



*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 Dolgarrog  
Ffordd Llanrwst  
Dolgarrog  
Conwy  
LL32 8QE**

**Date of inspection: November 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:

<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

The school is situated in the centre of the village of Dolgarrog in the Conwy Valley. It serves the village itself and the surrounding area. The area that is served by the school is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

At present, there are 57 pupils aged between three and 11 on roll, including eight nursery-age pupils. Children are admitted to the school on a part-time basis in the September following their third birthday and full-time in the September following their fourth birthday.

About 28% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is lower than the average for the local authority and for Wales. Twenty-eight per cent of pupils have been recorded by the school as having special educational needs, which is higher than the average for the local authority. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Education is provided through the medium of Welsh for all pupils, although English is the main home language of almost all of them.

Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes by two full-time teachers and two part-time teachers. The headteacher has been in charge of the school for 13 years.

The school was last inspected in November 2006.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Dolgarrog in 2012-2013 is £5,148. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Conwy is £12,262 and the minimum is £3,081. Ysgol Dolgarrog is in 13th place of the 60 primary schools in Conwy in terms of its school budget per pupil.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The school's current performance is adequate because:

- most pupils make consistent progress;
- the school is an inclusive and caring community in which pupils feel happy and safe;
- the school provides a range of interesting learning experiences that, on the whole, meet the needs of most pupils; and
- partnerships with parents and the community are very good.

However:

- pupils' standards over time are consistently lower in comparison with those in similar schools;
- there is not enough progress in pupils' extended writing skills in both languages in key stage 2; and
- the majority of pupils do not have a strong enough understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- staff members demonstrate commitment to pupils in their care;
- effective management processes and procedures are in place;
- planning for improvement focuses on raising standards; and
- the school is willing to co-operate with other schools for the benefit of pupils.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Raise pupils' standards across the school.
- R2 Raise standards of extended writing in Welsh and English in key stage 2.
- R3 Develop pupils' self-evaluation skills further in key stage 2 so that they can become more aware of what they need to do to improve their work.
- R4 Improve the governing body's understanding of data trends and comparisons with similar schools in order to enable them to hold the school to account better.

### **What happens next?**

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

## Main findings

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

Adequate

#### Standards: Adequate

Teachers' assessments at the end of year two in the Foundation Phase and at the end of Year 6 in key stage 2 must be treated with care. The small numbers of children in a year group can have a significant effect on a school's performance from one year to the next.

As this year is the first year to report back on the Foundation Phase, there is no data over time available. In assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected outcome, namely outcome 5 or higher, was lower than family and all-Wales averages in every learning area, namely language, literacy and communication; mathematics and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. In comparison with schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school was in the bottom quarter of schools for every learning area. The percentages who achieved outcome 6 were higher than the family and Wales averages in mathematics and in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity and placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools. No pupils achieved outcome 6 in language, literacy and communication.

In assessments at the end of key stage 2 in 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the core subject indicator, namely the expected level (level 4) in Welsh, English, mathematics and science in combination, were lower than the average for the schools in the family and the schools of Wales. In comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage who receive free school meals, the school was in the bottom quarter in terms of the core subject indicator and all subjects individually, other than mathematics which was in the top quarter. Very few pupils achieve a higher level, taking into account the school's results in the last five years.

In their lessons, and over time, many pupils across the school make good progress in relation to their age and ability. They recall previous learning successfully and show strong knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt. By the end of key stage 2, the majority of pupils have developed their thinking skills appropriately, acquiring knowledge purposefully and applying it appropriately in several subjects.

There is no significant difference when comparing the performance of boys and girls in the Foundation Phase or in key stage 2.

All pupils who have additional learning needs achieve well against personal targets and make good progress in line with their ability.

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils use oral Welsh regularly when responding to adults. They do this with increasing confidence in a range of situations and the skills of pupils who come from non-Welsh speaking homes develop quickly. The majority listen attentively and are prepared to contribute enthusiastically in lessons and

reflective sessions. Many pupils' early reading skills are developing effectively, and by the end of the Foundation Phase many read for a purpose and show appropriate understanding of the content. They use a range of appropriate strategies successfully in order to tackle new vocabulary. Many pupils make the expected progress in their writing skills. They become increasingly confident in writing simple sentences by using suitable and interesting vocabulary.

In key stage 2, most pupils listen well. They are willing to respond to teachers' questions and offer sensible ideas. However, there is a tendency for a minority of them to use English when discussing their work with each other.

Many have developed good reading skills in Welsh and English and many read fluently, accurately and with good expression. The majority do not use their reading skills in English to the same extent as Welsh in order to glean and present information.

In key stage 2, the majority of pupils become increasingly confident in writing clear sentences which are punctuated correctly and appropriate use is made of the main features of different forms of writing. However, only a very few write at length in both languages to a good standard. More able pupils do not show more developed writing skills consistently in Welsh and English.

In general, the standard of neatness and handwriting of a minority of pupils varies in the various subjects.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all pupils have a good awareness of the need to eat healthy food and keep fit. Nearly all pupils say that they enjoy life at the school, that they feel safe and that they are not aware that any bullying occurs. Their behaviour is good and they show respect for their peers and for adults at the school.

