



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 Gymraeg y Gwernant
Pengwern
Llangollen
Denbighshire
LL20 8AR**

Date of inspection: January 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:

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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Context

Ysgol Gymraeg Gwernant shares a site with Ysgol Gynradd Bryn Collen in the town of Llangollen, Denbighshire. Most pupils come from the town of Llangollen and nearby villages. The area is described as relatively prosperous and the pupils do not come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Approximately 11% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is lower than the local authority and all-Wales average.

The school has seen an annual growth since it was opened in September 2005. Currently, there are 132 pupils on roll and they represent the full range of ability. The school admits pupils on a part-time basis during the term following their third birthday and on a full-time basis at the beginning of the term in which they reach their fourth birthday. A minority speak Welsh at home.

The school has identified 14% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This percentage is higher than the local authority average, but below the national figure. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The school has six full-time teachers and one part-time teacher. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2005.

The school was first inspected in February 2007.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gymraeg y Gwernant in 2012-2013 is £4,385. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Denbighshire is £9,659 and the minimum is £3,064. Ysgol Gymraeg y Gwernant is 25th out of the 52 primary schools in Denbighshire in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- pupils' achievements at seven and eleven years old compare favourably over time with that of similar schools;
- most pupils achieve good standards in lessons and show clear progress in their work;
- most pupils have good skills in Welsh and English;
- the school has a caring, inclusive and happy ethos;
- most pupils throughout the school develop well as independent learners;
- there is an interesting range of learning experiences, which are enriched by a number of educational visits; and
- teaching is consistently good throughout the school and has a positive impact on most pupils' standards, especially on improving their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- there is effective management which gives clear responsibilities to staff on all levels;
- everyone has a clear awareness of the school's purpose and direction;
- there are clear and detailed processes for tracking pupils' progress;
- there are probing self-evaluation systems in place which have led to an authentic picture of the areas for improvement;
- the headteacher and governors have introduced a number of priorities which focus clearly on improving pupils' outcomes; and
- the governors operate effectively as critical friends and recognise the school's strengths and areas for further improvement.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that more boys achieve the higher outcome in the Foundation Phase and the higher levels in key stage 2.

R2 Improve pupils' English spelling in Years 3 and 4.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Across the school, nearly all pupils are eager and enthusiastic learners who make good progress. They can recall their previous learning successfully and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills skilfully in new situations. They can work together effectively and become increasingly confident when working independently. Pupils with additional learning needs achieve well and make good progress in line with their ability and previous achievement.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils have good speaking and listening skills and show increasing levels of confidence when using these skills. They use Welsh confidently in a range of situations and the language of those pupils who come from non-Welsh speaking homes develops very quickly.

In key stage 2, most pupils are confident in using Welsh and English orally in a range of interesting situations. They listen well and contribute confidently to discussions and use a varied vocabulary which is relevant to the topic.

Very early on in the Foundation Phase, most pupils come to recognise familiar words in simple texts. They use knowledge of letters and the relationship between sounds and symbols to read words and establish their meaning when reading. They become increasingly confident in expressing their opinion about important events or ideas in stories, poems and factual material.

In key stage 2, most pupils read a range of texts fluently and correctly. They read independently, using appropriate strategies to establish meaning and find information successfully and use it meaningfully in several areas. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are equally confident when reading in English.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, many of the pupils' written work conveys clear meaning using appropriate and interesting vocabulary. Many pupils are now consistently using a capital letter at the beginning of sentences and a full stop at the end. Their ideas develop in a sequence of sentences. Many of the pupils' spelling is developing well.

In key stage 2, many of the pupils' written work in Welsh and English is coherent, imaginative and clear. Pupils make appropriate use of the main characteristics of different forms of writing, and begin to adapt them for different readers. Most pupils make good progress in punctuating their work appropriately. Many pupils usually spell common words correctly, but make less progress than expected in English in Year 3 and Year 4. Nearly all pupils' handwriting is legible. A very small number of higher ability pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

As this is the first year for reporting on the Foundation Phase, there is no data over time available.

In assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, most pupils achieved the expected outcome (outcome 5 or better) in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity; language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development. The results are higher than the average for the family of similar schools and Wales. The percentage that achieved outcome 6 is also better than the family and all-Wales averages in all areas.

In 2012, compared to schools which have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, the school was among the highest 50% of similar schools in all aspects.

In key stage 2 in 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level (level 4 or higher) in Welsh, English, mathematics and science combined, was higher than the average of similar schools and the all-Wales average. The percentage of pupils who achieved level 5 was also higher in all subjects. Over a three-year period, results at levels 4 and 5 compare well or better with other schools in the family and in Wales.

In 2012, compared to schools with similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, the school was among the highest 50% of similar schools in terms of the core subject indicator, Welsh, English and mathematics and close to the highest 50% in science. Other than English in 2011 and mathematics in 2010, there has been a similar pattern over the last three years. In comparison with schools that achieved level 5, the school is in the highest 25% in Welsh and English and in the highest 50% in mathematics and science.

Girls achieve slightly better than boys in all areas of the Foundation Phase, and significantly better in each subject in key stage 2. This is especially true in the higher outcomes and levels.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of health and fitness and they achieve consistently well in their personal, social and cultural development. All pupils feel safe at school.

Nearly all pupils enjoy their lessons and they take full advantage of opportunities to express their views in the process of choosing and planning themes. They make appropriate progress in their ability to work independently. The participation levels of many pupils in decision-making and taking responsibility for their own work is a strong feature throughout the school.

Most pupils across the school show a good level of motivation and perseverance in their work. The school council, SNAG group and eco council work very conscientiously and listen to the views of all pupils on a wide range of topics. They take a prominent role in a range of community activities and are proud of their contributions to the town. Pupils are very proud of their local community and contribute extensively to different charities. Their views are treated with respect and are important to school life.

Behaviour is consistently good across the school and all pupils are very polite and respond respectfully to adults and their peers. The school's attendance levels compare favourably with the average of the family of similar schools and have consistently been among the top 25% of schools which have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals over recent years.

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

Schemes of work are comprehensive and respond well to the requirements of the National Curriculum, the Foundation Phase and religious education. All pupils are given opportunities to experience a good range of varied and interesting activities and to play a prominent part in planning their own work. Planning also meets the particular needs of groups and individuals and offers them challenging personal programmes.

Thinking skills are developed successfully in several subjects and a strong focus is given to developing communication, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. It is ensured that the provision for them is coordinated appropriately so as there is progression in pupils' experience across the school. Homework is planned carefully to ensure valuable opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, community events and an interesting and purposeful programme of termly visits for many pupils. These events enrich and contribute well to developing pupils' knowledge, understanding and social skills.

The Welsh dimension permeates all aspects of the school's life and work. Learning experiences are enriched by visits from resident poets and artists, along with regular opportunities to compete in eisteddfodau, study the local environment and the area's history and folk lore.

Through a diverse range of activities, pupils throughout the school are given regular opportunities to develop their awareness of sustainable living. Pupils are also given opportunities to compare their life experiences with those of children from different countries, thereby promoting their respect and understanding of different cultures and ways of life.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is consistently good or better throughout the school. Teachers use a variety of interesting teaching methods which engage pupils' interest and participation. Lessons are planned imaginatively, with high and challenging expectations in each session observed.

Teachers have up-to-date subject knowledge and the good relationship between them and the pupils fosters positive attitudes towards work. Teachers make good use of the team of learning assistants, who give valuable support to pupils and help them to complete their tasks. Teachers and assistants model and correct language effectively.

Teachers share learning aims with pupils clearly, which helps them to measure their own progress. Targets and success criteria are shared carefully to ensure a firm understanding of what needs to be done to succeed in lessons. Most pupils show a good understanding of their targets for improvement and how to work towards them.

The quality of assessment of learning and assessment for learning is high. All pupils' progress across the school is tracked extremely carefully. Information is used very effectively to plan further work. All pupils are given excellent opportunities to set their own targets and to assess their own work and that of their peers. Pupils receive constructive oral feedback on their efforts in all lessons. Comments on pupils' work link clearly with the success criteria set.

