



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 Baladeulyn
Nantlle
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL54 6BT**

Date of inspection: May 2012

by

Mr Mervyn Lloyd Jones

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:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Publication date: 19/07/2012

Context

Ysgol Baladeulyn is located in the village of Nantlle at the foot of Snowdon, some three miles from Pen-y-groes, a comparatively deprived rural area with free school meals percentages of 16%-24%. It is maintained by Gwynedd local authority. The school serves the village and the surrounding area. Pupil numbers have been fairly constant over the last three years.

The school provides education for pupils between three and 11 years of age and there are currently 25 on the register, including four part-time nursery children. Children are accepted into the school's nursery class on a part-time basis in the September following their third birthday and to the reception class on a full-time basis in the September following their fourth birthday. Pupils represent the full range of ability.

They are taught by two full-time teachers and one part-time. They are mainly taught through the medium of Welsh and some 70% speak Welsh at home. Two pupils are of ethnic origin.

Five pupils (19%) have been registered by the school as having special educational needs. The current headteacher has been in her post since January 2000. The school was last inspected in July 2006.

In 2011-2012, the individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Baladeulyn is £6010. The maximum per pupil for primary schools in Gwynedd is £7732 and the minimum £2745. Ysgol Baladeulyn is the 10th highest of the 102 primary schools in Gwynedd in respect of the individual school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school is good because:

- pupils achieve good standards;
- there is effective provision to promote pupils' wellbeing and their development as happy and safe individuals;
- teaching is of a good quality and pupils benefit from an interesting and varied curriculum; and
- the school's effective leadership and inclusive ethos create the best possible conditions for each individual to develop and flourish.

Prospects for improvement

The school has good prospects for improvement because:

- of the commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to continuous improvement;
- the school knows its own performance well;
- of the shared high expectations and common values with regard to learning, behaviour and inter-relationships;
- the school's commitment to enthusiastically undertake to develop effective collaboration practices with a vast number of partnerships.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 ensure that more pupils achieve the higher levels in mathematics and science at the end of the key stages;
- R2 continue to raise writing standards in both English and Welsh throughout the school;
- R3 further develop pupils' self-assessment strategies in key stage 2 so that they can become more aware of what they need to do in order to improve their work; and
- R4 ensure that there is a clear link between the findings of the self-evaluation report, the priorities in the school development plan and pupils' individual targets.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

In their lessons and over a period, most pupils throughout the school make good progress in relation to their ability and previous performance. They recall previous learning well and show good knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt in several subjects. By the end of key stage 2, most have developed their thinking skills well, glean information purposefully and successfully apply these in several areas of learning.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils listen intently and communicate confidently and clearly from an early age. They express an opinion confidently during formal lessons and when discussing their feelings during Circle Time. They reflect on their learning and discuss their work knowledgeably. They have a good grasp of vocabulary and phrases and make sound progress in their reading and writing skills in Welsh. They use these skills successfully in several areas.

In key stage 2, most pupils listen well and speak clearly, conveying their ideas sensibly and purposefully. They do this increasingly confidently in both English and Welsh. They have developed good reading skills in English and Welsh, many reading with fluency, accuracy and good expression. The more confident pupils discuss author's content and style knowledgeably. Many write for different purposes and in different styles with increasing skill. Pupils of higher ability write at length in both languages to a good standard. Even so, writing standards are not as good as the standards in speaking and reading.

Most pupils write and present their work neatly and take good care.

Throughout the school, most pupils make very good progress in their use of Welsh from the time they start at the school. The speaking skills of those pupils who come from non Welsh speaking homes develop very quickly. They use the language increasingly fluently and effectively in all types of formal and informal situations. They can discuss various topics very effectively using a broad vocabulary.

In the Foundation Phase during the last four years, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 in Welsh, mathematics and science at seven years of age is consistently amongst the lowest 50% of similar schools. Even so, in 2011, results in Welsh and science were amongst the highest 25%. The number of pupils attaining the higher level, namely level 3, in Welsh and science in 2011, is better than the family of schools average but no pupil achieved the higher level in mathematics.

