



*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 Borth-y-Gest  
Porthmadog  
Gwynedd  
LL49 9UF**

**Date of inspection: January 2012**

**by**

**Mr Goronwy Morris**

**for**

**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 Borth-y-Gest is a primary school situated in the village of Borth-y-Gest, near Porthmadog and it serves the village itself, nearby Morfa Bychan, and the surrounding rural area. It is maintained by Gwynedd local authority. Tourism plays a prominent part in the area's life, and overall, it is described as being relatively prosperous. Pupils represent the full range of ability and their attainments vary a on entry to the school.

The school provides education for pupils between three and 11 years of age. Children are accepted into the nursery class at the school on a part-time basis in the September following their third birthday and on a full-time basis to the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. Pupil numbers have fallen since the last inspection in 2006. At the time of the inspection, there were 60 pupils on the school's roll. They are taught by one full-time teacher and three part-time teachers.

They are mainly educated through the medium of Welsh and some 35% of the pupils speak Welsh at home.

Thirteen pupils (22%) have been registered by the school as having special educational needs. The percentage of pupils (4%) entitled to receive free school meals is considerably lower than the averages for Gwynedd and for Wales.

The current headteacher has been in his post since September 2011.

In 2011-2012, the individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Borth-y-Gest is £3,166. The maximum per pupil in Gwynedd primary schools is £7,732 and the minimum £2,745. Ysgol Borth-y-Gest is the 69<sup>th</sup> out of the 102 primary schools in Gwynedd in respect of the school budget per pupil.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The current performance of Ysgol Borth-y-Gest is good because:

- most pupils achieve well;
- pupils' motivation is high and the progress they make in the lessons is good;
- the school provides an interesting range of experiences that, on the whole, meet the needs of most pupils;
- the school ensures a caring, inclusive community where pupils feel happy and safe; and that there is
- effective provision to promote pupils' wellbeing and their development as rounded and responsible individuals.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has clear vision and successfully conveys that vision to the staff, pupils and governors;
- the school knows its own performance well;
- there is evidence of high expectations; and that
- the school is ready to work with partners to share good practice.

## Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 ensure further improvement in the number of pupils achieving at the higher level at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2;
- R2 continue with the work of planning for continuity in the development of skills, especially ensuring that pupils of higher ability are given tasks that fully challenge them;
- R3 provide more opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners; and
- R4 strengthen the contribution of the staff and the governing body to take a more prominent role in the self-evaluation process and monitoring the school's work.

### ***What happens next?***

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

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

**Good**

### **Standards: Good**

In comparison with the national average and the performance of similar schools, the school's performance in both key stages is good.

Over the last four years, almost all pupils in key stage 1 achieved the expected level (level 2) in all the core subjects. Over the same period in key stage 1, the numbers that achieve level 3 or higher has varied. Overall, the numbers compare well with the family in mathematics but are lower in Welsh and science.

In key stage 2, over the same period, the school's performance in respect of the expected level for pupils at 11 years of age (level 4) is consistently higher than the family and all Wales averages. Over the last four years, almost all pupils achieved the expected levels in the four core subjects. Almost without exception over this period, the school's performance has been amongst the highest 25% of similar schools, which have a similar proportion of children entitled to receive free school meals.

The percentage of pupils attaining level 5 or higher at the end of key stage 2 in English, and mathematics is consistently higher than the family averages. The percentage attaining the higher level in Welsh and science varies.

In lessons and over time, most pupils make good progress in relation to their ability and their previous performance. This good progress in pupils' achievement can be seen in their work, their books and in lessons. They recall well what they have previously learnt and display good knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt in several subjects. Pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who have special educational needs make the expected progress in line with their age and ability. In some aspects of their work, pupils of higher ability do not achieve as well as they could. There is no significant pattern of differences between the achievement of girls and boys.

Pupils across the school listen to their teachers very well and very readily offer answers or comments when talking about their work. They make very good progress in their use of Welsh from the time they start at the school. The oral skills of pupils who come from non-Welsh speaking homes develop very quickly. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use the language fluently and effectively in all types of formal and informal situations. They can discuss various subjects very effectively using a wide vocabulary.

Almost all pupils make good progress in their reading skills. They read challenging books aloud in both English and Welsh correctly and meaningfully. In key stage 2, there are many pupils whose reading age is higher than the expectations. They are developing as independent readers and are interested in books. They use their reading skills effectively to glean and present information from different sources.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils come to write independently in their own words for a range of purposes, effectively using adjectives and infinitives to enrich their work. In key stage 2, many pupils make very good progress in their ability to write to

several purposes. They plan their work carefully and can make improvements when redrafting. By the end of the key stage, the work of most pupils shows a good awareness of the characteristics of different forms of writing to several purposes. Most pupils make good progress in punctuating their work, paragraphing appropriately. They use their writing skills effectively in other subjects, making increasing use of specialist terms. The standard of accuracy of written work in both English and Welsh is good.

**Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils have a good awareness of the need to nurture healthy personal habits including fitness. One out of every two pupils in key stage 2 joins in the after-school sporting activities. Pupils feel secure and happy at the school and know who to turn to for help and advice.

The motivation levels of almost all the pupils are high and they engage enthusiastically in the learning activities. Many work well independently under the teachers' instruction and contribute effectively to lessons.

All pupils work together well and standards of behaviour are high. They are all polite and respectful of each other. The school's current attendance level at 95.5% is higher than the two previous years when attendance was slightly lower than that in similar schools.

Pupils' personal, social and life skills are developing well and prepare them well for life and work outside the school.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils understand how well they are doing in Welsh and what they need to do to improve their work. They are not as confident in other subjects.

Members of the school council, class councils and the green group are active and represent the opinions of the pupils well. They have had a positive effect on aspects such as the school's environment, resources and deciding on which charities to support. The way in which pupils at the school develop as rounded and confident individuals is a strong feature.

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

The school plans a variety of learning experiences that successfully build on pupils' experiences in the school and beyond. The activities satisfy the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education. Detailed planning for various activities in the Foundation Phase ensures appropriate improvement in skills and understanding. The schemes of work pay appropriate attention to developing skills across the curriculum but in some instances, insufficient attention is paid to ensure continuity in the development of skills in key stage 2. The provision for developing literacy is a strong feature. Pupils' experiences are enriched through visits outside the school and visitors who come to the school. Good attention is paid to studying the local environment and the history of the area in the context of industry, for example the shipping industry in Borth-y-Gest. The provision for developing the Welsh language is a strength at the school. There is also effective

provision to enable pupils to learn about sustainability and their role and that of others in society and the world.

### **Teaching: Good**

Most of the teaching ensures that pupils concentrate and show interest and ensures good progress and learning by the pupils. There is a good working relationship between the staff and pupils in all classes, and the teachers and assistants create an industrious and supportive ethos. The school makes appropriate use of the assistants to provide additional support to groups and specific individuals.

Teachers appropriately share the aims of the lessons with the pupils and arrange a series of activities that ensure that pupils continuously work productively. They discuss success criteria with pupils at the beginning of lessons and pupils have a good awareness of their personal targets in Welsh. In the few lessons where the teaching was not as good, over direction by teachers limits pupils' opportunities to take responsibility for their own work. Presentation materials and skills are differentiated appropriately in the majority of lessons but they do not always challenge the pupils of higher ability.

There are regular opportunities for pupils to develop their communication skills in lessons and teachers make good use of resources. Marking is thorough and gives pupils detailed feedback on the quality of their work and offers them comments on what to do to improve and the next steps.

Through the termly reports and meetings, parents receive clear information on their children's achievements.

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

The school is a caring community where pupils' wellbeing is given a high priority. The advantages of living healthily and developing pupils physical health is promoted effectively across the curriculum and in many extra-curricular activities.

The provision for personal and social education is very good, and the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development effectively.

The school has appropriate safety procedures and policies.

There are appropriate arrangements for identifying pupils' learning needs when they join the school and to ensure that these needs are satisfied. Staff work effectively with outside agencies and specialist services. Pupils' individual educational plans identify clear targets and specific activities for ensuring progress.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is an inclusive community and the industrious and supportive ethos nurtures positive attitudes and respect. Racial equality and tolerance receive good attention in the personal and social education programme.

The building offers a range of classes and appropriate facilities for a number of pupils. The school makes the best possible use of the site and standards of cleanliness in the building are high. The outside area for the Foundation Phase has been developed very effectively. The outside appearance of the building does not reflect the good quality of provision within the classes.



There are a variety of resources that enrich the teaching and learning. Children's work and displays are used effectively in the best practice to enrich the environment. Good use is made of the area's sporting facilities to augment the opportunities provided at the school.

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

In the short period of time since his appointment, the headteacher gives clear and appropriate leadership that is already having a positive effect on the school. Many plans and policies are being reviewed and appropriately updated to satisfy pupils' needs. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. His vision for the school's direction is successfully shared with members of staff and the governors. High expectations of maintaining good standards are evident in the everyday life and work of the school. Everyone is constantly included in discussions and decisions. Pupils receive good opportunities to contribute towards the development of the school.

The governing body receives regular reports from the headteacher and they are discussed carefully. Governors are enthusiastic and supportive of the school's work and very aware of pupils' performance at the end of the key stages. Through their interest in aspects of the school's work individual members are beginning to develop a better understanding of the life and work of the school.

Appropriate attention is paid to local and national priorities and the principles of the Schools' Effectiveness Framework appropriately influence the life and work of the school. The Foundation Phase has been established effectively and good attention is paid to the importance of literacy and developing thinking skills. Performance management arrangements are effective and focus on improving quality and raising standards.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Overall, self-evaluation procedures are effective. A good range of monitoring activities is used, including analysing data, lesson observations and examining pupils' work. Members of staff have the opportunity to contribute to the process but as yet they have insufficient influence on the contents of the report. Also, the role of the governors in the process is not fully effective and they recognise that they need to expand their role as critical friends and take a more prominent role in the process. The views of parents and pupils are appreciated and given serious consideration.

