



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Ysgol Y Garnedd
Ffordd Penrhos
Bangor
Gwynedd
LL57 2LX**

Date of inspection: May 2019

by

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

About Ysgol y Garnedd

Ysgol y Garnedd is a designated Welsh-medium community school, which serves the city of Bangor and the surrounding villages. There are 334 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 32 nursery pupils. They are organised into 12 mixed-age classes.

On average over the last three years, 7.5% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals, which is lower than the national average of 18%. There are currently slightly over 12% of pupils on the additional learning needs register, which is lower than the national percentage of 21%, and a very few have a statement of special educational needs.

Sixty seven per cent (67%) of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Most are from white British backgrounds and a very few are from ethnic backgrounds.

The school was last inspected in October 2012 and the current headteacher was appointed in 2014. A new building is currently being built for the school, with the intention of opening in September 2020.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

The Welsh ethos that permeates all of this school's work is a great strength. It is a caring community that promotes pupils' Welshness and personal development very successfully.

Leaders ensure a clear direction in order to maintain and improve the very effective practices within the school. They maintain an environment of high expectations, which leads successfully to pupils' excellent achievements and very high standards in terms of their wellbeing. Staff have a very effective working relationship with pupils and provide them with a supportive and effective learning environment. The quality of teaching is consistently very good, and teachers also have high expectations in terms of the standard of pupils' work and behaviour.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and they show great pride in their school, their community and their Welshness. They develop very effectively as learners who are willing to persevere and play an active part in their own learning. As a result, their literacy skills are strong and develop quickly from an early age. Across the school, they speak and listen maturely, read at a level that is at least in line with their age, and write very successfully in a range of interesting contexts across the curriculum.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Excellent
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Excellent

Recommendations

R1 Extend opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum

R2 Address the health and safety issue that was raised during the inspection

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to promoting pupils' positive attitudes to learning, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

During their time at the school, nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make very sound progress. They achieve outcomes that are at least in line with what is expected, and a majority exceed this progress. Most pupils recall their previous learning well and gain new knowledge, understanding and skills quickly.

Most pupils listen carefully to presentations, show a strong understanding of the main points and respond by expressing their views sensibly, where appropriate. They take pride in the Welsh language and use it in a natural and polished manner when talking to each other. By Year 2, nearly all pupils discuss their tasks with increasing confidence and use wide and accurate vocabulary, for example when discussing how they can reduce plastic waste in the environment. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 communicate extremely maturely in Welsh and English, and express their ideas, opinions and feelings confidently and effectively in extended sentences. A strong and consistent feature is the way in which pupils use polished language naturally and spontaneously. They are confident when giving presentations or recording video clips of themselves, for example portraying life as the only survivor on a desert island.

Most pupils' reading skills are developing extremely effectively. In the reception class, nearly all pupils develop early reading skills quickly and gain confidence while enjoying rich activities. By Year 2, pupils choose reading materials independently and give reasons for their choices. They use a range of sensible strategies when reading unfamiliar texts in order to determine their meaning. In key stage 2, nearly all read clearly and expressively in Welsh and English. When responding to a wide variety of texts, they show a sound understanding of the main ideas, events and characters. They gather information from more than one source to reinforce their work across the curriculum, for example when researching information about local houses that are for sale in order to create a descriptive advertisement.

One of the school's notable strengths is the way in which most pupils write to a very high standard for different purposes in a wide range of contexts. In the foundation phase, most pupils' writing skills are developing extremely soundly. In the reception class, pupils write an effective range of simple sentences about themselves in a portrayal. By Year 2, they write interesting pieces with increasing accuracy, for example when writing poems about seagulls by using adjectives effectively. They vary the beginning of their sentences, use broad and rich Welsh vocabulary and appropriate conjunctions to create effect and interest. In key stage 2, most pupils write thoughtfully and use polished and imaginative vocabulary in both languages. They show a sound grasp of punctuation and spell correctly. They use paragraphs to present their work coherently, and those who are more able use more varied and complex syntax fairly correctly. They often show originality when selecting words and phrases, for example when creating poems of a high standard in Years 3 and 4. Others have created imaginative, creative pieces by making effective use of similes successfully to enrich their work across the curriculum, for example when writing a portrayal of a pirate. By Year 6, most pupils write maturely in a wide range of

contexts and produce work of a high standard, such as an effective script to guide visitors around Bangor Cathedral. Nearly all pupils' work is polished and neat.

