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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  
LL26 0EY**

**Date of inspection: November 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:

<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 Bro Gwydir is situated in the centre of the town of Llanrwst and it is maintained by Conwy local authority. Eighty-five percent of pupils come from the town itself and 15% are either from the rural area or from nearby villages. The area is described as being neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

There are 292 pupils between the ages of 3 and 12 on the school roll, including part-time nursery children. Pupils are admitted to the school full-time during the September of the year when they have their fourth birthday. The catchment area's Resource Centre for pupils with learning difficulties is in the school and 12 pupils attend it on five mornings a week.

Twenty-one per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken as a first language and the rest are from homes where English is the main language of communication. Three per cent are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Welsh is the school's main medium of communication and learning. About 16% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals and this figure is lower than the county and national averages. Twenty-nine per cent of pupils have special learning needs and one pupil has a statement.

The school is nearing the end of a scheme to re-model the building and it is hoped that the building work will be finished before the new year.

The individual school budget in 2011-2012 per pupil for Ysgol Bro Gwydir is £3,702, which compares with a maximum of £13,941 and a minimum of £2,935 for primary schools in Conwy. The school has the 37<sup>th</sup> highest budget of the 61 primary schools in Conwy.

The present headteacher was appointed to the post in January 1995.

The school was last inspected in the autumn term 2005.

## 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 make sound progress during their time in the school and achieve good standards in the key skills across the curriculum;
- the school demonstrates success in developing bilingualism from an early age;
- the provision for different cohorts of pupils, the wide range of valuable experiences offered and the partnership with parents are obvious excellences; and
- there is a good standard of teaching in all the classes and effective support from the learning assistants.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and the deputy have very good knowledge of the school and a clear vision about developing the school for the future;
- the rest of the senior management team, along with the staff and the governors, share the same vision;
- through its self-evaluation and development plan, the school has correctly identified specific aspects to be developed for the future that are already being implemented; and
- the school demonstrates willingness to incorporate national and local initiatives.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, there is a need to:

- R1 continue to improve writing achievement in the Foundation Phase;
- R2 continue to decrease the difference between the results of boys and girls in Welsh in key stage 2; and
- R3 share the best teaching practices throughout the school.

### What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice seen during the inspection.

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

The results of the children's foundation assessments on entering the school show that many of them have quite low levels of ability in the basic skills. Nearly all pupils make good progress throughout the Foundation Phase in each one of the learning areas and excellent progress in oral Welsh.

The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level in Welsh in key stage 1 in 2011 was higher than the average in similar schools in reading. The results for writing have decreased gradually since 2009. The percentage who reached the expected level in mathematics and science was as good as the average in similar schools.

The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level in all the subjects in key stage 2 in 2011 was higher than the average in similar schools. In 2011 in Welsh, the boys' results were significantly lower than those of the girls.

The current work in pupils' books and other relevant evidence show a significant increase in the standard of skills in general. This progress is evident in pupils' work across the school and is as a result of the school's effective arrangement for targeting specific cohorts of pupils.

Most pupils listen attentively during the lessons. Almost all communicate confidently and are eager to contribute to discussions and to respond to the teachers' questioning effectively. By the end of the Foundation Phase, pupils ask questions that are relevant to their tasks and respond sensibly to the contributions of other pupils. At the top end of the school, most pupils speak confidently in a variety of contexts. They can respond to other viewpoints and offer their own valid contributions. They can offer meaningful contributions to paired discussions and in specific groups.

The reading standard of most pupils in both languages is appropriate to their age and ability. They read a wide range of materials fluently across the curriculum. Within the Foundation Phase, pupils are familiar with a range of reading strategies and can use them to make sense of that which is being read. Most of them read aloud fluently, accurately and with increasing emphasis and expression. In key stage 2, most pupils show understanding of a wide range of texts and can choose specific parts of books to be used in their work. At the top end of the school, they can search for and collate information from a range of sources confidently and translanguaging happens regularly and effectively.

The development of writing across the school is generally good, with the majority of pupils producing effective extended pieces. The development of writing across the activities of the Foundation Phase in Welsh shows significant progress since the beginning of term, following purposeful targeting by the school. By the end of key

stage 2, most pupils write clearly and interestingly in a wide range of forms and for a variety of purposes. All pupils revise and redraft their work effectively.