During the last four years, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English, Welsh, mathematics and science at 11 years of age varies. In 2008 and 2011 the school's performance in the four core subjects was in the highest 25% of similar school. In 2010 results were varied with English in the highest 50% and Welsh, science and mathematics in the lowest 50%.

In 2011, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level, namely level 5, at the end of key stage 2 is better than the family and the Wales averages in English and Welsh. No pupil achieved the higher level in mathematics or science. Overall, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level has varied considerably over the last four years.

Pupils entitled to receive free school meals and those with special educational needs make the expected progress in line with their age and ability. There is no significant pattern in the difference between the achievements of girls and boys.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the need to eat healthily and to keep fit. They understand that this contributes towards a healthy body and mind. They have a good awareness of what is bad for them such as smoking and drugs.

The behaviour of almost each one of the pupils is very good in lessons and around the school. They display respect and care for each other, and are courteous to everyone. They enjoy the life and work of the school and they all feel safe there.

Almost all the pupils are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They work hard and contribute well in lessons. They show obvious interest in their work and their ability to concentrate is good. They work together effectively.

Attendance levels of 95% are good and higher than in similar schools and the national average.

Many pupils shoulder responsibilities within the school community, and they benefit directly from the school's sound links with the local community. The council is actively involved in making decisions, and pupils' opinions are considered carefully. They have had a positive effect on school life through leading on matters such as health, learning resources and fund raising for recognised charities.

Pupils' personal, social and life skills are developing well and they are prepared well for the next step in their education.

By the end of key stage 2, the skills of most pupils in drawing up success criteria and planning units of work for their activities is developing well. Even so, only a minority of children currently have the confidence and ability to evaluate their own work and that of their peers. They are not always clear on what they need to do to improve their work.

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

Throughout the school, the school plans interesting learning experiences that fire pupils' imagination. The schemes of work are comprehensive and respond well to the requirements of the National Curriculum, the Foundation Phase and religious education. The curriculum meets the particular needs of specific groups and individuals and offers personal programmes for pupils who have specific needs.

The planning for developing literacy, numeracy, communication and information technology skills are effective, and have been consistently incorporated into pupils' experiences throughout the curriculum.

The Welsh language provision enables pupils to make very good progress. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to learn about the history, geography and culture of Wales.

The school also offers a wide range of interesting experiences in the field of sustainability. Staff encourage pupils to be responsible citizens and to take an active role in the local community and in the global community. Pupils are given opportunities to collect for charities, recycle, use less energy, and learn about fair trade goods.

Teaching: Good

The standard of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan a range of interesting activities that stimulate the pupils. Throughout the school, there is very effective collaboration between the teachers and support staff. Teachers make imaginative use of resources, including technology, to improve the learning. Adult support has been focussed well and contributes substantially towards pupils' quality of learning.

There is suitable pace to the learning, tasks are interesting and the questioning penetrating. Without exception, the relationship between the teachers and pupils is one that encourages respect and courtesy. The expectations of teachers and pupils are high and lessons build on previous experiences. There is a supportive ethos and an industrious atmosphere within classes, where each individual is respected.

Teachers respond constructively to pupils' work. In the best instances, they help them to develop their written work through marking effectively. Teachers set clear targets for improvement and record them carefully but the system of ensuring that children are aware of them is not fully embedded. Assessment for learning strategies are developing successfully across the school.

Pupils' attainment is assessed regularly and the findings are analysed to track progress. Reports to parents are clear, informative and outline the areas for improvement.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy community that gives clear priority to pupils' wellbeing and safety. Valuable opportunities are provided to learn of the importance of healthy eating, keeping fit and about personal safety. The school has effective arrangements for helping pupils to control their feelings and develop self-awareness and self-respect. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good.