In the foundation phase, pupils have sound numeracy skills and apply them to a good standard across the curriculum. Most have a sound understanding of place value, shape, measurement, time and money. They interpret data with increasing accuracy and present it in different forms, such as graphs or tables. In key stage 2, most pupils develop a sound understanding of mathematics and achieve well. When given an opportunity, most apply their numeracy skills appropriately in other areas across the curriculum, particularly in their scientific investigations and historical studies. One good example of this is the natural way in which they use their number and data skills when calculating the increase in the area's population during the growth of the slate industry. However, they do not apply the full range of numeracy skills across the curriculum consistently enough and to the same level as in mathematics lessons.

Soon after starting at the school, most pupils show good skills when using information and communication technology (ICT) equipment to support their learning. For example, they control a programmable toy and use a computer to write simple sentences to describe what they would like to do on the moon. By the end of the foundation phase, most develop a range of skills very successfully in order to present information, such as organising data in the form of a graph to show the different types of leaves that they have collected. They communicate with others by using e-mail software effectively and become increasingly proficient at using their coding skills in order to create pictures. In key stage 2, most pupils apply their skills very successfully to create presentations on a range of themes, and use an electronic tablet and green screen effectively. By the time they reach the top of the school, most pupils create a very effective website to attract visitors to Llanberis. They interact with their fellow pupils online and recognise well how to build relevant aspects of the website. These are notable examples of pupils applying their ICT skills effectively across the curriculum.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils' standards of behaviour and self-discipline in lessons, and around the school, are exceptionally high. They are enthusiastic, extremely affectionate and polite towards each other, staff and visitors, and show great pride in their school, their community and their Welshness. Pupils contribute extensively towards creating a welcoming ethos, and act wholly naturally on what is stated in the school's song, namely '*...deimli di'r gwres ar aelwyd glos yr ysgol*'.

By the end of the foundation phase, pupils understand clearly the difference between good and bad, and right and wrong. They are aware of the feelings of others and understand the concept of fair play. Key stage 2 pupils are very caring towards their peers and pay conscientious attention to their needs. They allow others to speak without interrupting, acknowledge their contributions and show their appreciation for their ideas very maturely.

An exceptional feature of the school's work is the way in which most pupils persevere with tasks and are keen to 'keep going' until they succeed. They start their work immediately at the beginning of sessions, and follow instructions and ask for support when necessary. Pupils foster thinking skills effectively and are willing to ask

questions in order to enrich their understanding of specific issues. Nearly all pupils realise that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process and, as a result, are very willing to 'give it another try' in order to succeed. Often, when reflecting with their discussion partners, they identify and develop new ideas well that are associated with the subject in question. For example, they consider the different types of questions that should be asked in questionnaires about recycling. They are keen to explore new things and take an active part in various activities. For example, most pupils take good advantage of opportunities to provide sensible ideas about the kind of tasks they would like to undertake as part of their work at the beginning of each specific theme. As a result, most work together effectively, discuss maturely, respect the feelings and contributions of their fellow pupils, and develop increasing ownership of the content of their work.

Pupils across the school, particularly the older pupils, appreciate the various opportunities they are given to make choices about what happens at school. Acting on ideas that are discussed in the wide variety of pupil councils has a positive effect on the school's life and work. As a result, pupils feel that adults listen to them and give their views serious consideration.

Most pupils feel safe at school and make healthy choices, and appreciate the importance of their own wellbeing and that of others intelligently. Nearly all pupils have a sound awareness of the importance of staying safe online, and the 'digital leaders' work diligently to remind their fellow pupils about the rules of the internet and the dangers of disclosing personal details online.

