



*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 Dôlafon  
Dôl-y-Coed Road  
Llanwrtyd Wells  
Powys  
LD5 4RA**

**Date of inspection: November 2010**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**



**INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR  
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL**

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
<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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Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court  
Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW

or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

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## Context

Ysgol Dôlafon, a bilingual community primary school is situated in Llanwrtyd Wells, a small town in mid-Wales. It opened as a new school for pupils of three to 11 years of age in February 1990, following the closure of the older Llanwrtyd Wells County Primary School. Fifty-six pupils are on roll. The school is part of a community facility sharing a library and a large hall.

The school serves an area described as being neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged and the pupils are neither privileged nor underprivileged. Ten per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is the same as when the school was inspected previously in 2004. This is lower than the Wales average of just under 20%. Thirteen pupils are identified with additional learning needs (ALN) and one has a statement of special educational needs (SEN). No pupil is 'looked after' by the local authority. Four percent of pupils are from minority ethnic background. Very few pupils come from homes where Welsh is the main language spoken. Four pupils receive support for English as an additional language.

Many pupils come from the town of Llanwrtyd Wells with some 25% coming from the surrounding small rural communities of Tirabad, Abergwesyn, Cefn Gorwydd and Beulah. Some families move into the school's catchment area for a relatively short period of time before moving on to another area. This makes it difficult for the school to track and report accurately on the progress of cohorts of pupils from their skills on entry to the end of key stage 2.

Parents can chose for their children to receive most of their education either through the medium of Welsh or English. There are four classes. Eleven pupils, about a fifth are taught through the medium of Welsh within two of the classes.

The school employs a headteacher, four part-time teachers and, three part-time classroom support assistants. The headteacher has been in post since September 2003. The school was last inspected in December 2004.

A bilingual pre-school nursery playgroup is based in the school for pupils of two and a half years to four years of age. The nursery is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales for a maximum of 12 children. It will be inspected separately from the school at a later date.

The school has achieved a number of awards including the Eco-School Green Flag, the healthy schools award and is awaiting the outcome of assessment for recognition as a Fairtrade school.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Dolafon is £5,827 which compares with a maximum of £11,812 and a minimum of £2891 for primary schools in Powys. The school has the fifth highest budget per pupil out of the 101 primary schools in Powys.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

Ysgol Dôlafon provides a caring and nurturing ethos and is at the heart of the community. Current performance is good overall because:

- over the last three years most pupils at eleven years of age achieve the levels expected. Pupils make appropriate progress in their communication skills in English especially, and use these skills well in their work across the curriculum;
- teaching generally provides pupils with relevant experiences that interests them;
- pupils feel safe and secure and interact well with each other and adults;
- pupils behave well, listen attentively in lessons, are keen to learn; and
- staff including leaders and managers work hard to improve pupils' learning.

### Prospects for improvement

The school has good prospects for improvement because:

- existing arrangements for self-evaluation provide a sound basis for future development;
- leaders and managers have an appropriate understanding of the needs of the school;
- teachers and support staff work well together to create a good environment for learning; and
- the governing body holds the school to account for its performance.

## Recommendations

- R1 further develop pupils' writing skills in Welsh throughout the school;
- R2 improve pupils' skills of independent learning;
- R3 improve classroom organisation to enable more effective targeting of the wide age and ability ranges within classes;
- R4 further develop assessment for learning strategies;
- R5 focus self-evaluation and whole-school development planning more effectively on targeting improvements in pupils' standards and skill development; and
- R6 improve attendance.

### **What happens next?**

The school will produce an action plan to set out how it intends to address the recommendations. The school sends parents and carers a copy.

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

Many children enter school with skills below those normally expected for children of their age. A significant minority receive additional support for speech and language and make good progress.

In key stage 1, and key stage 2, pupils' current work shows appropriate progress in literacy skills especially in English. Overall, pupils use these skills well in their work across the curriculum. Pupils in the Welsh and English medium classes make appropriate progress in their Welsh language skills in speaking, listening and reading but only adequate progress in writing. Pupils' skills of independent learning are underdeveloped.

Teacher assessment results at the end of year 2, in key stage 1, and at the end of year 6, in key stage 2, have to be treated with caution because of the significant distorting effect that small numbers can have on the schools overall performance from one year to the next.

Over the last four years, pupils' attainment at 11 years of age is consistently better than at 7 years of age. In 2010, in key stage 1, pupils' results are in the lowest 25% of schools for English, mathematics and science compared to schools in similar circumstances, and for schools in the local authority and nationally. Results are in the top 25% of schools for Welsh first language.

Since 2006, the key stage 1 core subject indicator (CSI) which shows the percentage of pupils at seven years of age achieving the expected level or above in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science in combination has placed the school's performance on average within the lowest 50% of schools. Pupils' current work shows an improvement in standards overall in key stage 1.

