



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 Betws yn Rhos
Betws yn Rhos
Abergele
LL22 8AP**

Date of inspection: May 2012

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 Betws yn Rhos is situated in the village of Betws yn Rhos, some five miles from the town of Abergele. The school is under the voluntary control of the Church and is maintained by Conwy local authority.

There are 66 pupils on roll including 13 part-time nursery children. The school serves the village and the nearby area. The numbers of pupils have been fairly consistent during the last three years.

Forty per cent (40%) of pupils come from Welsh-speaking households. Pupils are taught through the medium of Welsh or English according to parents' wishes. The aim is to ensure that pupils are completely bilingual by the time they transfer to the secondary sector. Nearly all children are white British.

Five point seven per cent (5.7%) of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a percentage that is much lower than the county and national figures. Eleven point three per cent (11.3%) of pupils are on the school's additional learning needs register, and 2% have a statement. These figures are lower than national averages. No permanent or temporary exclusions were recorded during the year before the inspection.

The present headteacher has been in post since September 2004.

The budget per pupil for Ysgol Betws yn Rhos in 2011-2012 is £3,926. The maximum in terms of school budget per pupil in Conwy primary schools is £13,941 and the minimum is £2,935. Ysgol Betws yn Rhos is in 31st place out of the 61 primary schools in Conwy in terms of its budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

Ysgol Betws yn Rhos' current performance is good because:

- the headteacher's vision and clear strategy have a positive effect on standards, wellbeing and provision across the school;
- bilingualism is a strength and a natural part of school life;
- pupils are making good progress over a period of time;
- standards of behaviour and attendance are very good; and
- the school is an inclusive and caring community.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- pupils' performance at the end of key stages compares favourably with that of the family of schools and Wales over time;
- the headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is shared successfully with staff, parents and governors;
- the school pays appropriate attention to national and local priorities and implements them effectively;
- the governing body sets the budget carefully, agrees on financial priorities for the year and monitors expenditure effectively; and
- the school has good strategic partnerships with parents, the community and organisations that have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 continue to raise standards of reading in Welsh in key stage 2;
- R2 improve the response to pupils' written work in order to give specific guidance on what to do in order to improve their work;
- R3 ensure that the school's staff use data more effectively in order to identify progress and plan for improvement;
- R4 develop the role of governors in challenging the school on standards; and
- R5 ensure that the targets in the school development plan are more quantitative in order to measure progress.

What happens next?

The school will prepare an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations above. Estyn will ask the local authority to report on the school's progress against the recommendations in a year's time.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils across the school listen well to their teachers and are very willing to contribute to discussions and offer comments. They communicate very effectively, and express themselves confidently in Welsh and English. The way in which pupils develop flexibility in their use of both languages is a strength and a natural part of school life. The majority of pupils use Welsh naturally when conversing together, and pupils who come from non-Welsh speaking homes become fluent quickly.

Nearly all pupils in the Foundation Phase are making good progress in their literacy skills. Most pupils have a firm grasp of the Welsh language, appropriate to their age. Most contribute enthusiastically to class discussions, using suitable vocabulary in a specific context. Most pupils are making appropriate progress in their reading. They read with expression and understanding and are very willing to discuss aspects such as characters and content.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase are making appropriate progress in their ability to write independently. By the end of the Foundation Phase, the majority of pupils can write for a range of purposes, showing an appropriate grasp of form and basic punctuation. The quality of most pupils' presentation of work and handwriting is good.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are making appropriate progress in their reading skills. In English, they are developing into independent readers and are showing a liking for reading. However, the development of a minority of them is slow when reading aloud in Welsh. Nearly all of them respond well to the text being read, and write concise and clear reviews of books they have read. They use their information gathering skills well to find specific information from a book.

Pupils who have received additional support to improve their reading skills are making good progress against their targets.

By the end of key stage 2, the oral skills of most pupils are developing appropriately. They are becoming confident when talking about their work and in informal conversations, in both languages.

