



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 Bethel
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1AX**

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:

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 Gynradd Bethel is situated in the centre of the village of Bethel, about three miles to the east of the town of Caernarfon. It serves the village itself, the parish of Llanddeiniolen and the surrounding rural areas.

There are 149 pupils on roll, including nursery class pupils. Numbers have been constant over the last three years. Welsh is the school's main language medium and the aim is to ensure that pupils are completely bilingual by the time they transfer to the secondary sector. Ninety-three per cent of pupils speak Welsh at home. There are no pupils from ethnic backgrounds at the school.

Six point two five per cent (6.25%) of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is lower than the county and national percentages. Fifteen per cent of pupils receive support for additional educational needs, which is lower than the national figure (21.2%). No permanent or temporary exclusions were recorded during the year before the inspection.

The current headteacher has been in post since January 2002.

The individual budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Bethel in 2012-2013 is £2,986. The maximum in terms of school budget per pupil in primary schools in Gwynedd is £7,732 and the minimum is £2,674. Ysgol Gynradd Bethel is in 88th place of the 102 primary schools in Gwynedd in terms of school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

Ysgol Bethel's performance is good because:

- the quality of pupils' oral work across the school is very good;
- provision for developing pupils' skills in Welsh is extremely effective and ensures that all pupils take pride in their Welshness;
- pupils' standards of oracy, reading and writing are generally good;
- the school is a close and caring community that creates an inclusive ethos;
- standards of behaviour across the school are high; and
- the school plans a variety of rich and stimulating experiences that meet pupils' needs.

Prospects for improvement

Ysgol Bethel's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has high expectations and a clear vision based on children's wellbeing and on ensuring high standards;
- the governing body is well informed about the school's performance, which enables them to operate effectively as critical friends;
- subject co-ordinators, through the medium of effective monitoring arrangements, make a valuable contribution to the quality improvement process; and
- pupils' wellbeing and achievement benefit from effective work with a range of partners.

Recommendations

R1 Raise standards of reading in English.

R2 Ensure that feedback on pupils' work gives clear guidance on how to improve their work.

R3 Strengthen arrangements for monitoring the school's systems in order to ensure appropriate progress.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most pupils make good progress during their period at the school. Pupils across the school concentrate well, recall their previous learning and participate fully in class activities. Most of them use their skills confidently across a range of subjects.

Nearly all, including those who receive additional support, make good progress against their targets.

Pupils across the school listen attentively to their teachers and many of them are very willing to offer answers and share ideas in a variety of situations. By the time that pupils reach the end of their period at the school, the responses of the majority of pupils are more extended. Nearly all pupils across the school area able to use Welsh confidently in formal and informal situations. The quality of pupils' oral work is a strength across the school. They use a robust Welsh vocabulary and syntax. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all are confident in both languages.

Nearly all make good progress in their reading skills in Welsh, take an interest in books and develop to be independent readers. In the Foundation Phase, most pupils read meaningfully and with expression to a standard that is appropriate to their age and ability. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read a wide range of texts with fluency and respond meaningfully to the text. They use their reading skills effectively to glean information and present it in an interesting way. The majority of pupils in key stage 2 use their skills in reading in English appropriately across a range of subjects.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils write meaningfully and independently. Most have a firm grasp of Welsh syntax and generally punctuate their work appropriately. By the end of key stage 2, many show a strong awareness of various written forms, using these characteristics confidently across a range of subjects. Many pupils make good progress in their extended writing in Welsh and English.

At the end of the Foundation Phase, pupils' achievements at the expected outcome (outcome 5) compare very favourably with the averages for the schools in the family, the authority and Wales.

All pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2012 attained the expected level (level 4+) in Welsh or English, mathematics and science in combination, namely the core subject indicator. The picture is the same in the individual subjects. The school's performance in key stage 2 has varied over recent years; however, it was in the top 25% in 2012 in every core subject in comparison with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals.

Pupils' achievement at the higher level (level 5) in Welsh and science has been consistently higher than the family of schools average.

In general, there is no significant gap between boys' achievements and those of girls, except for outcome 6 in mathematical development in the Foundation Phase and at the higher levels in Welsh in key stage 2.

The achievement of pupils who are entitled to free school meals compares favourably with the achievements of the remainder of pupils.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils across the school are courteous and friendly. Nearly all feel safe and they are very respectful of each other. This promotes pupils' wellbeing and attainment successfully. Year 6 pupils undertake Criw Clên and break time duties in a very responsible and caring manner.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of physical exercise in order to keep healthy. Their regular participation in the 'Clwb Dal i Fynd' and sports clubs reinforces this.

