



*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 Brynaerau  
Pontllyfni  
Caernarfon  
Gwynedd  
LL54 5EU**

**Date of inspection: July 2013**

**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 Gymuned Brynaerau is situated in a rural area approximately half a mile from the village of Pontyllyfni, which lies on the main road between Caernarfon and Pwllheli. Seventy seven per cent of pupils come from homes in which Welsh is the main language. Pupils represent the full range of ability. The school describes the area that pupils come from as one which is not particularly prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

During the inspection, there were 71 pupils on roll, including four nursery aged children who attend in the afternoons only. According to the school, 9% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much lower than the national figure. Twenty one per cent of pupils have additional learning needs, which is close to the national figure. A few very pupils are from other ethnic backgrounds.

Nearly all pupils transfer to Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle at 11 years old.

The current headteacher was appointed in January 2007. The school was last inspected in May 2007. There have been significant changes to the school's teaching staff since the previous inspection.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Brynaerau in 2012-2013 is £3,513. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Gwynedd is £9,577 and the minimum is £2,839. Ysgol Gynradd Brynaerau is in 79th position out of the 102 primary schools in Gwynedd in terms of its 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 school's performance is good because:

- there is a very friendly and inclusive ethos;
- nearly all pupils make sound progress in their learning;
- pupils' behaviour is very good;
- nearly all pupils are enthusiastic and participate well in lessons;
- the quality of teaching is good; and
- there are clear systems for assessing progress.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and staff share a clear vision;
- the governing body undertakes its role very effectively;
- leaders identify clearly its strengths and areas for development;
- there are effective systems for self-evaluation; and
- the school has fostered a wide range of useful partnerships which contribute well towards improving the quality of provision.

## Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' spelling skills in English

R2 Ensure that marking consistently shows pupils how to improve their work

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

The baseline assessment results of pupils at Ysgol Brynaerau on entry to the school show that most have a suitable level of ability in basic skills. Most pupils, including those who receive additional support, make good progress in lessons and over a period of time. Nearly all pupils in the Foundation Phase make good progress in all learning areas. They participate fully in classroom activities. In key stage 2, most concentrate and build well on their previous learning experiences. Most pupils use their skills confidently across a range of subjects.

Most pupils across the school make good progress in their use of language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh. Nearly all pupils across the school listen carefully to their teachers during lessons. Most pupils are keen to offer answers or comments when talking about their work. They develop a wide and appropriate vocabulary and most pupils use this clearly and correctly when talking about their work. The oral skills of pupils from non Welsh-speaking homes develop very quickly. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all of these pupils use Welsh consistently in both formal and informal situations. The English oral skills of most pupils in key stage 2 are good. By the end of their time at the school, nearly all pupils are confident in both languages.

Most pupils' reading skills are developing effectively. They take an interest in books and develop to become independent readers. Nearly all older pupils in the Foundation Phase read meaningfully and with fluency and clear expression. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read a wide range of texts in Welsh and English with fluency, expression and a good understanding. They use their reading skills effectively to gather information and present it in an interesting way. They use their purposeful language skills when conducting research.

In the Foundation Phase, all pupils show continuous development in terms of early writing skills. Most older pupils in the Foundation Phase write meaningfully and independently in Welsh. They use suitable and interesting vocabulary and begin to vary sentences and punctuate correctly. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use their writing skills effectively in their work across the curriculum for different purposes and a wide range of audiences. There are good examples of creative and extended writing in both languages across the curriculum. The standard of the best pupils' extended writing is of high quality and most pupils' work shows good standards in terms of accuracy of language in Welsh. Although the majority of pupils' written work in English is of good quality, spelling errors are evident in the work of the minority. Pupils with additional learning needs, including those who are more able and talented, make good progress.

Most pupils make successful progress in their use of numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.

There is no data report on pupils in the Foundation Phase. This is because the number of Foundation Phase pupils who were assessed in 2012 was too small to report on without identifying individual pupils. Similarly, there is no data report for key stage 2 in 2012 because the number of pupils who were assessed was too small to report on without identifying individual pupils. Trends over a period of time in pupils' achievements at the end of key stage 2 in the core subject indicator are higher than the percentages for the family of schools over a five-year period. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level (level 5) in all subjects is much better than the family of schools average over a four-year period. In comparison with schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level and the higher level in 2012 placed the school among the top 25% in all subjects. In general, over the last four years, trends have placed the school in the top 25% or 50%, and in the top 25% in terms of the higher levels, almost without exception.

There is no significant gap between the performance of boys and girls in the Foundation Phase. In key stage 2, girls tend to perform better at the higher levels over a period of time.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Pupils work very well with all members of staff and with each other. They follow classroom routines very well from an early age. Pupils have positive attitudes towards keeping healthy and safe and they understand the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. Behaviour in classrooms and during playtime and lunch time is very good.

