



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 Pentreuchaf
Pentreuchaf
Pwllheli
Gwynedd
LL53 8DZ**

Date of inspection: September 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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English)

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Publication date: 20/11/2012

Context

The school is situated on the outskirts of Pentreuchaf, near Pwllheli. It serves the village itself and the nearby rural area that includes the villages of Llannor, Llithfaen and Rhydyclafdy as well as Pentreuchaf. It is maintained by Gwynedd local authority. The school describes the area it serves as mixed in terms of social background and it is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

There are 96 pupils between the ages of three and 11 on roll, including 15 part-time nursery children. Pupils are admitted to the school on a full-time basis in the September following their fourth birthday.

Eighty-seven per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken as a first language. Welsh is the main teaching medium. At present, there are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. About 8% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals and this figure is much lower than the county and national averages. Twenty per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is around the national average. A small number of pupils have a statutory statement.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Pentreuchaf in 2012-2013 is £3,582. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Gwynedd is £9,577 and the minimum is £2,839. Ysgol Pentreuchaf is in 73rd position out of the 102 primary schools in Gwynedd in terms of the school budget per pupil.

The school was last inspected during the autumn term of 2006.

The current headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- nearly all pupils are making good progress in learning and in their literacy and communication skills;
- pupils' achievement at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 compares well with the performance of similar schools from the same family;
- the pupil's voice has a prominent place in school life;
- quality of learning skills, including provision for developing skills, is consistently good;
- most teaching is good and gives regular opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own work;
- the programme for counselling and supporting individual pupils is excellent; and
- the school is a happy and inclusive community.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because of:

- the headteacher's enthusiastic leadership, which conveys a clear sense of purpose;
- a clear focus at the school on raising standards and continuous improvement;
- effective self-evaluation arrangements that are implemented conscientiously;
- strong evidence that the school has improved learning and teaching and raised pupils' standards of achievement considerably;
- staff willingness to undertake new initiatives and priorities; and
- successful links with many strategic partners, which have a positive effect on standards of achievement.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure consistency in the quality of marking pupils' work in order to reflect best practice.

R2 Create better links with foreign countries.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice that was seen during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils across the school strive hard during lessons and are making good progress in their learning. They can concentrate and persevere with tasks, are alert to asking and answering questions, and discuss their tasks confidently. By key stage 2, most evaluate their work thoughtfully and they can identify what needs to be done to improve it.

Considering their ability and age, nearly all pupils are making good progress in their ability to apply their literacy and communication skills, as well as their numeracy and information and communication technology skills, across all curriculum areas.

When dealing with individual tasks or when co-operating on group activities, nearly all pupils in the Foundation Phase discuss their work confidently and many of them use polished language and extended vocabulary. Nearly all show a liking for books and read accurately, paying good attention to expression and subject. By the top end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils can write fluently and for a number of purposes. The most able writers submit imaginative and interesting pieces. Simple words are usually spelt correctly and letters are formed correctly.

On the whole, pupils in key stage 2 discuss their learning in a clear, intelligent way, using a wide variety of phrases and extensive vocabulary. Nearly all show interest in books and enjoyment of them and, by the end of the key stage, they apply their reading skills effectively in order to glean information from various sources such as books and websites. Nearly all pupils write confidently for a wide range of purposes while a few individuals compose stories and poetry of a very high standard.

Across the school, pupils who receive additional support to improve their reading skills are making good progress. Pupils who are learning Welsh are making significant progress in their proficiency in using the language in various curricular contexts.

In the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, nearly all pupils use their thinking skills very ably when planning jointly and solving practical problems. This is having a positive effect on their learning and the standards they achieve.

The proportion of pupils in the Foundation Phase who achieved the expected outcome (outcome 5) or higher in 2012 in Welsh language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity is higher than the national average and than relative performance levels of most of schools in the family. The proportion who achieved the higher level (outcome 6) was also much better than these benchmarks. In comparison with that of schools with a similar percentage of pupils who receive free school meals, performance in the Foundation Phase in the three areas is among the top 50% in the group.

The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected level (level 4) or higher at the end of key stage in 2012 in Welsh and science is higher than the national averages, and compares favourably with the performance of the schools in the family. The proportions for English and mathematics are a little lower. The proportion who achieved the higher level (level 5) in Welsh, English, and science was much better than expected in comparison with Wales and similar schools averages, whilst the proportion for mathematics was a little lower.

