



*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 Gynradd Carrog  
Carrog  
Nr Corwen  
Denbighshire  
LL21 9AW**

**Date of inspection: January 2012**

**by**

**Mr W Williams**

**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 Carrog is a community school for pupils aged four to eleven. It is situated in the village of Carrog, in Denbighshire. Most of the pupils who attend the school are from the local area with a few travelling from further afield. The area is described as neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. Around 8% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much lower than local authority and national averages.

Currently, the school has 33 full time and 5 part time nursery children on roll, who are taught in two mixed-age classes. All pupils are of white British ethnic origin. There are no pupils 'looked after' by the local authority. Approximately 10% of pupils speak Welsh at home.

The school identifies around 10% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is much lower than the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Carrog in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £4648 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Denbighshire is £9248 and the minimum is £2719. Ysgol Carrog is 18th out of the 52 primary schools in Denbighshire in terms of its school budget per pupil.

During the inspection, the school was led by a senior member of staff who had undertaken the role of acting headteacher in January 2012 following the retirement of the previous headteacher.

## 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 school's current performance is good because:

- pupils of all ages have good literacy and communication skills;
- achievement levels compare well with those of pupils in other similar schools;
- pupils enjoy school and are industrious and enthusiastic learners;
- nearly all pupils make good progress in their Welsh language skills; and
- the quality for care, support and guidance is good

### Prospects for improvement

The school prospects for improvement are good because:

- leadership is good and there is a shared commitment towards improving standards;
- governors have a good understanding of the school's developmental needs;
- information from self-evaluation is used effectively to make improvements;
- the school development plan provides a clear strategic direction for the work of the school; and
- the willingness of staff to undertake new initiatives and try out different ways of working.

## Recommendations

In order to make further progress, the school needs to:

R1 use information from self-evaluation more effectively to plan further development; and

R2 further develop assessment for learning strategies in key stage 2

### What happens next?

The school will create an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Standards: Good**

In lessons and over time, all pupils make good progress in their learning. As they progress through the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, nearly all become confident learners who have developed positive learning habits and are able to make choices about their own learning. By Year 5, the majority evaluate their own work purposefully and set themselves personal targets for improvement. Nearly all pupils, including the more able, are working to their full potential.

Pupils' problem-solving and thinking skills are very well developed during the Foundation Phase and this has a positive impact on their learning and the standards achieved. Further appropriate progress is made in key stage 2.

Pupils of all ages have good literacy and communication skills. Nearly all Foundation Phase pupils enquire and ask questions confidently, most read fluently employing a wide range of strategies and by Year 2, write with increasing fluency and accuracy.

Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 listen carefully during lessons and contribute purposefully during group and class discussions. Most show good comprehension and understanding of what they read and are developing good skills for reading to different purposes. By Year 5, most write skilfully to a high standard, varying their style in different contexts.

Performance at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2011 was good with every pupil attaining the expected level being higher than the family average. However, pupils' performance at the higher level (level 3) was much lower than the family average in English and mathematics but was significantly higher in science. The proportion of key stage 2 pupils attaining the expected level was generally higher than the family average. Pupils' performance at the higher level (level 5) was slightly higher than the family average in mathematics and science but lower in English.

Across the age range, nearly all pupils make good progress in gaining literacy and communication skills in Welsh language. By the end of the Foundation Phase and into key stage 2, they use Welsh with increasing confidence and accuracy in a variety of different contexts.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Pupils enjoy school and are well motivated with all saying that they feel safe in the school environment. Pupils say that there is little bad behaviour or bullying and are confident that the school will deal effectively with any instances which might occur.

Most have a clear understanding of what they must do to keep healthy; they enjoy exercise and eat healthily in school.

During lessons, nearly all pupils are industrious and enthusiastic learners. They work together harmoniously and continue diligently with their tasks for extended periods. Most recall previous learning effectively and face new challenges confidently. Nearly all pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour.

Attendance, over the past three years, is in the upper quarter when compared with that of similar schools. Nearly all pupils are punctual.

As pupils mature, most benefit greatly from a variety of experiences and opportunities including the school council and eco-group. The council respond conscientiously to their responsibilities, however, their decision-making role is not fully developed

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

Teachers and practitioners collaborate very effectively to plan flexible and imaginative activities, which succeed in engaging the interests of the full range of pupils. Stimulating and often innovative learning experience, both indoor and outdoor, particularly in the Foundation Phase, ensure that pupils are challenged by relevant activities that provide continuity and progression in their learning. Visits and visitors also have a positive impact on pupils' learning experiences.