Nearly all pupils across the school work diligently and effectively and display obvious progress in their achievement in learning sessions and over a period of time.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals, pupils who have additional learning needs and pupils from ethnic minorities achieve well.

Pupils who speak Welsh as a second language cope with the Welsh language confidently very quickly after starting school.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all pupils have a good awareness of the need to eat healthily and to do physical exercise regularly. Many take advantage of the numerous extra-curricular physical activities offered by the school. Pupils are very aware of safety issues; they know how to use the school's systems to express an opinion and to draw attention to any case of bullying or misbehaviour.

Nearly all pupils who responded to the questionnaire stated that they are treated with respect, are happy in school and feel safe there. The behaviour of nearly all pupils in lessons and at other less formal times is good. Pupils turn confidently to adults for support. In addition, there are prefects among the pupils, namely 'Ciw Clên', who help pupils to play together and offer support to their peers when needed.

School attendance is almost 95% at present and this is an increase on the average attendance of 93% in 2009-2010 and higher than the national average.

Children behave politely and they are very careful of one another and of the younger children. They are very proud of their school and consider it to be a happy place.

The School Council and the Eco Council meet regularly and operate effective ways of obtaining fellow pupils' opinions and comments and of ensuring that the opinions are heard and considered. The School Council set up several activities and projects effectively by including the 'It's great to be mates' scheme and a reading club. An enterprise scheme, in which pupils are responsible for creating small businesses, has enabled pupils to raise money to buy new equipment, chosen by the pupils themselves.

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

The wide range of valuable experiences that are offered to pupils in lessons and visits away from the school site are exceptional. The external and extra-curricular activities provided by the school are well above expectations. They strengthen pupils' confidence and contribute effectively to their desire to discover and learn.

Very detailed and imaginative planning across the curriculum ensures that pupils are challenged by interesting and stimulating activities. They are adapted to match pupils' interests. The development of key skills has been mapped very effectively, ensuring good progression across the school.

Very high quality differentiation takes place in the school which meets the needs of all pupils in an excellent way. There is a very effective system of streaming pupils for literacy and numeracy from Year 2 onwards and further differentiation within these streams, giving excellent support to each pupil.

The school provides a wide variety of rich and stimulating experiences for studying the local environment, and the history and folklore of the area across the curriculum. In addition, the work that is done in preparation for local and national eisteddfodau offers excellent cultural development to the children in terms of the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension.

The school enriches pupils' experiences in the field of education for sustainable development and global citizenship very effectively through innovative activities such as arranging for foreign students to teach at the school for periods, the Comenius scheme, foreign visits by pupils and holding European days.

### **Teaching: Good**

The teaching is consistently good across the school. The teachers have thorough knowledge of subjects and high expectations which enable them to inspire and challenge most pupils. Pupils who have additional needs receive especially good support and able and talented pupils are extended effectively. Detailed planning ensures that there are clear objectives for developing specific skills in lessons and focussed activities. There is a particularly good working relationship between all the staff in the school and pupils which is based on effort and respect. High expectations in terms of behaviour and standards produce a diligent ethos in classrooms. Very effective use is made of learning support staff to support pupils. The support that they offer is of high standard and underpins pupils' success.

Very good use is made of the principles of assessment for learning throughout the school in order to develop pupils as independent learners. Every member of staff shares assessment information to ensure that pupils make progress according to their ability. Each pupil has relevant personal targets. In the best practice, probing questioning and consistent and constructive oral and written feedback is used, based on learning outcomes, success criteria and individual pupil targets. Effective use is made of discussion partners and peer assessment to ensure that pupils play a prominent part in their own learning. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to be active enough in their own learning in some classes.

There are high quality assessment and tracking systems in the school which gives a strong, current recognition of every pupil's attainment. This information is used to plan lessons that meet pupils' needs effectively. Parents receive very detailed information about the achievement, wellbeing and development of their children, along with excellent guidance on co-operating with the school to ensure their children's success.



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

The school has thorough policies and arrangements for promoting pupils' healthy living and wellbeing. There are special systems in the school for boosting pupils' behaviour, which have had a very positive impact on the standards of behaviour throughout the school. The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.

The school is very caring. Pupils understand their right to be safe and know how to respond if there is any case of bullying or injustice. Support is clearly targeted for different groups of pupils and the school works well with external agencies and excellently with the parents. The school has an appropriate policy and it has procedures for safeguarding.

