



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 Ieuan Gwynedd
Rhydymain
Dolgellau
Gwynedd
LL40 2AS**

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 Gymunedol Ieuan Gwynedd serves the village and area of Rhydymain, near the town of Dolgellau, an agricultural area that is not particularly prosperous or disadvantaged. Thirty-two per cent of pupils come from outside the school's usual catchment area.

Children are admitted part-time in the September following their third birthday and full-time in the following September. The number of pupils on roll has decreased annually from 25 in 2007 to 18 in 2012. The decrease in the number of pupils has led to a situation in which the school is part of the Authority's reorganisation plans.

No children are entitled to free school meals; 12% of pupils are designated as those who have additional learning needs; a figure that is much lower than the national figure. A very few pupils have a statement of special education needs.

The area's linguistic background is strongly Welsh, and about 67% of pupils come from households where Welsh is spoken as a first language. Welsh is the school's main medium of instruction. All pupils are from a white British background.

The school was last inspected in February 2007. A temporary headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2011 and, since September 2012, she has also taken charge of Ysgol Brithdir.

The individual school budget in 2012-2013 per pupil for Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd is £9,577, which compares with a maximum of £9,577 and a minimum of £2,839 for primary schools in Gwynedd. This is the school that has the highest school budget per pupil of the 102 primary schools in Gwynedd.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make good progress in their work;
- nearly all pupils are enthusiastic, listen attentively and contribute very well in learning sessions;
- pupils' behaviour is very good at all times;
- there are effective links with parents and the local community; and
- the teachers are dedicated and teaching is good.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the temporary headteacher is having a significant effect on the school's ethos as a learning community and on leadership;
- there is a strong sense of working as a team among the staff and a clear commitment to ensuring further improvement; and
- improving standards of literacy has a high priority within the school's development plan.

However:

- the school's self-evaluation systems have not been embedded fully and co-ordinators are still developing their roles; and
- there has not been enough progress since the last inspection in areas such as standards of English across the curriculum and the role of governors as critical friends.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards of reading and writing in English across the curriculum in key stage 2
- R2 Embed self-evaluation systems and strengthen the role of subject co-ordinators
- R3 Develop the role of governors as critical friends, especially in the self-evaluation process

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that show how it will address recommendations. The local authority will monitor the implementation of the action plan.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Pupils at Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd make strong progress in their learning during their school career and the most able pupils attain good standards.

Nearly all pupils listen attentively, co-operate effectively and work diligently in learning sessions. Most pupils are able to discuss their work effectively and, across the school, their understanding of what they need to do to improve their work is good.

Although a minority of pupils come from homes in which English is spoken as a first language, nearly all pupils develop to use Welsh quickly. From an early age, nearly all pupils communicate confidently orally in Welsh. They can converse clearly and enthusiastically about their work and in various informal situations, and they use an appropriate and increasingly rich vocabulary.

Most pupils develop into effective readers in line with their age and ability. They read fluently, accurately and intelligently in Welsh. They can discuss the content of books effectively, expressing an opinion about them and discussing their favourite authors.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils write meaningfully and independently. Most of them have a firm grasp of Welsh syntax and, in general, punctuate their work appropriately. By the end of key stage 2, most show a sound awareness of different forms of writing, and use these characteristics confidently across a range of subjects. Most pupils make good progress in their extended writing in Welsh.

However, the ability of most pupils in key stage 2 to read and write at length in English is not developing well.

From a very young age, pupils make extremely effective use of information technology equipment such as recording equipment, portable computers and a number of programmes to support their learning. Most pupils' numeracy and thinking skills are developing well.

Teachers' assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 must be treated with care because the small numbers of pupils in a year can have a significant effect on school performance from one year to the next.

In 2012, the percentage of seven-year-old pupils who achieved the expected outcome (outcome 5) or higher in language skills, mathematical development and personal and social development at the end of the Foundation Phase was higher than the average for the family of similar schools and close to the average for the whole of Wales. In comparison with schools that have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, the school is among the bottom 25% in Wales. In general, the percentage of pupils who attained the higher outcome (outcome 6) was higher than

the average for the schools in the family and the average for Wales in their language skills, mathematical development and personal and social development.

The percentage of pupils who attained the expected level (level 4) in all subjects in key stage 2 in 2012 was higher than the average for schools in Wales and higher than the average results for the family of similar schools. The school's performance compares very favourably with schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and the school has been among the top 25% in all subjects since 2010. The school's results have been consistently higher than the family and schools in Wales' averages since 2010.

The school's internal tracking records show that nearly all pupils make progress that is as good as, or better than expected.

Pupils who have special educational needs show good progress against their personal targets.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils feel very safe at school and they are aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular physical exercise.