The school has comprehensive procedures and close and effective links with specialist agencies such as the health and welfare services, the police, the school nurse and the social services. The school encourages pupils to express an opinion and to offer ideas on how to improve the school effectively.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safety.

There are effective policies in place for additional learning needs and they are fully implemented. Successful arrangements exist to support all pupils who have been identified with additional learning needs. The school knows the needs of each child very well and provides effectively for them.

Learning environment: Good

There is a very homely ethos within the school which promotes the feeling of belonging, respect for each other and equality. Each pupil is encouraged to become fully involved in all aspects of school life. Parents appreciate this. The school offers a wide range of activities that nurture pupils' understanding of the wider world. The school is sensitive and effective in dealing with instances of challenging behaviour.

The school has a wide range of resources for the needs of all pupils. The buildings meet the needs of the pupils well and the high standard of classroom displays help to create a stimulating and rich learning environment. The buildings are of a good quality and are well maintained.

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

The headteacher provides effective leadership. She ensures that all aspects of school life have a clear and positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and standards. Behaviour and values are promoted that successfully contribute towards creating a supportive ethos where all are valued. She knows the school well and offers clear strategic direction.

All members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work together effectively as a team. Regular staff meetings are held which include everyone in discussions; these have a positive effect on the school's life and work.

The governing body provide effective support. They have a good understanding of how the school is performing in comparison with similar schools. They are aware of the matters that arise from data analysis and of the school's self-evaluation report. They are confident in discussing reports and financial matters, visit the school regularly and discuss targets. All this raises their awareness and understanding of their role well. They use the information knowledgeably to challenge the school in areas that are in need of further improvement.

The school pays good attention to current national priorities. This can be seen particularly in the areas of wellbeing, raising standards of literacy and numeracy and working with other schools as professional learning communities. Good attention is paid to the child's voice in all aspects of school life.

Improving quality: Good

Arrangements for self-evaluation and planning for improvement are good and a regular part of the school's life and work. The arrangements are comprehensive and thorough and members of staff and governors are involved in the process. Seeking the opinion of

others has also been well established. The school regularly seeks the views of pupils, parents and the wider community and their comments are given serious consideration.

Within these arrangements many methods are used, including looking at examples of pupils' work, observing teaching and carefully analysing results of formal assessments.

The priorities specified in the school development plan are suitable for the school's development and concentrate clearly on raising standards. It is an effective tool to ensure that the school sets challenging and appropriate targets. Even so, the link between the findings of the self-evaluation report, the priorities in the school development plan and pupils' individual targets are not always clear.

Everyone has a good awareness of the contents of the school development plan and their role in their implementation. The methods of implementation and the expected outcomes are identified under the different priorities. Responsibilities for implementation are also identified and resources are earmarked to support the developments.

The school's professional learning community enables staff to develop and share their knowledge successfully. Effective networks of professional practice with other schools and partners contribute purposefully for the benefit of pupils' standards and wellbeing. A good example of this is the collaboration on a project to raise the standards of boys' writing in English.

Partnership working: Good

The school is working effectively with a range of partners. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' wellbeing and achievement.

There is a very good partnership with parents. They are very supportive of the school and contribute enthusiastically towards a number of activities, including fund raising to improve the educational provision. There is very close collaboration between the school and the 'Friends of the School' society, and with a number of links in the community. Experiences and expertise are successfully shared to enrich the children's education.

Parents appreciate the regular information shared with them regarding their children's progress.

There is a good partnership with the local authority and valuable use was made of recent support in supporting pupils' wellbeing.

A very effective strategic partnership exists within the cluster of schools. Advantage is taken of all opportunities to work together and use the expertise of staff from several schools.

There is a good partnership with the local secondary school. An effective transfer plan has been established to ensure a smooth transition. These arrangements are effective, for example, collaborating on moderating assessments ensures consistency throughout both sectors.

There is a good link with local businesses, for example, a local hotel and quarry, where pupils undertake beneficial visits which have a good influence on their experiences and develops their entrepreneurial skills.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources effectively. All staff work together successfully and valuable use is made of their expertise. Teachers are supported by an effective team of assistants. They have a key role in supporting the pupils.