The provision for additional learning needs is one of the school's main successes. Pupils are identified early and receive support of a very high standard. Very imaginative use is made of staff, resources and a variety of support schemes to ensure the strongest opportunities for every pupil to develop. Pupils' progress is tracked in great detail throughout the year, adapting the provision and support according to demand. The school has restructured pupils' individual education plans very effectively. They are reviewed every term and pupils' progress is discussed with parents three times a year.

### **Learning environment: Good**

An inclusive, supportive and friendly ethos exists in the school. Clear emphasis is placed on respect, celebrating diversity and equal opportunities for all.

The building is in excellent condition inside and outside, following a programme of renovation over a number of years.

The school has a wide range of resources that match pupils' needs well. The external areas are used very effectively for a wide variety of activities such as a vegetable and fruit garden, a forest and an adventure area.

The internal learning environment is very attractive throughout the school and this creates a special atmosphere. Every classroom is tidy and well organised and provides valuable learning opportunities for pupils. Displays of children's work are very tasteful and bring prestige and respect for their efforts and successes.

<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 and the deputy headteacher have a clear vision of how to improve pupils' standards and wellbeing. It is shared effectively with the school's senior management team, staff and governors. The headteacher and the deputy, as well as the senior management team, offer effective leadership and management. The

strategic plans have a positive impact on standards, wellbeing and provision across the school.

The leaders know the school well and set challenging targets and expectations for the whole school. They ensure that their effectiveness is monitored regularly and that any further developments receive attention. The arrangement for sharing responsibilities is effective, with every member of staff having valuable opportunities to contribute towards aspects of management across the school. Performance management arrangements are effective and the priorities of the development plan are reflected within the targets set.

The school receives good support from the governors. They know the school's performance well, by considering end of key stage data as well as further evidence. They are ready to challenge and support the school in order to evaluate and identify progress and promote improvements.

National and local priorities are identified and are included well in the strategies for improving literacy, the principles of the Foundation Phase and other current activities.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The school's self-evaluation processes are effective. The arrangements are robust, and include visits and classes, checking work and interpreting data. Direct evidence is collected and used effectively in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

The self-evaluation report is a comprehensive document and clearly names the elements that are obvious strengths and the fields to be developed further. The contributions of governors, parents, pupils and others are collected carefully in order to form an opinion and contribute towards identifying priorities for planning and ensuring improvement.

The main priorities are clear and the school notes pupils' progress against these priorities.

The school's internal professional learning community ensures that the staff develops and shares relevant information effectively. The links with the network of other schools contributes positively towards ensuring that good practices are adopted by the school.

### **Partnership working: Excellent**

The strategic partnerships between the school and parents, the community and other organisations are one of the school's strengths and is sector-leading practice.

The partnership activities contribute very effectively towards widening the provision in the school and, as a result, contribute very well to improving standards and pupils' wellbeing.

The partnership with the parents is extremely strong and influences pupils' achievement and wellbeing throughout the school very effectively. The school succeeds in including the parents in almost every aspect of its work. The wide range of various pamphlets and guidance on specific plans to co-operate on homework is of a very high standard. Regular opportunities to share relevant information on the curriculum are offered, as well as the latest methods of presenting work. This is done through a combination of group meetings and through appropriate booklets. The school also works with parents on the process of curriculum planning to arrange activities and experiences off-site. The school ensures a specific place for the parents in its arrangements for identifying different cohorts of pupils and setting targets for them. Excellent use is made of parents' expertise in enriching learning experiences within specific themes. The partnership with the Parent Teacher Association is very good and they raise a significant amount of money for expanding and improving resources.

There is a strong partnership with a number of local organisations and the community in general, and the school is a focus for community activity. These links have a positive influence on enriching pupils' experiences and the quality of education.

Good arrangements have been established with the neighbouring nursery school, for welcoming new pupils to the school, and there are robust arrangements to ensure that older pupils transfer smoothly to the secondary school.

There are effective partnerships with nearby schools. A notable example of this is the school's innovative role in creating an assessment group within the local learning communities along with developing strategies for promoting thinking skills. This has had a positive impact on raising standards throughout the school.

The school played a prominent part in establishing the system of moderating assessments at the end of key stage two in the core subjects with the secondary school.