Well-planned provision ensures that pupils acquire the necessary literacy and communication skills for them to access the wider curriculum. Effective learning support programmes enable all pupils to take part fully in every activity. The more challenging and demanding work which is provided for more able and talented pupils leads to good progress being made in learning and achievement.

Strategies for promoting pupils' thinking and problem solving skills are very well established in the Foundation Phase and make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning. Although a recent initiative, provision for the development of thinking and problem solving skills in key stage 2 is good.

Planning and provision for Welsh language development is comprehensive and enables pupils to make good progress. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig has a central role in the school with a wide variety of opportunities provided for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of Wales.

The very productive links which have been forged with other communities, countries and cultures enable pupils to become more aware of their role as global citizens. The school acts sustainably and pupils are actively involved with conserving energy and minimising waste.

## **Teaching: Good**

Teaching is good and ensures that pupils are motivated and make good progress in their understanding and learning. Challenging activities and skilful questioning stimulate pupil's learning and extend their knowledge and understanding. Most are inspired and engaged by demanding and purposeful tasks. Teachers have detailed subject knowledge and successfully use a range of methods and tasks to further pupils' learning and progress. Very good working relations have been established that foster learning; behaviour is well managed by teachers and support staff. Tasks are very thoughtfully organised to ensure that they meet the needs of the full range of learners.

Assessment and recording of pupil progress and learning throughout the school is thorough. Recent developments have ensured that pupils' progress is monitored closely as they move through the school and that underperformance can be quickly identified and intervention programmes put in place.

In the Foundation Phase, assessment information is used very effectively to inform future planning and provision. Key stage 2 pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work, set their own targets and take part in peer assessment. However, assessment for learning strategies are in the early stages of development and have not yet impacted fully on pupils' learning.

Parents and carers are kept well-informed about their children's achievements and wellbeing through written reports that are clear and consistent.

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

The school's quality of care for the pupils is good. All staff ensure that there is a warm and welcoming atmosphere and that the needs of every individual are met. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that pupils are safe and that they achieve their emotional and physical wellbeing successfully. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and, through physical activities they have a broad range of opportunities to increase their levels of fitness and health.

Pupils' personal, moral, social and cultural development is well co-ordinated and strongly embedded in the curriculum and in the school's daily activities. The school promotes high values, which help pupils to distinguish between right and wrong and encourage them to take responsibility for their actions. Provision for promoting pupils' spiritual development is appropriate.

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

The school is pro-active in building collaborative working with key agencies. Pupils make full use of professional support from both within school and from specialist services.

Provision and support for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Through early identification of underachievement, appropriate and timely support is provided for pupils. Individual education and behaviour plans are focused and of good quality. Parents are kept well informed and fully involved in the process. Good use is made of outside agencies and specialist services to provide additional support for pupils and staff.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is a happy and inclusive community, in which pupils have an equal opportunity to access all educational and social provision. A clear emphasis is placed on acknowledging, respecting and celebrating diversity and on creating an ethos that nurtures care and tolerance.

There is an extensive supply of high-quality resources that is matched appropriately to the whole range of ages and ability.

The building is of good quality with all available space purposefully used for the benefit of pupils. The outside learning area for the Foundation Phase is very well developed and offers a wide range of learning experiences ensuring that pupils receive a well-balanced curriculum matching the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum

<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 skilled leadership of the acting headteacher conveys a clear vision and gives a strategic direction to the work of the school. In a short period, she has succeeded in identifying the school's main strengths and the areas for development and has implemented improvements. Expectations are high and there is a shared commitment towards improving educational standards. Regular staff meetings effectively share ideas from training and new initiatives.

The teaching staff and the support staff work together closely as a team and under the leadership of the acting headteacher, they have been prepared to try new initiatives and different methods of working. All members of staff fulfil their roles and responsibilities very conscientiously.

Performance management is implemented in line with statutory requirements and the arrangements include all members of staff. Training needs are planned carefully to meet both individual and school priorities. These processes are closely linked to school improvement strategies and impact positively on the priorities included in the school development plan.

Local and national priorities are successfully incorporated into the school's programmes of work. Initiatives such as assessment for learning and developing thinking skills have contributed positively to improving pupils' learning especially in the Foundation Phase.