Pupils' performance in key stage 2 is above the local authority and Welsh averages. Results are in the top 25% of schools for the CSI. All pupils attain the standards expected for their age in Welsh first language, English, mathematics and science. Girls perform better than boys in attaining above the expected level (level 5) although the numbers involved are too small to make the results significant.

Pupils with SEN achieve well against personal targets and make appropriate progress relative to their ability. Most pupils entitled to free school meals make good progress in line with their ability.

#### Wellbeing: Good

Pupils' have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy the activities on offer, work hard, and take pride in their work. They have a good understanding of the importance of being healthy and active. They feel safe and secure in school.

Pupils' personal and social skills are well developed. Behaviour is good and pupils relate well to each other and to adults in school and when taking part in a wide range of community based projects. Pupils put into practice many of the personal, social and life skills including decision making skills learnt in school. For example, they act sustainably by recycling products and by acting as energy saving monitors responsible for switching off lights and other power devices when not needed. They also try and influence their parents' attitudes and behaviour regarding the importance of being good global citizens by buying goods and foodstuffs that carry the Fairtrade logo when out shopping.

Pupils increasingly influence what is taught and how, by requests made through the Eco School Council and through ideas placed in a School Development Plan suggestion box. Their ideas and suggestions if appropriate and practical are taken into account by teachers in planning a theme or a project each term.

Pupils' skills in improving their own learning, in setting and reviewing their targets to identify what they need to improve on, are less well developed.

Pupils arrive on time at the start of the school day. The school has an average attendance rate of 91.75% over the 3 terms prior to the inspection. These attendance percentages are markedly lower than Powys and Wales averages and the school's own target of 95%. Attendance for spring 2010 was under 90% due to pupils unable to travel from the outlying rural areas because of heavy snow. Unauthorised absence is low and slightly better than Powys and Wales averages.

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

The curriculum is broad, balanced and generally flexible enough to meet the needs of nearly all pupils. The school implements appropriately the curriculum requirements of the Foundation Phase, KS1 and KS2, including religious education. However, pupils in the Foundation Phase do not always have enough opportunities to practice, consolidate and extend their skills through a play-based, active learning approach to curriculum delivery.

Teachers plan lessons and activities that overall provide pupils with relevant experiences that interest them. Pupils have good opportunities throughout the school for developing their speaking and listening skills. Paired and group work is a regular feature in all classes and effectively encourages pupils to listen to others and respond appropriately. For instance, the older pupils in key stage 2 work co-operatively to design and carry out their own enquiry in science.

Provision for the development of pupils' writing and reading skills in English and reading in Welsh is generally good. Well planned and relevant activities ensure that pupils apply their literacy skills appropriately across the curriculum. Pupils use their skills in information writing, for example, to produce recipes for 'Fair Trade smoothies'. However, pupils' writing in Welsh is over-dependent on teacher direction and the use of writing templates.

Staff provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about their locality and the art, music, and culture of Wales. The school provides well for the development of pupils' understanding of education for sustainable development and in developing pupils' understanding of global citizenship.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is good overall. Observations of teaching during the inspection were at least adequate. Evidence in pupils' books and discussions with pupils show that most pupils make good progress in line with their age and ability.

Where teaching is particularly effective, resources are used well to support pupils' learning and skillful questioning extends pupils' understanding. In sessions where teaching is adequate, classroom organisation and management is not always focused enough on challenging and targeting specific year groups especially the more able at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills of independent learning.

All staff, including support staff, model language accurately and use behaviour strategies effectively to keep nearly all pupils on task.

Teachers conscientiously mark pupils' work but on occasions the marking is too positive and doesn't help pupils to improve. Pupils' progress in learning is assessed regularly and tracked carefully by teachers. This information and assessment for learning strategies are not always well-used to target improvement in the performance of individual pupils. Pupils are not involved sufficiently in tracking, evaluating and identifying the next steps in their learning.

Reports to parents are generally clear and informative. Parents and carers feel well informed about their children's progress.

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

The school has appropriate procedures and systems for identifying and supporting pupils who need additional help with their work. This support is coordinated effectively and there are good links with specialist external agencies. Overall, parents and carers are well informed about their children's progress. Pupils' individual education plans are regularly evaluated and updated.

The school has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school provides a caring and nurturing ethos and is at the heart of the community. It is welcoming to parents and visitors. It is fully inclusive and treats all pupils equally. All have the opportunity to access the full range of the school's provision.

The exterior and interior of the building are well maintained. Accommodation is used effectively and appropriate arrangements exist in sharing some of the resources with



the community. Resources are plentiful and overall are put to good use in meeting pupils' learning needs. The maintenance of the school building, community facilities and grounds is good.

Displays in classrooms and elsewhere in the building are attractive and well presented. They reinforce pupils' learning in many areas of the curriculum effectively.

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

Leaders and managers have a sound understanding of the needs of the school. The management team and the staff work well together in order to create a good environment for learning.