Many pupils show natural sensitivity to global concerns and show an increasing awareness of current affairs, such as plastic waste and its detrimental effect on nature. Many pupils have a good understanding of their place in the world. For example, they compare their own lives with those of children in other countries, such as Ecuador, and study activities that relate to the football world cup. They develop as ethical and knowledgeable citizens through their recognition of fairness, equality, tolerance, sustainability and children's rights. Pupils take pride in the opportunities they are given to represent their school in Eisteddfodau and sports competitions, and experience good success.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school, and staff establish a very effective working relationship with pupils and provide a supportive and effective learning environment for them. Teachers have effective class management and expect high standards of effort and behaviour from pupils. They encourage pupils to give of their best during lessons and contribute significantly towards the school's caring ethos. They question them skilfully in order to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding successfully and, at times, challenge them to think and reason their responses at a high level. Teachers give pupils timely and useful feedback and provide them with valuable written comments in order to support them appropriately to know how to improve their work further.

An exceptional feature of teaching is the emphasis that most staff place on promoting Welshness and pupils' positive attitudes towards the Welsh language. They model polished Welsh for them regularly which, in turn, has a very positive effect on their

spoken Welsh skills and ensures that they develop a wide and elaborate vocabulary. As a result, the school has a natural Welsh ethos, which promotes pupils' enthusiasm towards the language very successfully. This emphasis leads to pupils' robust use of the Welsh language, whether in the classroom, on the playground, with each other or with adults, and this is one of the school's obvious strengths.

Teachers plan together effectively and provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop various skills in a range of interesting contexts. A good feature is the way in which teachers plan activities that derive from lines of enquiry set by the pupils themselves. This contributes successfully towards developing pupils' independent learning skills, in addition to giving them ownership of their learning.

The school's provision to develop pupils' literacy skills has an exceptionally positive effect on their standards of oracy and reading, and their extended and creative writing. This is one of the school's clear strengths. A notable example is the opportunities that pupils are given to write poetry based on the work of the artist L.S. Lowry as one of the various forms of writing.

Regular and purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills ensure that they have a very good understanding of how to present information by using a wide range of software and hardware successfully. As a result, most pupils transfer and apply their skills very confidently to various areas of learning across the curriculum.

There are good opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum, particularly in the foundation phase where they have access to independent, challenging tasks. In key stage 2, teachers plan and provide frequent and good opportunities for pupils to acquire all mathematical areas within their lessons. However, there are not enough purposeful opportunities for them to apply their numeracy skills consistently enough across the curriculum.

The principles of the foundation phase are well embedded, and continuous provision challenges pupils and develops their independence effectively. However, their use of the outdoor area to enhance learning is limited.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has a highly caring and friendly ethos, which promotes the importance of courtesy, respect and pupils' perseverance very effectively. The school's personal and social education programme contributes very successfully towards ensuring that there is a rich culture of respect, equality and fairness, which promotes the school's values exceptionally. The school develops pupils' social and emotional skills highly effectively. An excellent example of this is the way in which it develops pupils' mindset of perseverance and resilience, which is a strong feature across the school. Another exceptional feature is the pupils' care towards each other, which includes acting as 'cyfeillion caredig' (kind friends) to support pupils who feel lonely or low during break time and lunchtime.

The school has robust arrangements to track pupils' progress effectively and regularly. Leaders and teachers know their pupils well and, on the whole, use data purposefully to plan the next steps and appropriate provision for all pupils. As a result, nearly all pupils make good progress from their starting points.

The school uses data effectively in order to identify pupils with additional learning needs at an early stage. As a result, staff and leaders provide effective support and interventions for individuals and groups of pupils, in line with their needs. Individual education plans and profiles for these pupils include clear, challenging and achievable progress steps and targets. Strategies to ensure that pupils have beneficial input into these plans are developing well, and parents are given valuable opportunities to contribute to their content and to review them. The school works closely with external experts in order to ensure effective provision for pupils with additional learning needs. The school has been innovative in ensuring robust support for these pupils. For example, it has ensured successful and efficient specialist provision for a group of pupils with similar learning difficulties.

