different sources, including the internet, for example when learning about famous inventors from the Victorian era.

In the foundation phase, most pupils develop their early writing skills successfully. By the end of the phase, many write independently for different purposes, and start to use appropriate syntax and vocabulary that is associated with the theme, for example when writing a poster to inform about what a baby needs. Most pupils in key stage 2 build successfully on their writing skills in both languages, by paragraphing and punctuating correctly. By Year 6, many write at length and show a sound awareness of the features of a wide range of different forms, for example when writing a fact file about a famous musician, or writing a pamphlet about the religious celebration, Diwali.

Most pupils have sound numeracy skills. In the foundation phase, most make very good progress. By Year 2, they handle money correctly and develop a good understanding of measurement, time and data. Most solve numeracy problems successfully across the areas of learning, for example to support their work on homes, or when solving money problems in relation to King Ravana. In key stage 2, most pupils build well on previous learning and, by Year 6, they have a sound understanding of number strategies. They are confident when using a wide range of mental calculation methods. They apply them successfully to a wide range of activities across the curriculum, for example when organising a trip to Glan-llyn activity centre.

Most pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills purposefully to support their work across the curriculum. By the end of the foundation phase, most use publishing software to present their work in a colourful and attractive manner, for example when creating a pamphlet about their visit to Dolwyddelan castle. They use a simple database confidently to record the eye colours of members of the class. Most pupils in key stage 2 use the internet successfully to search for information, for example about the solar system. They create multimedia presentations successfully in order to present their work, for example on what Llandudno was like during the Victorian era. However, only a minority develop a good understanding of how to handle data or create spreadsheets independently across the curriculum.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils' standards of wellbeing and attitudes towards learning are excellent. Nearly all pupils have high standards of behaviour and self-discipline in lessons and around the school. Pupils treat adults and visitors with a particularly high level of respect and maturity. Nearly all pupils are caring towards each other and give careful consideration to their friends' needs, for example when helping each other during lunchtimes. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and enjoy attending regularly. They show pride when they talk about their school and their local area.

The strength of the working relationships between pupils and staff is an exceptional feature of the school's work and they make an extensive contribution to the effective learning environment. The staff's commitment to introducing strategies to increase pupils' confidence and develop their resilience contributes extremely effectively towards ensuring that pupils show high levels of motivation, interest and pride in their work. As a result, most are ambitious, able, confident and independent learners who work together in harmony and stay on task diligently for extended periods. Excellent examples of this are the 'Clwb Codi Hyder' (raising confidence club), which is a half-hour weekly club, and the 'Clwb Antur Fawr' (big adventure club), which increase pupils' confidence and self-respect and help them to deal with failure maturely and overcome challenges in their lives. This is evident in the pupils' success in organising an outdoor adventure trip.

Pupils across the school show an increasing ability to plan jointly and express an opinion about what they learn. Pupils have a very good ability to improve their own learning. From an early age, most have a very good understanding of how to improve their work. By Year 6, pupils show particular maturity when evaluating what they have achieved and identifying what they need to do to improve their work. An excellent example of this is the maturity of a group of older pupils when discussing their success in a national engineering competition.

The pupil's voice is given due attention in all aspects of school life, and pupils take pride in what they achieve to improve the school. They take full advantage of a wide range of opportunities to express an opinion and influence the school's life and work. Pupils are grateful that leaders trust them and take their ideas seriously. They do so through a variety of committees, which include the school council, the eco council and the digital dragons. Members are very enthusiastic and understand that they represent the views of other pupils in the school community. A very strong feature is pupils' contribution towards developing the school's improvement priorities.

Members of the school council create their own plan, which outlines clearly the pupils' role in working towards achieving the priorities. This has an excellent effect on pupils' understanding and sense of ownership of their school. An effective example of this is the school council's commitment to developing the Welsh Language Charter.

These committees make a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of different aspects of their personal and social skills. The school council organises community activities, for example to visit Hafan Gwydir residential home. This provides an opportunity for pupils and the home's residents to work together on art and dance projects, and for the digital dragons to provide ICT training. They also make a significant contribution to local charities. This has a very positive effect on pupils' awareness of the needs of others in their community and the wider world.