Standards of behaviour across the school are high. In lessons, nearly all pupils behave courteously and concentrate well on the tasks that are set for them. However, a minority of pupils have not developed their ability to improve their own work effectively enough.

The School Council and the Green Council make important contributions to school life. Members are proud of their roles in ensuring a strong voice for pupils. Through regular involvement in activities in the community, most pupils develop to be responsible members of the community.

The school's attendance levels compare very favourably with those of similar schools.

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

The school plans a variety of rich and stimulating experiences that meet pupils' needs effectively. Careful planning ensures provision for developing numeracy and information technology skills across a range of subjects. Extra-curricular activities give valuable opportunities to reinforce pupils' experiences.

Recent developments to improve extended writing in key stage 2 have been delivered successfully and have a positive effect on pupils' achievements. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig has been integrated successfully into every aspect of the curriculum, and through this develops pupils' identity inclusively in way that fosters respect for their area and its traditions. Provision for sustainable development and global citizenship has a prominent place in school life. Through a variety of experiences and activities of a high quality, pupils' awareness of living in a sustainable way is developed very effectively. There are strong links with schools in France, Uganda and Argentina, which in addition to French lessons, promote pupils' awareness of their place in the world and of cultural diversity. The school has

received the silver accreditation for 'International Schools' from the British Council. The school's charity work develops pupils' understanding of different parts of the world effectively.

Teaching: Good

Teachers have good subject knowledge and careful planning ensures that activities are stimulating and promote effective learning. Successful co-operation between teachers and support staff creates an industrious ethos and develops appropriate support for pupils. All members of staff are good linguistic models.

Where teaching is at its best, there are lively presentations and probing questioning to ensure pupils' understanding. Tasks have been differentiated appropriately for pupils of different ability. Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement are high.

Where teaching is not as good, assessment for learning has not yet been developed fully, nor have tasks been differentiated enough to challenge pupils of higher ability.

In most lessons, teachers offer effective oral feedback to pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and in the best examples, constructive comments are given on how to improve the work that is linked to success criteria. However, this is not consistent throughout the school. Arrangements for setting targets have not been established firmly enough and pupils' understanding of what is needed to improve their work has not been developed sufficiently.

The school assesses work regularly, and identify pupils' progress clearly. Robust processes for standardising and moderating teachers' assessments have been established at the school. Effective use is made of assessments to track pupils' progress and to develop additional support as needed.

Through regular reports and meetings, parents receive clear information about their child's progress and achievement.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring community that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully.

The development of pupils' wellbeing is a strength and is an integral part of the school's life and work. Staff use a variety of strategies to promote behaviour successfully. The 'Cerdyn Cwrteisi' system is a good example of this. The school's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and they are not a cause for concern.

Provision for additional learning needs is good. The school makes effective use of external expertise as needed. Data from standard tests and continuous assessments is used to identify pupils' needs. Through intervention programmes, appropriate support is provided successfully by teachers and assistants. Individual education programmes identify clear targets in order to ensure progress. Plans are reviewed twice a year, and pupils are part of that process.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a close, caring community that creates an inclusive ethos. There is a warm atmosphere among staff and pupils that is based on respect. This contributes very successfully to standards of behaviour.

Clear policies and procedures promote equal opportunities and equality effectively.

The school provides enough space and makes effective use of the indoor and outdoor area in order to offer wide and valuable experiences for pupils.

The school is in good condition and it is clean and well kept. The school environment is tasteful and very attractive and pupils' work has a well-deserved place alongside the work of famous artists.

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

The headteacher has high expectations and a clear vision based on children's wellbeing and on ensuring high standards. She conveys that vision effectively to staff, pupils, parents and governors. The school is a well-organised community and it has clear structures and policies. This ensures that all members of staff work as part of a team and understand their role in implementing the school's plans. A good example of this is the whole staff's dedication to implement the language strategy that was introduced recently.

The governing body is well informed about the school's educational provision and performance and it fulfils its statutory responsibilities in full. It analyses data effectively and contributes successfully to setting the school's strategy through discussing the priorities of the self-evaluation report and the school development plan. The headteacher's regular reports, in addition to regular visits to the school, enable members of the body to act effectively as critical friends and hold the school to account for standards.

The school pays extensive attention to national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase provision was established successfully, in addition to effective provision in order to develop pupils' thinking skills across the school. The pupil's voice has a prominent place in all aspects of school life.

Improving quality: Good

The school has a good understanding of its own performance, its strengths and elements for further development. Appropriate arrangements have been put in place to discover the opinions of pupils, parents and governors. Subject co-ordinators make a valuable contribution to the process by creating reports based on visits to classes, checking plans and examining pupils' work. The information is used effectively in the quality improvement process.