### **Resource management: Good**

Effective use is made of resources and the building to promote good learning and high standards, by responding to the needs of individual groups very effectively.

The school makes effective use of the specialisms of teachers and assistant staff by ensuring that every aspect of the school curriculum can be presented to every pupil. Planning, preparation and assessment time is used well, ensuring high quality provision and clear identification of the attainments and needs of every pupil. This has a positive effect on the effectiveness of the school's system of planning and assessment.

The governing body sets budgets carefully and agrees on financial priorities for the year. The school is successful in the way that available funding is targeted to respond to the priorities as noted in the school development plan.

As a result of pupils' good attainment and wellbeing and the effective use of contingency funds in order to respond to the priorities in the development plan, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Comments on performance data

The percentage of pupils who attained the expected level in Welsh in key stage 1 in 2011 was higher than the average in schools in Wales and higher than the family of similar schools in reading. The results for oracy and writing were lower than those of the family of schools.

The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level in mathematics, science and in the core subject indicator (the expected performance in Welsh or English, mathematics and science) was higher than the Welsh average but lower than that of the family. This puts the school among the lower 50% of similar schools in every subject in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to have free school meals.

The percentage who attained beyond the expected level this year in key stage 1 was lower than the family and all-Wales averages in every subject.

There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls; the boys are a little better than the girls in Welsh and science and the girls are a little better in mathematics and reading and writing Welsh.

The results of key stage 1 pupils over four years have declined a little in Welsh from 96.4% in 2008 to 91.2% in 2011. The results have been lower than the family average since 2009 but higher than the all-Wales average, apart from 2010. The greatest decline has been in the standard of writing.

In mathematics and science, the results have been fairly consistent on the whole over the last four years, lower than the family average this year but higher than in 2009 and 2010 and consistently higher than the average for Wales overall.

The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level in all the subjects and the core subject indicator in key stage 2 in 2011 was higher than the all-Wales schools average and higher than the average for the family of similar schools.

The school compares favourably with similar schools in terms of benchmarking against schools with a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. The school is among the 25% highest in English and the 50% highest in Welsh, mathematics and science.

The percentage who attained beyond the expected level this year in key stage 2 was higher than the family and all-Wales averages in every subject except Welsh.

A significant difference has been seen between the results of boys and girls in 2011 in Welsh, with boys' results significantly lower than those of the girls.

The results of key stage 2 pupils over four years have been fairly constant. The school has performed above family and Wales averages since 2008, except for 2010

when a decrease was seen from the norm. The same pattern was seen in oracy, reading and writing. In English, the school had performed consistently below the family and Wales averages from 2008 up until 2011 when significant progress was seen, which put the school's performance levels above those of the family and Wales. In mathematics and science the results have been fairly consistent, lower than the family average in 2009 and 2010 but higher in 2008 and 2011.

There are no obvious differences in the data at the end of both key stages in terms of specific groups of pupils such as entitlement to free school meals and additional learning needs or those from ethnic minority backgrounds. On the whole, these pupils succeed in attaining levels in line with their ability.

## Appendix 2

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Twenty-eight responses were received. Each one states that their children have had support to settle in well in the school and that they are encouraged to be healthy and do physical exercise regularly.

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

In addition, almost all parents are of the opinion that the teachers work effectively and encourage the children to work hard. They are happy with the progress the pupils make and the variety of activities offered to them. They also believe that the teaching is good and that the school is well run.

Nearly all are happy with the information that they receive about pupils' progress.

#### **Responses to learner questionnaires**

Eighty-four learners from key stage 2 completed the questionnaire and the team spoke to pupils during the inspection. All the learners state that they are happy and feel safe in school. They say that there are many opportunities for them to take physical exercise regularly and that teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress.

Nearly all are of the opinion that the teachers teach them effectively about the importance of knowing how to be healthy. They know where to turn for support when they are worried or finding the work difficult.

Approximately 75% of pupils responded through the questionnaire that behaviour is good in the school and that there is no bad behaviour that affects their ability to work. This is not the finding of the inspection team on the basis of observation and as a result of questioning the learners face to face.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Glyn Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Stella Gruffydd	Team Inspector
Jeremy Turner	Lay Inspector
Glyn Griffiths	Peer Inspector
Roberts Alun Williams (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