Parents receive regular information about their children's progress. Personal targets and tracking results are shared with parents each term and reports respond fully to statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school gives a clear priority to pupils' safety and wellbeing. Effective policies and arrangements are in place and programmes such as Healthy Schools, personal and social education and physical education ensure that each child has the necessary experiences.

Pupils are encouraged consistently to differentiate between right and wrong. Values such as honesty, fairness and respect for truth and justice permeate through the school's day to day work. Collective worship, circle time and periods during lessons ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to reflect upon the message being presented.

Staff have a good knowledge of social disadvantage and specific wellbeing issues. There are effective arrangements in place to help pupils manage their feelings and develop their self-awareness and self-esteem. The school works closely with families and outside agencies to ensure the best support.

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The school has rigorous arrangements for identifying additional learning needs which comply with the Code of Practice. They identify different pupils' needs early and take prompt and purposeful action. Individual education plans identify clear targets and specific activities to ensure progress.

Learning environment: Good

The school successfully ensures a caring community, in which pupils feel safe and happy. One prominent feature is the sense of family based on principles which respects individuals' rights within the school community. All pupils have equal access to all aspects of provision and are encouraged to contribute fully to school life. The school deals with challenging behaviour sensitively and effectively.

The school has an extensive range of learning resources and they are used skilfully to promote good learning. The information and communication technology provision has improved significantly since the last inspection.

The accommodation meets pupils' needs well and the high standard of the classroom displays create a stimulating and rich learning environment. Full use is made of all facilities, including the hall for activities such as collective worship and sports.

The outdoor area for the Foundation Phase is used to its full potential. The building and grounds are well maintained and provide a safe environment for learning and play.

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

The headteacher's leadership is of good quality and has a positive impact on the school's strategic direction. She and the rest of the staff encourage and value team work. This is a prominent feature which creates a firm foundation when addressing raising standards and providing a broad curriculum across the school.

Staff have specific responsibilities for developing the school as a learning community and they share good practice purposefully and successfully. Staff meetings focus directly on the school improvement process and lead to clear actions to improve practice. Progress on implementing previous decisions is reviewed regularly.

The school addresses local and national priorities successfully. Clear attention is given to adopting and implementing principles and procedures arising from the School Effectiveness Framework, and to developing pupils' bilingualism and literacy skills successfully. The Foundation Phase is implemented very creatively.

Governors undertake their roles and responsibilities conscientiously. They develop a robust understanding of the school's performance by handling school performance data effectively, listening to staff and visiting classes. They attend training and challenge the school consistently as critical friends.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation process is comprehensive and develops the understanding of all staff of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All staff, parents, governors and pupils are a key part of the process. The school's self-evaluation report is thorough and records areas to be improved correctly. Through rigorous analysis of performance data, monitoring provision and reviewing all aspects of school life, a clear focus is given to raising pupil standards.

There is a clear link between the self-evaluation report's findings and the priorities in the school improvement plan. The plan contains an appropriate range of relevant actions and identifies the members of staff who are responsible for completing them. It also contains clear success criteria and specific deadlines for completing tasks. The school has succeeded in ensuring improvements over time.

The school has established effective arrangements for improving teachers' knowledge and skills within the school and beyond. Staff are included in a range of working groups to develop their expertise and to take full advantage of opportunities to take part in training to improve their skills. A good example of this is the willing collaboration with the five designated Welsh schools in the county to develop the writing of able boys.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a range of partners. This has a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and attainment.

There is a very strong partnership with parents, who are very supportive of the school and contribute enthusiastically towards a number of activities. Evenings to raise parents' awareness of the importance of literacy and numeracy and the teaching methods that are used have been valuable.

There are numerous links with the local community and this has an extensive influence on learning experiences. The Fruit and Vegetable scheme with a local business has improved pupils' business and communication skills successfully.