There is a clear link between the self-evaluation process and planning for improvement. The school development plan is comprehensive, focuses on raising standards and the success criteria are relevant and challenging. The action steps include success indicators and appropriate timetabling for their completion.

There are good procedures for supporting the professional development of staff members and the school benefits from appropriate collaboration. There are good links with other local schools to discuss priorities and share good practice.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has good partnerships with parents and the pupils benefit from their generosity. The links and arrangements with the local secondary school are comprehensive and ensure a very smooth transition. The task of moderating pupils' work has only just begun and is not yet an effective tool to ensure understanding of the requirements of the different levels in each core subject.

The school has developed good links with the community. The partnership with the education authority ensures appropriate improvement in the provision. Pupils' visits locally promote their awareness of their community and the importance of contributing towards it. The school works with a number of agencies to gain accreditations such as the Healthy Schools and Green Schools. These experiences successfully develop pupils' awareness of the principles of keeping healthy and sustainability.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school has sufficient appropriately qualified staff to undertake its work effectively. Teachers and assistants work well together. The school has a good range of appropriate resources in all areas apart from information and communications technology. Effective use is made of teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time.

There is a good balance and understanding between the governors and the headteacher in defining financial responsibilities. The budget gives a clear overview of expenditure. A good range of resources are effectively managed for all the school's needs and good use is made of them.

The school makes good use of its budget to promote education effectively. Pupils' standards and the quality of the provision and the good teaching ensure that the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### **Commentary on performance data**

Teacher assessments at the end of year 2 in key stage 1, and at the end of year 6 in key stage 2 must be treated carefully due to the small number of children in each year. This can significantly affect the school's performance from one year to the next.

#### **Key stage 1**

Over the last four years, the school's performance in relation to the expected level in Welsh, mathematics and science, for pupils at seven years of age (the core subject indicator), is higher than the average for schools in the same family and the all Wales average.

Almost all pupils achieved the expected levels, namely level 2, in the three subjects over the last four years.

In comparing key stage 1 results with results of similar schools across Wales in relation to the percentage entitled to free school meals, in 2011, the school's results for the expected level in Welsh, mathematics and science was amongst the highest 25%. Over the previous three years, the results were amongst the lowest 50%.

Over the last three years, numbers achieving the higher than expected level, namely level 3 or higher, has varied. Overall, it compares well with the family in mathematics but tends to be lower in Welsh and science over this period.

#### **Key stage 2**

In key stage 2, the schools performance in respect of the expected level in English and Welsh, mathematics and science, for pupils at 11 years of age (the core subject indicator), is consistently higher than the average for schools in the same family and the average for Wales.

Over the last four years, almost each pupil achieved the expected level, namely level 4, in the four subjects. Over this period, almost without exception, the school's performance has been in the highest 25% of similar schools in respect of the proportion of children entitled to receive free school meals.

The percentage of pupils achieving higher than the expected levels at the end of key stage 2 (level 5 or higher) in English and mathematics is consistently higher than the average of schools in the same family and the average for Wales. The numbers achieving the higher levels in Welsh and science varies.

There is no difference between the achievements of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and their peers. There is no significant pattern with regard to the differences in the results for girls and boys.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty responses were received. All state that their children have received support to settle in well at the school and that they are encouraged to be healthy and to take regular physical exercise.

Overall, all parents who responded are satisfied with the school and are of the opinion that their children like school, are happy there and feel secure. They also believe that pupils' behaviour is good.

All parents are also of the opinion that the teachers work effectively and encourage their children to work hard. They are happy with the progress made by the pupils and the variety in the activities offered them. They also believe that the teaching is good and that the school is well run. Each one was happy with the information they received on their children's progress. Almost all agreed that the staff treated each child fairly and with respect.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

All pupils in key stage 2 (33 pupils) completed the learners' questionnaire.

All pupils agree that they feel safe in the school and that they know who to talk to if they are worried or concerned. They feel that they receive many opportunities for regular physical exercises and that all children behave well during play times and lunch times.

Almost all pupils felt they were doing well at the school, that the teachers and other adults at the school helped them to learn and to make progress. They state that they know what to do and who to talk to if they find their work difficult. They believe that they learn how to stay healthy and that the school deals well with any instances of bullying. They agree that they have sufficient books, equipment and computers to undertake their work.

A small number of pupils state that homework does not help them to understand and improve their work. A small number of pupils do not agree that other children's behaviour is good and that they can do their work. This was not the finding of the inspection team based on observation within lessons and as a result of interviewing learners face to face.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Goronwy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Mervyn Lloyd Jones	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Kevin Williams	Peer Inspector
Rhys Williams	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.

### 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.