As they mature, most pupils enjoy and benefit successfully from a variety of appropriate experiences and opportunities to undertake responsibilities, including the school council and the eco committee. The council has an active role in school life and members take good advantage of the opportunities that they have to influence the school's work.

The majority enjoy their lessons and recently they have begun to develop ways to voice an appropriate opinion about what they are learning. At present, the confidence of the majority of pupils to evaluate their work, and the work of their peers, has not been developed sufficiently. They are not always sure of what needs to be done to improve their work.

The school's attendance level is 95.6%, which places the school in the top 25% in comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who receive free school meals.

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

The learning provision deals appropriately with the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education. Teachers and classroom assistants co-operate effectively to provide a wide and varied range of interesting experiences to gain pupils' interest. However, activities do not always challenge pupils of higher ability.

Activities and experiences beyond the school enrich pupils' experiences successfully.

Planning for developing literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology skills across the curriculum and learning areas is good. However, provision for developing pupils' extended writing skills in both languages is not completely effective.

Staff promote Welsh effectively and regularly and there is an obvious Welsh ethos in classes. Provision for developing pupils' awareness of the culture and history of Wales is good, and studies of the local community and the history of Wales make a valuable contribution to this.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is a prominent feature at the school. The school ensures that pupils have regular and interesting opportunities to expand their knowledge of issues concerning international relations. This contributes well to their knowledge and understanding of these aspects. The school has an enthusiastic and active eco committee that works industriously to promote environmental issues constantly.

**Teaching: Good**

In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good on the whole. Classroom management across the school is firm and fair. There is a good relationship between adults and pupils that creates an appropriate and homely atmosphere surrounding the work. All members of staff are good language models for pupils.

All the staff have a firm understanding of the curriculum and they question pupils effectively to review their knowledge and understanding and to extend their ideas. They use a range of teaching methods and resources skilfully to support teaching and learning. However, activities in all lessons are not wholly suitable for pupils of varied abilities.

Teachers offer supportive feedback regularly in lessons and frequently as a response to pupils' work, and give constructive comments. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to respond to the comments in order to improve their work. Use of assessment for learning has not been rooted fully in order to ensure that pupils are able to improve their own work.

The school has introduced a new tracking system recently to strengthen the process of observing pupils' progress. The information that is recorded is used appropriately to support teachers in setting targets for improvement.



Reports to parents meet statutory requirements and they appreciate the good information about their children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

**Care, support and guidance: Good**

Effective arrangements exist to support pupils' health and wellbeing, in addition to encouraging their involvement in their school. These arrangements contribute well to pupils' development and wellbeing and support their learning effectively.

Pupils are encouraged regularly to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong. Values such as honesty, fairness and respect for the truth and justice permeate the school's everyday work. Morning assemblies and reflective periods ensure a regular opportunity for pupils to reflect on the message that is being presented.

The process of identifying pupils who have additional learning needs is very thorough. The school responds in a timely fashion to pupils' specific needs and ensures suitable provision for them. Effective co-operation between all members of staff and parents ensures the best care. Individual education plans are detailed and clear and are evaluated regularly. The school makes effective use of specialist agencies to support pupils' needs.

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

**Learning environment: Good**

The school is successful in ensuring a caring community, in which pupils feel happy and safe. A prominent feature is the feeling of family, based on principles that respect the rights of individuals within the school community.

The inclusive ethos places a good emphasis on ensuring equal opportunities and full access to all the school's activities. Respect for diversity and racial equality is promoted through varied work to study foreign countries.

The building offers an appropriate learning environment for the number of pupils. The library and hall are used appropriately for sports, morning assemblies and concerts. The outdoor space for the Foundation Phase and the school grounds are an attractive resource, and are used effectively to promote learning. The school building and grounds are maintained well and offer an interesting environment.

The varied supply of good quality resources matches pupils' needs appropriately. Displays in classrooms and across the school reflect pupils' work effectively.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors share an obvious commitment to promoting pupils' wellbeing and do so very successfully. The school has a wide range of

appropriate procedures and policies which have been reviewed recently and their impact is beginning to have a positive influence on pupils' attainment. Strategic planning puts an appropriate focus on improving the school by raising standards of pupils further.

All staff have clear responsibilities and job descriptions that are fulfilled well. Teachers' and assistants' continuous professional development is supported through suitable and regular opportunities to attend in-service training meetings.

Under the guidance of an experienced Chair, the new governing body strengthens its awareness of the school's life and work. Visits to classes and appropriate training by the local authority have reinforced this. Its understanding of the school's performance is now robust and it is very aware of the need to be more challenging.

The principles of the Effectiveness Framework are reflected in the effective co-operation that exists across the school. This has a positive effect on raising standards of bilingualism, mathematics and science. The staff work well with the schools in the cluster and the secondary school to develop curricular elements and staff professional development.

### **Improving quality: Good**

On the whole, self-evaluation procedures are effective. A good range of monitoring activities is used, including data analysis, observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work. Members of staff have a beneficial opportunity to contribute to the process of influencing the content of the report through discussion in weekly staff meetings in order to agree on priorities for improvement. However, the governors' role in the process is not completely effective and they do not attach sufficient importance to holding the school to account. Parents' and pupils' comments are appreciated and detailed consideration is given to them.