Teaching and support staff have clearly defined roles which they generally perform well. All teaching staff have responsibilities as curriculum co-ordinators and have an input into the school's self-evaluation process.

The governing body successfully supports the school in planning its strategic direction through taking an active part in the self-evaluation process, in setting priorities in the School Development Plan and in monitoring the effectiveness of the school's work.

The school has implemented a good range of national and local initiatives such as the Foundation phase. It has been especially effective in its implementation of the Healthy Schools initiative where it has achieved level 3, and the Eco Schools Green Flag award. It is awaiting the outcome of its application for status as a Fairtrade school.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The school has appropriate self-evaluation procedures which form the basis of a comprehensive self-evaluation report. It takes good account of the views of all stakeholders including governors, staff, parents and pupils. Outcomes from the self-evaluation report inform the school development plan. Both documents do not place enough emphasis on using the information on pupil outcomes to prioritise improvements in classroom organisation and management. Insufficient attention is given to using teachers' and learning support assistants' expertise more effectively on raising pupil achievement.

Overall, the recommendations from the previous inspection report have been addressed appropriately.

The school has close links and works well with neighbouring schools. They are part of a professional learning community where Foundation Phase teachers meet with colleagues from the catchment group of schools to discuss planning and related issues, and to share best practice.

The school is also part of another professional learning community whose aim is to share ideas and best practice on the most effective strategies for supporting more able and talented pupils. Data from membership of the family of schools is used effectively to compare the school's performance against that of the other members. Contact with the newly revised Family of Schools to discuss and share good practice is at the planning stage.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has strong links with the community taking part in numerous events. It also organises visits in the locality which include local businesses and to view the work of the Forestry Commission. These experiences enhance pupils' understanding of their own work and of employment in the locality.

There are effective structures and processes in place which contribute well to joint working. The school benefits from the services of external agencies including the health service, speech and language therapy and the educational psychologist. The school works in partnership with Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities in mentoring teacher trainees undertaking initial teacher training courses.

The school operates initiatives which effectively facilitate transition of pupils from one stage of their learning to the next. The Friends of the School Association is very active and contributes well to the activities and funds of the school. Some adults help with specific activities within classrooms, such as listening to pupils read, and helping them in their creative work. Through the gardening club parents and other adults improve pupils' concept of wellbeing through deepening their understanding of issues of sustainability and the importance of a healthy lifestyle and diet.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school has sufficient qualified teaching staff to teach the whole curriculum. Generally, teachers and support staff work well together to create a good environment for learning. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use more effectively resources such as teachers' and learning support assistants' expertise to target groups of pupils to improve their progress and raise achievement.

Teachers generally use their planning, preparation and assessment time effectively and arrangements for this are well-managed.

The school makes good use of the funding it receives in securing appropriate outcomes for pupils overall. The head teacher and the governing body scrutinise the school budget on a regular basis and funds are allocated to meet requirements identified within the school development plan though these requirements are too numerous and not in priority order.

Overall, value for money is good in terms of the use made of the budget and the outcomes gained for pupils. However, the school is small and has the fifth highest budget per pupil out of the 101 primary schools in Powys.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Nearly all parents have very positive views about the work of the school. They say it is a safe and happy environment that is efficiently managed and organised. Their children like attending school and that behaviour is good. Nearly all feel that the school helps their children to settle in well when they first start. They state that their children progress well in their learning and feel well-informed about the standards they achieve through termly meetings with teachers and end of year reports.

Teaching is perceived as good and their children are keen to learn and to do their best. All parents are of the opinion that there is a good range of activities in school including out of school activities. Most state that the homework given is appropriate and reinforces the learning in classrooms. Parents state that children receive enough additional support with their individual learning needs if and when required. All feel that children are treated fairly and with respect.

Nearly all parents state that they can readily approach staff if they have concerns about their children's work or wellbeing. Most know how to make a complaint if they need to.

Many parents believe that their children are well prepared for moving on to the next stage in their learning. A few state that they do not have enough information to make an informed judgement on this aspect.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

All pupils feel safe in school and know who to talk to when they are worried or upset or if they find their work hard. Nearly all pupils feel they are doing well at school and all agree that the teachers and other adults give them good support and provide plenty of opportunities to develop active and healthy lifestyles. All pupils feel that homework helps them to better understand and improve their work. Nearly all pupils believe there are enough resources to enable them to learn well. All state that they have good opportunities to contribute to decision making through, for example, the School Eco Council and in having a contribution on planning aspects of their learning

Most pupils think that pupils' behaviour is good especially during playtimes and lunchtimes. All pupils feel that any instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and appropriately by staff.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Jeff Jones	Reporting Inspector
Bev Jenkins	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Glyn Roberts	Peer Inspector
Gill Lloyd	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))

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## 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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 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	R	Y1	Y2	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:

Key stage 1	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