Governors have a good understanding of the school's developmental needs and by working closely with the acting head teacher, are influential in setting the strategic direction of the school. Data on pupils' attainment is scrutinised and trends in performance identified. Individual members undertake class visits and take an active role in self-evaluation. Governors fulfil their duties conscientiously and appreciate the importance of their role as a critical friend to the school. They fulfil their statutory role very conscientiously.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Management and staff are well-informed about the school's performance and use the information gathered through self-evaluation effectively to raise standards and make improvements. All teaching and support staff play an active part in the process and collate evidence from a number of different sources for making judgements. These include scrutiny of pupils' work, outcomes of lesson observations, benchmarking information and feedback from governors, parents and pupils. Good account is also taken of the views of the local authority and external agencies.

The school's self-evaluation report is of good quality and has a clear focus on standards and performance. Comments made are evaluative and the judgements are clear, honest and evidence based.

The school development plan provides a clear strategic direction for the work of the school and identifies both immediate and long-term priorities for action. Appropriate development plans are drawn up which are monitored against clear targets and success criteria. Specific tasks are identified and individual members of staff are assigned to put the plans into action. However, only a minority of the priorities identified through self-evaluation are included in school development plan.

Staff share good practice which includes direct classroom observation, and are very willing to undertake new initiatives and different ways of working. The school's participation in professional learning communities impacts very positively on the development of data interpretation, resource provision and management. All staff share good practice which includes direct classroom observation, and are very willing to undertake new initiatives and different ways of working.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Strong partnerships with parents, the community and other schools effectively extend pupils' learning experiences. Parents are very supportive and appreciate the regular information that they receive about the school's activities and their children's progress.

There are mutually beneficial links between the school and the local community. Visitors from, and visits to, the community enrich pupils' experiences. The school benefits substantially from its regular use of the adjacent community hall for indoor physical education lessons and other school events.

The strong links that have been forged with the receiving secondary schools ease pupils' transition from one key stage to the next and ensure continuity and progression in learning. There are appropriate arrangements for moderating pupils' work at the end of both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.

**Resource management: Good**

Staff and financial resources are managed and deployed effectively to support learning improvement. The school is appropriately staffed to teach the curriculum effectively. Teaching and support staff are deployed well to make the best possible use of their time, expertise and experience. Teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment time and arrangements for this are managed well.

Effective and efficient use is made of all available resources. The financial implications of all priorities in the school development plan are regularly monitored. This ensures that all monies are spent wisely and in accordance with the school's priorities.

Overall, outcomes for pupils are good and there is a trend of improvement. The school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Baseline assessment scores when children start in the reception class show that most have well developed literacy and communication skills. By the end of the Foundation Phase, nearly all achieve the outcomes expected for their age and ability.

Performance in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 fluctuates from year to year due to the small cohorts. The school's performance during the last five years has generally compared well with the achievement levels of pupils in other similar school. Pupils' performance in the core subject indicator, the expected level (level 2 in the Foundation Phase and level 4 in key stage 2) in English, mathematics and science, has on average, been similar to that of pupils in other similar schools. Key stage 2 performance in science has been particularly strong and was higher than the family average throughout the period.

In 2011, all Foundation Phase pupils achieved the expected level (level 2) in all three core subjects. Although half of the group achieved the higher level (level 3) in science, none achieved the similar level in English and mathematics. Key stage 2 performance in mathematics and science was very positive with the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level and the higher level 5 being significantly higher than the family average. Performance in English was generally similar to national and family averages.

Nearly all pupils, whatever their ability or background, make good progress through the school. Girls and boys generally perform equally well.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty-one parents completed the questionnaire, most of which were positive and supportive of the school. Without exception, parents say that:

- they are satisfied with the school and that teaching is good;
- their child likes school and has settled down well;
- children behave well and are expected to do their best and work hard,
- the school helps their child to become more mature; and
- the school is well run.

Nearly all say that:

- teaching is good and that their child is making good progress; and
- their child is safe in school and that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem.

A few parents do not feel that homework builds well on what their children learn in school.

#### Pupil questionnaires

Twenty-three pupils completed the questionnaires, all of which were positive. Pupils say that:

- they feel safe in school, that staff deal well with any bullying and they know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset;
- they are doing well and that adults help them to learn and make progress;
- the school teaches them how to keep fit and there are lots of chances for them to get regular exercise; and
- that other children behave well and that they are able to get their work done.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Mr W Williams	Reporting Inspector
Mrs H Hughes	Team Inspector
Mr K Jones	Lay Inspector
Mrs T J Howarth	Peer Inspector
Mrs S Jones	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.