The school has a robust and effective relationship with parents. Staff share beneficial and regular information with them about the school's activities through newsletters, text messages and social media websites. Reports for parents on their children's progress are comprehensive and identify clearly their strengths and what they need to do to progress their learning.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting eating and drinking healthily among pupils. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about eating healthily and take part in exercise sessions. As a result, nearly all pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of what they need to do to stay healthy and the beneficial effect of exercise.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to shoulder various responsibilities, for example by being members of the school council, the eco committee and the 'dewiniaid digidol' (digital wizards). These pupils take their roles seriously and their contribution has a positive effect on school life. For example, they have ensured that useful 'Llyfrau Llais Plant' (children's voice books) are available in all classes, and have presented beneficial lessons to pupils on the importance of recycling and saving energy. However, there are not regular enough opportunities for a wider representation of pupils to accept responsibilities and play a full part in making decisions at whole school level.

The school ensures that there are highly valuable opportunities for pupils to develop a sound awareness of the local community and the wider world. This is reinforced successfully through a wide variety of very rich experiences. For example, the school has invited a visitor from the university to discuss the damage that plastic does to marine wildlife, and has organised an online talk with an expert from Ecuador to discuss the effect of deforestation on the rainforests.

The school has procedures and policies that ensure that provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to contribute purposefully during assemblies, by leading prayers or playing the piano. The school ensures extensive provision to develop pupils' creative skills very effectively. As a result, nearly all pupils are given beneficial opportunities to engage in the expressive arts. For example, they study and emulate the work of local artists and authors, and perform in eisteddfodau, concerts and services regularly. This contributes particularly well towards developing pupils' awareness of Welsh culture and increases their self-confidence successfully.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. However, during the inspection, a health and safety issue was brought to the attention of the headteacher and the chair of governors.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher provides effective leadership for the school, which sets a clear strategic direction for developing it very successfully. He and other leaders have very high expectations in promoting a purposeful vision for the school. This includes focussing on creating a supportive environment that promotes wellbeing and enhances pupils' standards in a natural Welsh ethos. The vision is shared highly successfully among staff, governors, parents and pupils. As a result, the staff's passionate eagerness and enthusiasm succeed in developing positive attitudes among nearly all pupils to attain high standards and take pride in their achievements and Welshness.

The school's management structure is very effective, and responsibilities are distributed sensibly among a strong team of conscientious leaders. This structure provides highly valuable experiences for staff to develop professionally and share good practice. As a result, the school has developed as a strong learning community in which staff learn from each other very effectively. Their willingness to plan interesting and stimulating experiences for pupils jointly contributes effectively to the high standards that exist, particularly in literacy, and include example of exceptional creative writing and excellent speaking and listening skills.