Nearly all pupils have a mature understanding of the importance of keeping healthy by eating and drinking sensibly and taking part in physical activities. A good example of this is the Bwyd o Bwys scheme (BOBs – nutrition action group), which develops pupils' cooking skills, and the fruit shop that is led by pupils at the resource centre. Pupils appreciate the wide variety of physical activities that are available, and many attend regularly and compete in friendly games with teams from nearby schools. This makes a very positive contribution towards developing their fitness and social skills. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves safe at school, at home, on the road and online.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching across the school is good and derives from a successful working relationship between pupils, teachers and assistants. This leads to effective co-operation and develops pupils' enthusiasm towards learning.

All staff take advantage of all opportunities to enrich pupils' language, which contributes successfully towards their oral skills. There is a very strong Welsh ethos and provision encourages pupils to make full use of the Welsh language in all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils develop as competent and confident bilingual learners. Teachers plan numerous opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of their Welsh heritage and culture. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities that enrich pupils' learning successfully.

Through effective co-operation and clear guidance, teachers ensure that there are opportunities for all pupils to experience a range of practical, stimulating and rich learning experiences. Interesting and imaginative cross-curricular themes and work programmes extend most pupils' knowledge and understanding and strengthen their engagement in their work very effectively. The principles of the foundation phase have been embedded in full. Teachers make effective and flexible use of the school's resources, including the outdoor areas, in order to develop pupils' skills successfully.

Most teachers use a variety of effective teaching methods, which ensure that pupils apply themselves fully in their lessons. Teachers have a sound understanding of the requirements of the curriculum, and they provide tasks and challenges that engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. They link their lessons effectively with previous

learning, explain new concepts clearly and ensure that sessions have a good pace. In the few classes where teaching is at its best, imaginative presentations and the pace of lessons are strong features of teaching. Teachers use open-ended questions very successfully to develop pupils' skills, including those with additional learning needs and more able pupils. As a result, pupils try confidently and undertake tasks enthusiastically and independently. In the few examples where teaching is less effective, teachers do not always challenge pupils effectively enough. As a result, a few more able pupils do not develop to the best of their ability.

Teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. There are comprehensive opportunities to develop these skills in other areas across the curriculum. Overall, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills to gather and present information. However, opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to develop their data handling and modelling skills have not been developed effectively enough for pupils to apply their ICT skills regularly across the curriculum.

Teachers provide sound oral and written feedback for pupils in order for them to make improvements and develop their work further. Pupils are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to improve their work by responding to teachers' comments. There are regular opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work and that of others. This ensures that pupils, at a very early stage, understand how well they are doing and know how to improve their work.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school has extremely effective and thorough procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress and wellbeing. This helps staff to identify any pupils who need additional support or challenge quickly and to arrange appropriate intervention. The school provides a wide range of intervention programmes of a very high standard to target focus groups of pupils very successfully. Assistants play an important part, under the guidance of teachers or the additional learning needs co-ordinator, in order to implement a wide range of intervention programmes of a very high standard. This enables most pupils to make sound and consistent progress. Individual education plans are concise and clear. Plans include realistic targets that challenge and support pupils to improve their learning and develop new skills. These plans are reviewed regularly with pupils and their parents, and are adapted purposefully. The school is prominent in developing an individual profile for each pupil with additional learning needs, in line with the Welsh Government's legislative reforms. The school takes significant advantage of opportunities to work with a number of specialist agencies. For example, beneficial links with speech and language and autism teams ensure valuable support for pupils and their families.

There are exceptional partnerships between the school and parents and the community, which promote an open and co-operative culture. This ensures particular commitment and support from parents. The school's extremely effective partnerships with social services also mean that they work together to tailor support packages that meet the needs of individual families. An excellent example is the strong partnership between the school and Llanrwst Family Centre, which nurtures and promotes family engagement by providing a variety of opportunities for parents and their children to work together. The parent support group provides valuable support to families to prepare their young children for full-time education. This promotes their social skills

very effectively, for example by promoting language skills through play. The strong partnership with a local outdoor centre provides innovative opportunities for pupils and their parents to work together to organise a 'Big Adventure'. This contributes extensively towards gaining confidence and a positive self-image. The school is innovative in organising engagement mornings to promote parents' understanding of the learning methods that are used, for example to learn numeracy and how to read, and how specific strategies can promote their children's life skills. Parents appreciate these opportunities and, as a result, they are more aware of what they can do at home to support learning.