A partnership with the town's playgroup ensures very effective shared use of school staff and learning resources. The school gives clear guidance on what is expected when the children enter the Foundation Phase.

An effective moderation system has been established in the catchment area and purposeful and useful profiles have been developed to assist teachers in their assessments. There is also a good partnership with the local secondary school. The transition arrangements are effective in ensuring a smooth transfer.

Resource management: Good

Teachers have appropriate qualifications to teach the curriculum effectively. The school makes the most of staff expertise in physical education, music and information and communication technology; this has a clear influence on standards. Use of support staff is managed very effectively.

All relevant staff are given the necessary planning, preparation and assessment time, and this is used purposefully to share good practice, monitor, plan and prepare resources.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to manage the performance of all staff, which leads to valuable opportunities for continuous professional development.

The impact that resources have on teaching and learning is reviewed regularly and future needs are planned carefully.

Spending is monitored very carefully by the headteacher and the finance panel. Specific amounts have been earmarked for implementing the priorities identified in the school improvement plan.

The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

As this is the first year for reporting on the Foundation Phase, there is no data over time available.

In assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, most pupils achieved the expected outcome, namely outcome 5 or better, in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity; language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development. The results are higher than the average of the family of similar schools and the all-Wales average. The percentage that achieved outcome 6 is also better than the family and all-Wales averages in all areas

In 2012, compared to schools with a similar level of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school was among the top 25% in terms of the Foundation Phase indicator, among the top 50% in language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development and slightly below the median in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. In comparison with schools that achieved outcome 6, the school is in the top 25% in language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development and in the top 50% in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

In key stage 2 in 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level, namely level 4 or higher, in Welsh, English, mathematics and science combined, was higher than the average of similar schools and the all-Wales average.

In the individual subjects, pupils' achievement in Welsh, English, mathematics and science was higher. The percentage of pupils who achieve level 5 is also higher than the family of schools and schools in Wales in all subjects. Over a three-year period, results at level 4 or 5 compare well or better with the family schools and Wales.

In 2012, compared to schools with a similar number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school was among the highest 50% of similar schools in terms of the core subject indicator, Welsh, English and mathematics and close to the highest 50% in science. Other than English in 2011 and mathematics in 2010, there has been a similar pattern over the last three years. In comparison with schools that achieved level 5, the school is in the highest 25% in Welsh and English and in the highest 50% in mathematics and science.

Girls achieve better than boys in all areas of the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2. This is especially true in the higher outcomes and levels.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent/carers questionnaires

Nineteen questionnaires were completed by parents/carers. Parent satisfaction levels are high, and are higher than the average for primary schools.

All parents state that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the school in general and that their children are safe. All are of the opinion that the school is well run and feel comfortable raising any issues.

All parents feel that their child was helped to settle in well when they started school. All parents also believe that the pupils behave well, that they are respected and treated fairly and that they develop to become more mature and to accept responsibility.

All parents feel that the teaching in classrooms is good, that there is a good variety of activities and that their children are encouraged to be healthy and to undertake regular physical exercise.

All parents say that their children enjoy school and they feel that they receive regular information about their children's progress. All state that they understand the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints.

Very few feel that homework does not build well on what is learnt at school.

Responses to learner questionnaires

The questionnaire was completed by 60 pupils in key stage 2. The satisfaction level compares well with the average for primary schools.

All pupils say that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress and teach them how to keep healthy. They all feel that the school deals with bullying well and that they are safe there.

Nearly all pupils feel that they are doing well in their work and that they know who to approach if they are worried or upset or if they find their work difficult.

Nearly all pupils state that there are sufficient books, equipment and computers for them to do their work and that there are many opportunities to undertake regular physical exercise. Very few say that homework does not help them to understand and improve their work.

A very few pupils feel that other children do not behave well during playtimes and lunch time, and that children do not always behave well so that they can do their work.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Merfyn Jones	Reporting Inspector
Carolyn Thomas	Team Inspector
Ruth Rhydderch	Lay Inspector
Gareth Owen	Peer Inspector
Bethan 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)

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.