Pupils are confident and show good levels of self-respect. Most pupils have well-developed social skills and life skills and are keen to learn and develop themselves further. They show courtesy, respect and care towards one another and towards adults and visitors.

Pupils participate very successfully in a range of community activities. The school council and eco committee are well established and pupils show good decision-making skills. Pupils are proud of their role and act responsibly with staff and the governing body to assist with developments at the school.

Pupils' enterprise skills are developing exceptionally well through projects such as 'Llysiâu Llyfni'. By the end of key stage 2, pupils work with a good measure of independence and continue their learning outside of the school.

The percentage of pupils' attendance has placed the school among the top 25% over the last five years in comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Pupils' punctuality is good.

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

The school provides valuable learning experiences which gain pupils' interest and meet the requirements of pupils of all ages. Teachers work together effectively to plan comprehensive programmes. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities available to older pupils which contribute successfully towards their cultural and physical development.

Rigorous planning for developing communication, numeracy, information and communication technology skills, thinking skills and problem-solving skills ensures progression and consistent progress in all areas. This has a positive effect on the good standards that are achieved across the school.

Provision for developing the Welsh language is comprehensive and enables pupils to make very good progress. There is a clear and effective emphasis on enriching pupils' vocabulary through all learning areas and all subjects. The school promotes Welsh culture and history very successfully.

The school gives pupils good opportunities to learn about sustainability and global citizenship. The school encourages them to look after their environment and fellow man, and the work of the eco-committee is evidence of all of the varied and active work which happens at all levels at the school.

**Teaching: Good**

Teachers and other adults have a good relationship with pupils and a thorough subject knowledge. They use a range of methods and activities to inspire and challenge most pupils successfully.

In most lessons, there are lively presentations, a good pace and effective questioning. In the best cases, teachers give good attention to the needs of all pupils. In a very few cases, pupils are not challenged enough and the pace of lessons slows down.

Teachers are good language models on all occasions and encourage pupils to develop their Welsh in a wide range of different contexts. They plan effectively and succeed in motivating pupils. Resources are used skilfully and imaginatively.

On the whole, teachers give pupils useful feedback both orally and through marking. However, marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work. Assessment for learning is embedded well and teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to self-assess and assess the work of their peers.

The school tracks pupils' progress systematically and teachers make effective use of this information, in addition to performance data, in their planning.

Parents and carers receive detailed information about their children's achievement and development in annual reports.



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

Ysgol Brynaerau is a safe, organised and caring community where everyone is valued. Appropriate policies and strategies promote healthy living and wellbeing successfully. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school and they enjoy being there. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' inclusion.

The school ensures that pupils are given the opportunity to contribute to developments in the school and they take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities in their local community. These learning experiences promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. The school makes effective use of a wide range of specialist services to improve the support and guidance that it gives to pupils.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

There is good provision for pupils with additional learning needs. The school has put effective procedures in place for the early identification of pupils with additional learning needs. Clearly targeted support has led to positive benefits in achievement, behaviour and attitudes. Individual education plans are evaluated regularly in partnership with pupils and parents. One of the school's particular strengths is the firm partnership with the parents of these pupils. They review individual learning plans jointly and are aware of the measurable targets that are set.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is a caring community which values all pupils and recognises their achievements. Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils and these contribute successfully towards the positive ethos.

Policies, plans and procedures are in place to ensure equal opportunities for all and which promote equality and social diversity. These are known to all stakeholders.

The headteacher and governing body have invested much in the school's physical resources over recent years in order to ensure that they are safe, functional and attractive. Purposeful use is made of the school building and grounds for play and learning, following the recommendations of the school council and eco council. Classrooms are colourful with good resources for the purposes of the curriculum. There are displays of a high standard throughout the school which stimulate learning. They show good examples of pupils' work and successes. The building and grounds are well maintained.

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

The headteacher offers robust strategic direction which is based on improving standards and the quality of provision for pupils. The teaching team work together effectively to develop activities and ways of teaching and learning that have a

positive influence on pupils' achievement. They make effective use of data analyses to measure pupils' progress and to prioritise areas requiring further attention.

The roles and responsibilities of all members of the teaching staff are defined clearly, including leading and supporting curriculum areas and skills. All members of staff are committed to their role in achieving the school's objectives.

The governing body has a good understanding of how the school performs in comparison with similar schools. By collecting subject information, conducting monitoring visits and analysing a range of data, they challenge and support the school in order to raise standards further. Statutory policies, documents and procedures meet the requirements.

The school has selected a number of local and national priorities which contribute positively towards raising standards. These include initiatives to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and extend the Foundation Phase provision further.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Self-evaluation processes and high expectations among teachers and governors have a positive influence on promoting higher standards across the school.