Pupils have an opportunity to voice an opinion and express concern. All state that they are treated with respect and that they can turn to adults for support if necessary.

Children's behaviour is consistently very good. They respect the school's rules and apply themselves enthusiastically to learning within lessons. Pupils of all ages offer support and friendship to others.

Pupils are proud of their school and their local community and appreciate the opportunity to make a difference. They enjoy contributing towards the activities of the school council and are proud of the opportunity to raise money in aid of charities and other people.

As a result of a wealth of community and external activities, most pupils' social and life skills are developing well. Pupils know their community very well and appreciate it. Pupils in the enterprise groups and the fruit shop benefit from the experience of developing a business for the school.

Pupils' attendance percentage at the school over time is consistently good. In 2011-2012 it was 95.3%, which is good in comparison with that of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and higher than the percentage for the local authority and for Wales. Pupils' punctuality is very good.

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

The school plans carefully in order to provide a wide range of appropriate learning activities for all pupils. Provision for more able and talented pupils challenges them and extends them effectively.

The whole-school plans, in addition to individual teachers' plans, ensure that there is robust development and progression in key skills across the curriculum.

Teachers provide effective opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and reading skills, and procedures for supporting reading in English are beginning to have a positive effect on standards.

The rich provision for developing the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is central to all the school's life and work. The school develops a wealth of opportunities for pupils to perform and compete, in addition to taking part in extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum. Provision pays good attention to the work of poets, authors, artists and other well-known Welsh people.

The school provides good experiences that promote pupils' knowledge of sustainable development, but provision for global citizenship is less effective.

Teaching: Good

Across the school, teaching is good. Teachers respond very intelligently to pupils' needs, and in the best lessons pupils have opportunities to take responsibility for their learning by making their own decisions and working independently.

Teachers have a good understanding of curriculum requirements and various strategies to promote pupils' independence in a number of aspects of the curriculum. In nearly all of the lessons observed, teachers and other adults stimulated pupils by providing regular opportunities for pupils to self-evaluate their work and the work of their peers. Assessment for learning processes have now been embedded well in the school and they are implemented consistently. Good aspects can be seen in the marking and there are examples of comments that show clearly the way forward for pupils to improve their work.

All teachers have high expectations of pupils and they are very dedicated and work hard to ensure high standards. They prepare tasks that are suitable for the ability range in all classes, including extending and challenging work that meets the needs of more able pupils. The pace of lessons, probing questioning and teachers' enthusiasm contribute successfully to developing independent learners. Support staff are used effectively in all classrooms.

The school has effective assessment procedures that record all pupils' attainment clearly. They also identify opportunities for extending more able and talented pupils.

Reports to parents meet statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are effective arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and, through physical activities inside and outside the school, they have a wide variety of opportunities to increase their fitness and health levels. Daily assemblies, that are supported by local churches, promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development successfully. Arrangements for promoting good behaviour are effective.

The school provides very good individual support for pupils' educational, social and personal issues. It co-operates very closely with external agencies and ensures that pupils benefit from the relevant support that is available for them. This includes social services, the counselling service and the psychological service.

A range of suitable methods are used in order to identify pupils' needs effectively, including reading tests, spelling tests and teachers' professional judgement. Intervention groups, support for individuals and support within classrooms are used to meet these needs effectively. A suitable progress monitoring system is in place, and pupils are supported appropriately within the intervention groups as needed.

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

Learning environment: Good

The school is a happy and welcoming community and there is a friendly atmosphere among staff and pupils. The ethos is inclusive and all pupils have equal access to all the school's provision. Good emphasis is placed upon recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity.

Classrooms around the school are attractive and stimulating and create a striking learning environment. The standard of display work, which includes pupils' art work, is high.

The extensive outdoor areas are used effectively to enrich the range of learning opportunities for groups in the Foundation Phase and also for formal and informal sports activities. The standard of maintenance and the cleanliness of the building and grounds is good.

There are enough appropriate resources to meet pupils' needs, and good use is made of them.

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

Since the appointment of the temporary headteacher in September 2011, rapid progress has been made in a short period of time in important areas and change has been managed well. The temporary headteacher co-operates very effectively with the school's staff in order to create a positive ethos and a clear vision for the future.

As a result, there has been improvement in the strategic planning which now focuses clearly on raising standards, improving the quality of provision and the learning environment. Although not all of the activities have had enough time to have a full effect on pupils' standards across the school, firm foundations have been set.

A comprehensive and balanced review of provision has been produced, which gives a clear direction for developing the school. All members of staff have a specific job description, which ensures that they understand their role in implementing the school's plans.

Appropriate attention is paid to national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase has been established very successfully, ensuring suitable resources that are managed effectively. Assessment for learning is now being embedded within lessons and it contributes successfully to raising standards.