A majority of pupils in key stage 2 write intelligently in a wide range of written forms in both languages. They show an appropriate standard in terms of accuracy of language and use phrases and a range of vocabulary effectively. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils organise their work into paragraphs and present it neatly.

Pupils across the school concentrate well and recall their previous learning. They co-operate well together and respond appropriately to the tasks that are presented to them. Most pupils are developing into independent learners.

In key stage 1, the percentage of seven-year-old pupils achieving the expected level (level 2) in Welsh or English, mathematics and science has been higher than the average figures for Wales for two of the last five years, and higher than family of similar schools average in three of the last five years. Pupils' achievement in oral Welsh has been higher than the average for similar schools for a large period of the time. Except for in Welsh, no pupils have attained level 3 in any subject during recent years. Over the last five years, the school's performance in key stage 1 has varied from the bottom 25% to the top 25% in comparison with the results of similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals.

In key stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) in Welsh or English, mathematics and science in combination has been higher than the average for the family over time. This is true for the performance of pupils in every one of the core subjects. The achievement of 11-year-old pupils in reading and writing in English compares favourably with the average for the family of schools and the figures for Wales. However, pupils' achievement in reading in Welsh at level 4 has declined gradually over the last two years.

Over a period of five years the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English has placed the school among the top 25% in comparison with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals.

There is no significant gap between the achievement of boys and girls in key stage 1. However, in key stage 2, boys have performed better than girls at level 5 during the last three years in mathematics and science.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils at the school show interest and pride in their work. They show good self-discipline within activities and respond enthusiastically to tasks that are set. The oldest pupils at the school show motivation and perseverance when working in groups.

The behaviour of most pupils is good. They show respect for one another, for their teachers and for visitors. They are happy at school and feel safe. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit through participating in physical activities.

Pupils are very caring towards one another. Through the 'Mêts Mawr' friends system, they show maturity that ensures that the youngest pupils feel safe. Members of the school council show good thinking skills through discussing and contributing to decisions. An example of this is the work that pupils did to develop the school garden.

The attendance percentage is consistently good and is higher than the average for the family of similar schools and the national average. This places the school consistently either in the top 50% or 25% of similar schools in terms of pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

Most pupils show a good awareness of social skills and life skills. Pupils of all ages are beginning to develop the skills that are needed in order to improve their own work.

Through a range of activities at school, their participation in the community, and the extra-curricular experiences, pupils' social and life skills are being promoted effectively and this prepares them well for the next stages in life.

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

The school provides a wide range of experiences that meet the needs of all pupils and respond to the statutory requirements. The experiences capture their interest and motivate them to learn. A number of visits and extra-curricular activities reinforce and enrich learning effectively.

Provision for specific groups of pupils is good, and intervention strategies are being planned carefully and are having a positive effect on pupils' outcomes.

Through careful planning, it is ensured that appropriate aspects of skills are included and developed well in every lesson. As a result, very many pupils develop their skills effectively across a range of subjects. Provision for developing literacy skills is effective.

Provision for the Welsh dimension is deeply rooted across the school and enables learners to make good progress. Planning for developing pupils' bilingualism is very robust. This is a strength in the school. Nearly all pupils are fluent in Welsh and English by the end of key stage 2.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship has been developed strongly in lessons and through the work of the eco council. A close link has been established between the school and a home for children and young people, 'Edith's Home' in Uganda. This link has deepened pupils' understanding of other cultures.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use a range of methods and activities in order to motivate and challenge pupils. Teachers share lesson aims clearly with pupils, and the activities have been differentiated appropriately in order to respond to pupils' needs. Effective use is made of resources, including information and communication technology, in order to strengthen the teaching and learning. However, at times the tasks are too structured and do not allow pupils to think for themselves.

A very successful relationship exists between the adults and pupils that fosters effective learning across the curriculum where a strong element of respect is evident. Every member of staff offers a good linguistic model.