Appropriate arrangements are in place for the performance management of all staff, which leads to appropriate opportunities for continuous professional development. Effective use is made of teachers, planning, preparation and assessment time.

The school has a wide range of teaching and learning resources which are used effectively. Good use is made of both the indoor and outdoor space.

Expenditure is carefully monitored, with specific sums earmarked for implementing the priorities in the development plan.

The school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Results of teacher assessments at the end of year 2 in the Foundation Phase, and at the end of year 6 in key stage 2 must be treated with care because the very small numbers of children in a year can significantly affect the school's performance from one year to the next.

During the last four years, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 (the expected level in Welsh, mathematics and science for children at seven years of age) is consistently amongst the lowest 50% of schools that are similar in respect of the numbers entitled to free school meals. Even so, in 2011, results in Welsh and science were amongst the highest 25%.

The number of pupils attaining the higher level 3 in Welsh and science in 2011 was higher than the average for the family of schools, but no pupil achieved the higher level in mathematics. In 2009 and 2010, no pupil achieved the higher level in Welsh, mathematics or science. Results in 2008 compared favourably with those of the family.

There is no difference between the achievement of pupils entitled to receive free school meals and that of their peers. There is no significant pattern of any difference between the results of girls and boys at the expected level.

Over the last four years, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 (the expected level in English, Welsh, mathematics and science for children at 11 years of age) varies. In 2008 a 2011, the school's performance in the four core subjects was in the highest 25% of similar schools. In 2010 results varied, with English in the highest 50% and Welsh, science and mathematics in the lowest 50%. There was no pupil in year 6 in 2009.

In 2011, the percentage of pupils achieving higher than the expected levels at the end of key stage 2 (level 5 or higher) is better than the family and the Wales averages in English and Welsh, no pupil attained the higher level in mathematics and science.

Overall, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level has varied considerably over the last four years. In Welsh, results were consistently better than the family and Wales averages. In English in 2008 and 2011, the pupils' performance was better than that in similar schools and the Wales averages, but apart from in mathematics in 2010, no pupil achieved the higher levels in mathematics and science.

There is no difference between the achievement of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals and that of their peers nor between boys and girls.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent/carer questionnaires Number of responses: 13

Each one agrees or agrees strongly that the school:

- is well run;
- provides a good variety of activities;
- helps their child to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility; and
- gives appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs.

Each one agrees or strongly agrees that their child:

- likes school;
- is helped to settle in well when starting at the school;
- is making good progress;
- is encouraged to be healthy and to undertake regular physical exercise;
- is safe at the school; and is
- well prepared to move forward to the next school.

Each one agrees or strongly agrees that:

- the teaching is good;
- pupils behave well;
- staff expect their child to work hard and to give of their best;
- homework given builds well on what their child learns in the school; and
- treat each child fairly and with respect.

Each one agrees or strongly agrees that they:

- receive regular information on their child's progress;
- Feel comfortable to ask the school questions, make suggestions or raise a problem;
- understand the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires Number of responses: 13

The learner questionnaires were completed by all but one pupil in key stage 2. The responses are very positive and are higher than the average for primary schools. All pupils agree with all the statements in the questionnaire.

All pupils agree that the school:

- deals well with any bullying; and
- provides many opportunities to undertake regular physical exercise.

All pupils agree that:

- teachers and other adults at the school help them to learn and make progress;
- homework helps them to understand and improve their work;
- they have sufficient books, equipment and computers to undertake their work;
- other children behave well and that they can do their work; and
- almost all the children behave well during play times and lunch times.

All pupils agree that they:

- are doing well in the school;
- know who to talk to if they are worried or concerned, or if they find their work difficult;
- learn how to stay healthy, and
- feel safe at the school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Mervyn Lloyd Jones	Reporting Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Tristan Roberts	Peer Inspector
Esme Spencer	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (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. FPYear 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.