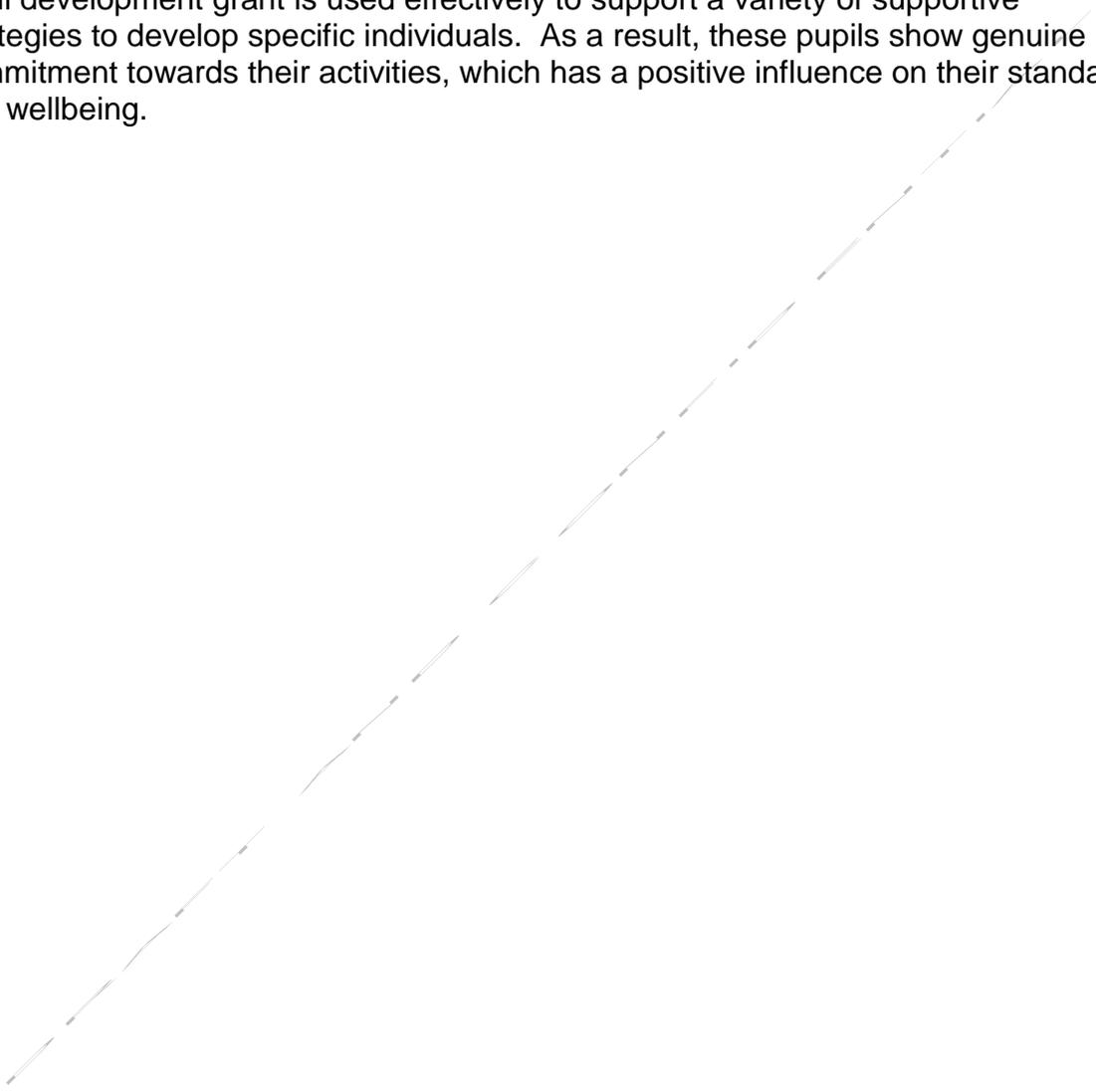
Self-evaluation arrangements are highly effective and ensure that leaders identify the school's strengths clearly in terms of pupils' progress and standards, in addition to areas that need to be improved in order to develop further. These arrangements also identify elements of the school's work that are suitable to be shared as examples of good practice. For example, staff have discussed the effectiveness of resources that they have produced to encourage pupils to follow lines of enquiry within their themes every term. These resources, which are of very high quality, contribute highly effectively towards promoting pupils' investigation skills successfully.

The school responds very successfully to its priorities for improvement, and places a clear focus on evaluating progress and identifying the effect of provision on pupils' outcomes. For example, it has begun to adopt aspects of the new curriculum for Wales successfully, particularly in raising standards of pupils' health and wellbeing. Arrangements for developing pupils' independence by nurturing their perseverance skills and their ability to concentrate and work together effectively are also developing soundly. The leadership's emphasis on promoting the Welsh language and Welshness has an exceptionally successful effect on pupils' high standards, and has made excellent progress in promoting their Welsh oracy skills.

The strategic emphasis on developing the wellbeing of pupils and staff is a great strength. For example, support activities, such as developing resilience and perseverance, lead very successfully to increasing pupils' confidence and willingness when responding to new challenges. The support of the school's leadership to promote staff health also contributes well to ensuring their wellbeing in the workplace. As a result, all staff show energetic enthusiasm, which stimulates pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.

Members of the governing body have highly robust knowledge of the school's performance and the effect of its procedures on pupils' standards and wellbeing. They share responsibilities conscientiously in order to evaluate the effect of teaching and the support that is given to pupils. By visiting the school regularly to observe lessons, scrutinise work, talk to pupils and observe developments, such as the new curriculum for Wales, they have up-to-date and well-informed knowledge of the school's work. As a result, they hold the school to account effectively and play their part successfully in setting clear guidance and strategies to develop it further.

Expenditure and resources are linked sensibly to priorities for improvement, and the pupil development grant is used effectively to support a variety of supportive strategies to develop specific individuals. As a result, these pupils show genuine commitment towards their activities, which has a positive influence on their standards and wellbeing.



Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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