Governors are very supportive of the school's work and are increasingly aware of their responsibilities. Members of the governing body are beginning to monitor teaching regularly across curriculum areas and play an appropriate role in managing the headteacher's performance. They are beginning to use data more effectively to identify strengths and areas to be improved in the life and work of the school. They are aware that there is a need to develop their role as critical friends further.

Improving quality: Adequate

Since the appointment of the headteacher, suitable progress has been made to develop self-evaluation arrangements and planning for improvement. The process is inclusive and the school is active in trying to seek the opinion of parents, pupils and teachers. The school analyses formal results suitably at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. However, the self-evaluation process has not been embedded fully and members of staff are not confident enough as subject co-ordinators.

The self-evaluation report is a document that gives a balanced picture of strengths and areas to be improved. There is a clear enough link between the report and the priorities of the school development plan and the content of the school development plan is acceptable.

Recently, data has been used appropriately to target specific support for groups of pupils. This strategy is moving the learning of cohorts of pupils ahead successfully.

The school works well to reinforce its commitment to professional networks with schools within the catchment area. The staff are involved in a range of effective training and development opportunities and this is reflected in aspects of provision such as the focus on assessment for learning.

The school has addressed successfully the majority of recommendations from the previous inspection. However, not enough progress has been made to raise standards of reading and writing in English, and co-ordinators and governors are continuing to develop their roles in the self-evaluation process.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a range of partners. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' wellbeing and attainment. The headteacher and staff communicate effectively with parents. There is also effective co-operation and communication with other primary schools, local secondary schools and the local authority's specialist services, in addition to a number of other agencies. They all contribute effectively towards enriching provision and improving pupils' outcomes. Arrangements for transferring pupils to secondary schools prepare older pupils well for the next stage in their education. Teachers co-operate effectively with other primary schools in the area as well as secondary schools in order to moderate and standardise pupils' work.

A variety of visitors from the local community and beyond make a valuable contribution to enriching pupils' learning experiences.

Resource management: Good

The school's staffing and financial resources are managed and used effectively to improve learning. Good use is made of teachers' and assistants' time and experience and they co-operate and support each other well.

The school is staffed appropriately to teach the curriculum.

Provision for planning, preparation and assessment time is effective. The school's buildings are well maintained and the range and quality of learning resources are good. Financial resources are allocated appropriately to support the school's priorities and, considering the standards and quality of provision, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Teachers' assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 must be treated with care because the small number of pupils in a year can have a significant effect on school performance from one year to the next.

The percentage of seven-year-old pupils who achieved the Foundation Phase indicator (the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected outcome, namely outcome 5 or higher in language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh, mathematical development and personal and social development in combination) in 2012 was higher than the average for the family of similar schools and near the average for the whole of Wales. In general, the percentage of pupils who attained the higher level than expected (outcome 6) is higher than schools in the family and the average for Wales in their language skills, mathematical development and personal and social development.

In comparison with schools that have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, this placed the school among the bottom 25% in Wales. In general, girls achieved better than boys.

As this is the first year of publishing Foundation Phase data, no information about trends is available.

Pupils' key stage 2 results in Welsh, English, mathematics and science over three years have been fairly even and the school has performed consistently higher than the family and Wales averages since 2009. The school's level 5 results have varied considerably during the last five years and have been lower than the averages for the family and Wales in English and science over the last three years.

It is difficult to see any significant pattern between the results of boys and girls during the last five years because of the size of groups.

There is no obvious pattern in the data at the end of key stages in connection with specific groups of pupils, such as pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Seventeen questionnaires were completed by parents. Parents' levels of satisfaction are high, and are higher than the average for primary schools. They are all satisfied with the school and say that their children like school. All are of the opinion that teaching is good and that teachers expect their children to work hard. They believe that the school offers a good variety of activities. They say that they receive regular information about their children's progress. All are of the opinion that their children make appropriate progress and that they are encouraged to be healthy and to take regular physical exercise. All state that the school prepares their children for the next stage in their education and that homework builds well on what their children learn at school. They feel comfortable about discussing any matter with the school and understand the school's system for dealing with complaints. All are of the opinion that the school is well run.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Eleven pupils completed the questionnaire. Responses are very positive, and are higher than the national average for primary schools. All state that they feel safe. They believe that there are plenty of books and equipment. They all indicate that they are taught to be healthy and all are of the opinion that there are enough opportunities for them to take regular physical exercise. All are of the opinion that they are doing well at school and that teachers help them to learn and make progress. They know to whom to speak if they are anxious about something and feel that homework helps them to understand and improve their school work. All believe that other pupils behave well during lessons and they believe that they behave well at play-time and during the lunch break. All are of the opinion that the school deals with bullying well.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

David Gareth Evans	Reporting Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Elin Evans	Peer Inspector
Catrin 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)

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.