Teachers offer useful oral feedback to pupils in lessons. Where there are good examples of responding to written work, constructive comments are given on how to improve. However, this is not consistent. By the end of key stage 2, pupils can set success criteria and assess their own work individually and with peers effectively.

The school assesses work appropriately, indicating pupils' progress clearly. It makes effective use of assessments in order to track pupils' progress and to provide additional support as needed. Through regular reports and meetings, parents receive appropriate information on their child's progress and achievement.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes health and wellbeing appropriately. Pupils' health and fitness are being promoted effectively by various sports clubs and the school's healthy eating scheme. This is all an intrinsic part of the school's daily life.

All the school's pupils have numerous opportunities to contribute to school life and they take pride in those opportunities.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and fosters values based on honesty, fairness and respect for others.

The school takes a prominent part in community activities. These links are a strength that leads to high standards of social skills and an involvement in local cultural activities.

The school works closely with a number of external agencies and as a result the quality of care and support for these pupils is good. The school uses a range of strategies effectively to fulfil the needs of different groups of pupils. Under the leadership of an effective co-ordinator, the school identifies pupils that need additional learning support early on. The school provides individual teaching plans that set clear, specific and measurable targets. These are reviewed and monitored regularly and they have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

The school has appropriate procedures and a policy for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

One of the school's strengths is the very inclusive ethos it creates. The school is a very close and welcoming community and there is a warm atmosphere among staff and pupils. Everyone shows respect for others. Clear policies and procedures ensure equal opportunities for all and promote equality and social diversity.

The school makes good use of the buildings and resources. Effective use is made of the community hall nearby and the external resources in order to ensure full access to all the aspects of the curriculum. Colourful and stimulating displays enrich teaching and learning well. The toilets are clean and suitable and the site and building are kept in a good condition.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and she shares that vision successfully with staff, parents and governors. The headteacher has high expectations of staff and this permeates the life of the school. An example of this is the way the teachers teach effectively through the medium of Welsh and English. As a result, pupils' bilingualism skills are developing particularly well.

All members of staff have appropriate job descriptions and their responsibilities are defined clearly. Through effective co-operation, and sharing information about pupils' achievement, the school is beginning to make use of data in order to prioritise improvement priorities. The governing body is very supportive of school life and is aware of the school's performance in general. However, governors' understanding of data and of the school's standards has not been developed fully in order to challenge the school on its performance. Regular reports from the headteacher and the local education authority, and regular monitoring of the school development plan, give a clear direction in order for governors to operate strategically.

The school pays appropriate attention to national and local priorities by addressing raising standards of literacy and numeracy in particular. The Foundation Phase has now been established firmly. Good attention is paid to the learner's voice in every aspect of school life.

The school has a wide range of management and curricular policies that are implemented effectively.

Improving quality: Adequate

The self-evaluation process provides a clear picture of school life. It is based on the use of a wide range of evidence for identifying strengths and issues to be developed. Direct evidence of teaching and learning monitoring observations, along with subject reports, is collected and used to identify strengths and areas for improvement. However, teachers do not analyse and use data thoroughly enough to promote improvement in standards over time. Viewpoints from governors, parents, pupils and educational advisers are used effectively in order to form an opinion and contribute towards identifying priorities for the future.

The self-evaluation report gives a clear overview of standards and aspects for improvement, which feed into the school development plan directly. However, the school does not use the evidence from the self-evaluation thoroughly enough to determine specific and measurable targets for improvement.

The main priorities of the development plan focus appropriately on improving teaching, raising standards and developing skills. Progress on the basis of these priorities will be checked on a termly basis by governors, but as there are no clear quantitative targets it is not possible to measure progress in enough detail.

The teaching staff are part of a local professional community and these links contribute effectively towards raising standards and enriching teaching methods. The effect of this has facilitated establishing the Foundation Phase successfully and has also contributed to strategies for raising standards of literacy.