The school development plan arises directly from the self-evaluation and is having a positive effect on improving standards. The plan's focus targets specific areas and the use of data in tracking pupils' progress challenges the school to raise standards further. The intentions of the plan have been costed carefully and there are realistic time limits and definite success criteria to measure the effectiveness of the actions.

Staff have been included in a range of training opportunities that develop them well. These include opportunities to work in successful partnerships with the local authority and with local schools, which has led to sharing good practice.

### **Partnership working: Good**

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

There is a strong partnership with parents. They are very supportive of the school and contribute enthusiastically to a number of activities, including raising money to improve educational provision. Parents appreciate the regular information that is shared with them. Responses to questionnaires are very positive and they do not suggest that there are important issues which need attention.

A valuable partnership exists with the Cylch Ti a Fi which meets at the school. This prepares the children well for their period at school and transfer arrangements are effective.

There are numerous links with the local community and this has an extensive influence on learning experiences. The community has contributed generously over the years and the effect of this can be seen in the improvement to the outdoor area and the resources that have been contributed to the school. Recently, £1,000 was received to buy reading books.

The good partnership with the local authority has ensured valuable support, especially when developing Welsh-medium provision. The site is shared with the Language Centre and every opportunity to work together is taken advantage of in order to provide the best possible experiences and resources for pupils.

There is also a good partnership with the circle of schools who feed into the local secondary school.

These arrangements are effective, for example, in standardising and moderating teachers' assessments at the end of a key stage and to ensure smooth transfer.

### **Resource management: Good**

All members of staff have appropriate qualifications to deliver the curriculum. They work together well and share their expertise effectively for the benefit of all pupils. Teachers' skills are taken full advantage of in order to enrich pupils' experiences in different classes. There are good examples of this in information and communication technology, music and physical education.

Effective use is made of classroom assistants and their contribution is having a positive effect on individual pupils.

All relevant members of staff have appropriate time for planning, preparation and assessment, and this is used appropriately to plan and prepare resources.

A good supply of resources for all the school's needs is managed effectively and good use is made of them. Pupils have benefitted from a considerable sum that was earmarked recently for improving computer equipment.

The governing body defines the headteacher's financial powers clearly and expenditure is monitored carefully. This ensures a good understanding of the allocation of responsibilities. The school provides adequate value for money, considering pupils' outcomes.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Teachers' 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. Small numbers of children in a year can have a significant effect on the performance of a school from one year to the next.

There is no data report on pupils in the Foundation Phase or in key stage 2 in 2012 because the numbers are too small without identifying individual pupils.

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

In assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected outcome, namely outcome 5 or higher, was lower than the family and Wales averages in every learning area, namely language, literacy and communication, mathematics and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. In comparison with schools with similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, the school was in the bottom quarter of schools for every learning area. The percentages who achieved outcome 6 were higher than the family and Wales averages in mathematics and in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity and placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools. No pupils achieved outcome 6 in language, literacy and communication.

In assessments at the end of key stage 2 in 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the core subject indicator, namely the expected level (level 4) in Welsh, English, mathematics and science in combination, was lower than the average for the schools in the family and the schools of Wales. In comparison with similar schools in terms of free school meals, the school was in the bottom quarter in terms of the core subject indicator and every subject individually, other than mathematics which was in the top quarter. Very few pupils achieve level 5, taking into account the school's results in the last five years.

There is no significant difference when comparing the performance of boys and girls in the Foundation Phase or in key stage 2.

All pupils who have additional learning needs achieve well against personal targets and make good progress in line with their ability.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent/carer questionnaires

Eleven completed questionnaires were received from parents/carers. Parents' level of satisfaction is high and compares well with the average for primary schools in all questions.

All parents/carers state that they agree or agree very strongly that the school is well-run and that their children are happy and safe at school. All parents/carers also say that their children like the school and feel that they receive regular information about their children's progress. All state that pupils are respected and treated fairly and develop to be more mature and to shoulder responsibilities. All parents/carers feel that teaching in classes is good and they say that their children are making good progress at school. All feel comfortable in raising any matter.

A few parents/carers feel that they do not understand the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints, and a very few believe that pupils behaviour is not good.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Learner questionnaires were completed by 22 pupils in key stage 2. Except for two questions, the level of satisfaction compares well with the averages for primary schools.

All pupils say that they feel safe at school and that the school deals well with bullying. All pupils feel that teachers help them to learn and make progress and that they know to whom to turn if they are anxious or to ask for advice. They all agree that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that there are enough opportunities to take regular physical exercise. All pupils feel that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

A few are of the opinion that not all pupils behave well at lunch time and play time.

A minority of pupils feel that homework does not help them to understand and improve their work at school and that other children do not behave well in order to enable them to do their work. The positive answers to these two questions are lower than the averages for primary schools.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Merfyn Lloyd Jones	Reporting Inspector
Carolyn Thomas	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Ceren Lloyd	Peer Inspector
Eleri Roberts	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

### Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11