The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very successfully. Staff organise rich opportunities for pupils to reflect in collective worship sessions, which are often based on stories from the Bible, or on aspects such as respect and equality. An exceptional element of the school's work is the prominent emphasis on promoting the school's agreed values and personal perseverance through the school's wellbeing strategy. This has a very positive influence on pupils' behaviour. This can be seen clearly in the way in which pupils treat each other.

The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to play an active part in decision-making through the 'Child's Voice' in the classroom, and through the successful activity of the school council, for example to organise a musical gig as part of promoting the Welsh Language Charter. Provision to develop pupils' creative skills is excellent. Visitors are used extensively to broaden pupils' cultural experiences, for example local composers to promote pupils' awareness of contemporary Welsh music. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to perform and take part in concerts and compete in eisteddfodau. This contributes successfully towards increasing their self-confidence and their ability to work with others. Pupils take pride in their success in sports activities, when competing in local and national eisteddfodau and the 'cerdd dant' festival, in addition to their performances in the community.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of making healthy choices in their lives, and it has appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. A good example of this is the sessions to make a healthy packed lunch by the parent support group. There is a wide variety of extra-curricular activities and clubs that contribute successfully towards pupils' wellbeing and fitness.

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

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide innovative and robust leadership and set a clear strategic direction for the development of the school. They have very high expectations and are both very passionate about the community they serve. They are extremely effective in setting and promoting a vision for the school, which focuses on Welshness, nurturing respect and encouraging pupils and staff to do their best.

The school's management structure is of a very high standard and has been established firmly. A particular feature is the way in which responsibilities are distributed extremely effectively. This is part of the school's strategy to develop staff and promote co-operation and sharing good practice. As a result, there are clear communication procedures between all members of staff. This ensures that everyone shares responsibility for the school's strategic direction and that they use their individual strengths and qualifications to ensure the greatest effect. There are very effective and specific arrangements in place to inform the staff's continuous development. The system of ensuring that all members of the senior management team lead on specific aspects of the school development plan and work closely with teachers is an obvious strength. Leaders mentor new teachers very effectively and ensure consistency in provision throughout the school.

A culture of improvement permeates throughout the school, and continuous review and planning for improvement are at the heart of the school's ethos. Self-evaluation procedures are extremely rigorous and have been established firmly over time. They draw on information from a wide range of first-hand evidence. This includes pupils' performance data and comprehensive monitoring evaluations of standards and the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders listen carefully to the views of parents and pupils. An effective example of this is the way in which the school has changed the morning arrangements at the parents' request, and the nature of homework at the pupils' request. One of the strengths of the self-evaluation process is the way in which all members of staff share their ideas, knowledge and expertise. As a result, all teachers have a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths, areas to be developed further and their responsibilities in the process.

This has led to a strong teaching community in which staff learn from each other very effectively in teams. For example, teachers work successfully within learning triads, which gives them an opportunity to observe lessons and scrutinise pupils' work with each other in order to track their progress. This has led to agreed teaching strategies with a prominent emphasis on ensuring that pupils play an active part in learning. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and pupils develop perseverance and resourcefulness skills, which enable them to face challenges confidently and ensure progress in their learning.

Leaders are clear about the priorities that are included in the school development plan. Priorities are based directly on the outcomes of self-evaluation procedures, focused firmly on maintaining and raising standards, and are costed carefully. Members of the senior management team have strong individual ownership of the process. They monitor progress carefully and present thorough reviews regularly. This ensures that the school continues to improve each year. A good example of this is the clear improvement in pupils' mathematical development and numeracy over time.

The governing body plays a key part in ensuring a strategic direction for the school, and challenges the school and holds it to account for its performance. Through regular meetings and frequent visits to the school, governors have sound knowledge and a rigorous understanding of the school's performance and systems. This enables them to challenge the school effectively. A good example of this is the data sub-committee challenging pupils' performance in the national reading tests. As a

result, the school has adopted a number of agreed reading strategies, which have led to improving pupils' Welsh reading skills.

The headteacher and governors manage expenditure carefully. Good use is made of the pupil development grant. An excellent example of this is the innovative 'big adventure' scheme, which targets pupils and their parents for the benefit of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

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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