The self-evaluation report is clear and analytical. A wide range of evidence is used to support judgements, including performance data, the opinions of pupils and parents, monitoring work, lesson observations and the views of the local authority's improvement officers.

The development plan is an operational document and the priorities correspond with the issues identified in the self-evaluation. Measurable targets and a specific budget are set to ensure improvement.

The process of monitoring the curriculum and skills contributes positively towards the process of raising standards. There is an appropriate emphasis on monitoring standards in addition to provision, and progress in implementing any issues for development is reviewed carefully by the headteacher and the governing body.

The school is developing a number of professional learning communities internally and as a member of a cluster of local schools. This has a positive influence on the school's practices and standards, particularly when developing literacy skills and disseminating good practice in terms of teaching and learning.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has fostered a wide range of useful partnerships which contribute well towards improving the standard of provision for pupils. The school has strong links with parents and carers. The school benefits financially from the support of the active Brynaerau parents association. There are effective partnerships with the community and this has a positive effect on pupils' awareness of their local area.

The school works very successfully with the cluster of primary schools and the secondary school that it feeds in order to create teaching materials and share resources. These partnerships have a positive effect on provision and standards, particularly on pupils' standards of speaking, reading and writing. The school works effectively with the local secondary school in order to prepare the older pupils for the transition period.

Jointly with other teachers in the cluster, teachers moderate and standardise assessments effectively at the end of key stage 2.

The school welcomes trainee teachers from the higher education sector for periods of work experience, which helps to share good practice and develop staff professionally.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school is staffed appropriately and good use is made of teachers' experience and expertise to deliver the curriculum. A great emphasis is placed on the continuous professional development of the teaching and support staff, and appropriate performance management processes promote this further. Teachers and teaching assistants work together and support each other effectively.

The school meets the requirements relating to teachers' work load. Teachers make effective use of their non-contact time to plan, prepare and assess pupils' work and observe good practice.

The school building and grounds are well maintained. The school invests in appropriate resources in order to maintain standards of education and replaces them as necessary.

The governing body and headteacher work together effectively to manage finances. There are appropriate procedures for ensuring that funds and resources are provided to promote pupils' development and to support the priorities identified in the school development plan.

The positive outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 are testament to the good value for money offered by the school.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Trends in the school's performance data should be treated with care as the number of pupils at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 is very small.

There is no data report on pupils in the Foundation Phase. This is because the number of Foundation Phase pupils who were assessed in 2012 was too small to report on without identifying individual pupils. Similarly, there is no data report for key stage 2 in 2012 because the number of pupils who were assessed was too small to report on without identifying individual pupils. Trends over a period of time in pupils' achievements at the end of key stage 2 in the core subject indicator (the percentage of pupils who achieve level 4 in Welsh or English, mathematics and science combined) are higher than the percentages of the family of schools over a five-year period. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level (level 5) in all subjects is much better than the family of schools average over a four-year period. In comparison with schools with a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level and higher level in 2012 places the school among the top 25% in all subjects. In general, over the last four years, trends have placed the school fairly consistently in the top 25% or 50%, and in the top 25% in terms of the higher levels, almost without exception.

Pupils with additional learning needs, including those who are more able and talented, make very good progress. There is no clear pattern which suggests that there is a difference between the performance of boys and girls in the Foundation Phase; however, boys tend to do better at the higher outcomes. In key stage 2, girls tend to perform better at the higher levels over a period of time.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

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

Responses to the questionnaire were received from 31 pupils in key stage 2. The responses are very positive, with all agreeing with each statement. All pupils agree that the school deals well with any bullying and that everyone knows whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. All pupils agree that other children behave well and that they are also doing well at school. All pupils agree that the school offers them good help and support, and teaches them how to keep healthy. All pupils say that they feel safe in school and that there are enough books, equipment and computers for them to do their work.

The responses are more positive than the average across Wales.

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

Responses were received from 11 parents. The responses to each question were above the average of primary schools in Wales, with all parents agreeing with each statement. All parents agree that their child likes the school and that they are making good progress. They believe that the school is very well run and everyone feels that their children are safe at school and that the pupils behave well. They agree that their children are encouraged to exercise regularly and are taught how to keep healthy. All parents say that staff treat all children fairly and with respect and that there is a good range of activities, including trips and visits. All parents also note that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

David Evans	Reporting Inspector
Buddug Bates	Team Inspector
Jeremy Turner	Lay Inspector
Jane Peate	Peer Inspector
Nia Puw	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))

### Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, 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**

### **Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)**

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

### **The core subject indicator (CSI)**

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

### **All-Wales Core Data sets**

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.



The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.