Partnership working: Good

The school has established a number of effective partnerships. The partnership between the school and parents in order to raise standards in numeracy is an example of this. A valuable booklet has been prepared for parents, listing the different number strategies that are used by the school in order to give them guidance on how to support their child. This has contributed effectively to improving pupils' standards in numeracy.

A number of valuable links have been established with members of the community, local businesses and nearby schools. The effect of this is seen in the use that pupils make of information and communication technology in relation to activities associated with the world of work.

Effective partnerships with parents in order to raise standards and hold Welsh cultural activities have a positive effect on pupils' outcomes.

Effective links with the school's parent teacher association contribute well towards raising money in order to buy and improve the quality of the school's resources.

Strategic planning and good and positive co-operation with the nursery school ensures that there are effective, expedient arrangements for transfer. There are also effective arrangements for helping the oldest pupils to transfer to the secondary schools.

The school's partnership with a local secondary school has ensured consistency and accuracy in moderating pupils' work in English and Welsh.

The school makes effective use of its professional links and other providers as well as external expertise. This leads to ensuring that quality and good practices are implemented throughout the school.

Resource management: Good

The school makes good use of the expertise of teachers and assistant staff in order to deliver and implement all aspects of the school curriculum.

The governing body sets the budget carefully, decides on financial priorities for the year and monitors expenditure effectively.

The time for planning, preparation and assessment is used well, ensuring that lessons are prepared in an orderly way. This contributes well to supporting pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The school gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

As there is a comparatively small number of pupils at the school, data must be treated carefully as the results for one child count for a high percentage of the cohort every year.

In the assessments at the end of key stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 2) in Welsh or English, mathematics and science in combination has been higher than the averages for Wales for two of the last five years and higher than the family of similar schools average for three of the last five years. Pupils' achievement in Welsh has been consistently higher than the family average for a considerable amount of the time. This is also true of pupils' achievement in speaking and listening. Over a period of five years, pupils' achievement in reading and writing has varied and has been lower than the family average. Apart from in Welsh, no pupils have achieved level 3 in any subject over the last five years.

Over the last four years, the school's performance in key stage 1 has varied from the bottom 25% to the top 25% in comparison with that of schools with similar levels of entitlement to free school meals.

In key stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) in Welsh or English, mathematics and science in combination has been higher than the family's average over a period of time, although it dropped in 2011. This is true of pupils' performance in every one of the core subjects.

The percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in Welsh and English has been consistently higher than the average for the family of similar schools in four of the last five years. Performance in reading and writing in English has been consistently higher than the average figures for the family and Wales. The pattern is the same for Welsh. However, percentages for reading and writing in Welsh have dropped over the last four years.

Over a period of five years, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English has placed the school among the top 25%, in comparison with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals for four of those five years.

Achievements at level 5 or higher in Welsh and science have compared very favourably with those of the family over the last five years.

There is no consistent pattern of boys' underachievement in comparison with girls in key stage 1. However, in key stage 2, boys have performed better than girls at level 5 over the last three years in mathematics and science.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Forty-four responses were received from pupils. The responses give a positive picture, which is around or higher than the national averages for primary schools for every aspect.

All pupils indicate that they feel safe at school and that they know to whom to speak if they are worried or anxious. Ninety-eight per cent of pupils believe that the school deals well with any bullying, which is higher than the national figure of 92% for primary schools in Wales. Many believe that other children behave well and that they can do their work. All pupils believe that there are many opportunities at the school for keeping healthy.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty responses were received from parents:

All parents agree or agree strongly that their children are making good progress and that they have regular information about their progress, which is higher than the national figure of 96% for primary schools in Wales.

All parents indicate that their children feel safe at school, and that they are encouraged to keep healthy. Nearly all believe that pupils behave appropriately, and most parents believe that they feel comfortable in asking the school a question, making suggestions or identifying a problem.

All parents believe that the school is run well and that they are satisfied with the school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Anwen Griffith	Reporting Inspector
Glyn Griffiths	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Jane Peate	Peer Inspector
Elen Owen	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. If it is available, the data report can be seen on our website alongside this report.

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.