The system for analysing data from end of key stage assessments and annual standardised tests is thorough and managers use information effectively to target aspects that need improvement. The analysis of trends over time is not as probing.

The school uses the information from self-evaluation effectively to set challenging and appropriate priorities for improvement. These priorities focus clearly on raising standards. There are suitable strategies for achieving intentions, and appropriate use of success criteria to measure progress in addition to specific time limits. However, monitoring arrangements are not always effective enough to ensure appropriate progress.

Networks of professional practice within the school, as well as links that have been created with other schools, make an important contribution towards developing provision and raising standards further. An example of this is the work that has been done to develop standards of writing in the Foundation Phase.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a range of partners. This has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and attainment. There is a strong relationship and effective co-operation between the school and parents, such as with the knitting club and the gardening club. The school benefits from these links, and provides further experiences for pupils.

Arrangements for transferring pupils to secondary schools prepare older pupils well for the next stage in their education. Teachers work together effectively with other primary schools in the area, along with secondary schools, in order to moderate and standardise pupils' work and provide joint training. There is a strong partnership with the cylch meithrin that shares the same campus, and this ensures that children settle in quickly in the Foundation Phase.

There is a strong partnership with the local community. Pupils' contribution towards community activities, in addition to the large number of visitors who come to the school enriches learning experiences and promotes a feeling of belonging and pupils' pride in their area.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources effectively. The school has an appropriate number of teaching staff and assistants that work together successfully in order to ensure appropriate support for pupils. The school makes appropriate use of staff expertise in order to enrich experiences and improve the quality of teaching.

There are suitable arrangements in place for managing teachers' performance. Targets are based on whole-school priorities and individuals' needs.

Teachers make appropriate use of their planning, preparation and assessment time. This has a positive effect on maintaining the school's standards.

There is a good supply of resources available that respond appropriately to all pupils' needs. Use is made of the school field by Bethel football club and by the village Urdd group in order to expand pupils' experiences outside school hours.

School expenditure is planned carefully according to the school's priorities. The school and governors monitor the budget effectively.

Considering the good outcomes, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

At the end of the Foundation Phase, achievements at the expected outcome (outcome 5) compare very favourably with the averages for schools in the family, the authority and Wales. The school's performance at outcome 6 in language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh is very high and considerably higher than the average for schools in the family, the authority and Wales and places the school in the top 25%, and in the top 50% to 25% in every learning area in comparison with schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals.

At the end of key stage 2 in 2012, all pupils attained the expected level (level 4+) in Welsh or English, mathematics and science in combination (core subject indicator). The picture is the same in the individual subjects. This follows a period of decrease/decline in the achievements of 11-year-old pupils in every core subject over the previous three years.

The school's performance in key stage 2 has varied over recent years, although it has been in the top 25% in 2012 in all core subjects in comparison with schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals.

Pupils' achievement at the higher level (level 5) in Welsh and science compares favourably with the figures for the family and has been consistently higher than the family of schools, the authority and Wales averages over a period of time.

In general, there is no significant gap between boys' and girls' achievements, except in outcome 6 in mathematical development in the Foundation Phase and at the higher levels in Welsh in key stage 2.

The achievement of pupils who are entitled to free school meals compares favourably with the achievements of the remainder of pupils.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Sixty-seven responses were received from pupils. The responses give a positive picture that is close to or higher than national averages for primary schools for almost all aspects.

All pupils feel safe at school. All pupils indicate that they are doing well at school and that teachers and other adults at the school help them to learn and make progress. All pupils believe that there are many opportunities at school to take regular physical exercise and that the school teaches them how to keep healthy. Nearly all indicate that the school deals well with any bullying, which is a little higher than national percentages. Most pupils know to whom to talk if they are worried. Many believe that other children behave well and that they can do their work.

Fifty-one responses were received from parents

Parents' responses are very positive. All parents agree or agree strongly that their children like school and that they feel safe there. Nearly all parents are satisfied with the school in general and feel that pupils behave well. Most parents agree that teaching is good and that their children are making good progress at school. Nearly all parents agree that their children receive additional support in relation to any specific individual needs, and most parents agree that they receive regular information about their children's progress. Most parents feel safe about asking the school a question, making suggestions or identifying a problem. Many understand the school's system for dealing with complaints, which is lower than the national percentage.

Most parents feel that the school is well run.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Anwen Griffith	Reporting Inspector
Goronwy Morris	Team Inspector
Jeremy Turner	Lay Inspector
Robert Jenkins	Peer Inspector
Nia Guillemin	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.