In three of the last five years, results in Welsh have placed the school mostly among the upper 50% of schools who have a similar percentage of pupils eligible to receive free school meals. Results in English, mathematics and science placed the school mostly among the lower 50% during this period.

Wellbeing: Excellent

All pupils say that they feel safe in the school environment and that they are free from any physical or verbal abuse. Nearly all have a firm understanding of how to be healthy and they appreciate that healthy foods and regular physical exercise have a positive effect on their wellbeing and development.

During lessons, all pupils are industrious and enthusiastic, co-operate harmoniously and keep diligently to a task over extended periods.

Standards of behaviour are consistently good and all pupils socialise and play happily together. Without exception, pupils are respectful and courteous towards one another, towards staff and towards visitors. This makes a considerable contribution to creating a pleasant ethos that promotes effective learning.

The esteem placed on giving a prominent place to the pupil's voice in every aspect of the life and work of the school is an excellent feature. For example, key stage 2 pupils plan their classes' termly themes independently, organise and conduct daily joint worship without the help of adults and, through the school council, have been campaigning very energetically on issues concerning the school's buildings and grounds. These progressive experiences strengthen pupils' involvement in their learning and in their local community.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance rates are good and a little higher than the national rates and the rates for similar schools.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

All staff plan together effectively in order to provide a wide range of rich learning experiences that meet the needs of the full range of pupils. This includes pupils with additional learning needs or those who are more able and talented. The regular opportunities that pupils have to contribute to the planning process increase their ownership of their learning considerably.

In the Foundation Phase, the highly interesting and imaginative learning experiences that are planned enable children to make consistent progress towards meeting the necessary learning outcomes. Through careful planning, it is ensured that the curriculum at the beginning of key stage 2 builds systematically on pupils' current knowledge and skills and that there is progression and continuity in their learning.

There is thorough planning to ensure that pupils acquire the necessary literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. Good provision is made for developing the Welsh language and bilingualism and the cultural, environmental and historical features of Wales are promoted very thoroughly. Learning experiences are enriched considerably by visits away from the site and through welcoming a large number of visitors to the school.

Respecting multiculturalism, promoting anti-racist attitudes and developing fairness and equal opportunities are strong elements in the school's culture. The school's strategies, in addition to the eco council's programme, have contributed significantly towards raising pupils' awareness of the importance of sustainability and protecting the environment. Although there is a strong emphasis on raising pupils' awareness of global citizenship and respecting human rights, the school does not have an active link with any foreign country.

Teaching: Good

Most teaching leads to good learning that motivates pupils to do their best and captures their interest and their enthusiasm. Teachers and assistants have robust subject knowledge and they use a wide range of strategies to inspire and challenge pupils. The close working relationship between staff and pupils creates an active, supportive ethos that promotes effective learning. The practice of sharing lesson aims and success criteria with pupils leads to clear expectations and productive working. A strong feature of the teaching is the regular opportunities that pupils have to take responsibility for their own work.

Through continuous assessment and detailed analyses of assessment data, each individual's progress is monitored continuously. This enables staff to provide extra support to groups of pupils and individuals as needed.

Teachers give detailed feedback orally to groups and individuals that enables them to know how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve. Although there are some good examples of marking pupils' work effectively, this is not consistent practice across the school.

Annual reports to parents on their children's progress are of good quality and they include comprehensive comments on achievement and progress.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is an orderly community that gives a high priority to pupils' wellbeing and safety in addition to promoting their involvement with their school and the wider community. Learning experiences promote pupils' personal development successfully, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Circle time is used very effectively to respond to pupils' concerns and deal with cases that arise in an open and sensitive way. The innovative 'Friends for Life' programme, which is operated to counsel and support individual pupils, is an excellent feature of the health and wellbeing provision. It has already been of considerable help to a group of children who were not accustomed to being at school, in helping them to cope better with their feelings of fear, anxiety and depression. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The school's provision for pupils who have additional learning needs is comprehensive and effective and leads to significant progress by these pupils. Through detailed assessment, pupils' specific needs are identified early and intervention is implemented. This contributes significantly towards improving standards of achievement and enabling pupils to have access to the whole curriculum. The support provided is targeted clearly for groups of pupils, for example pupils who have behavioural problems or low achievement. Pupils' individual education plans are evaluated and updated regularly and parents and their children are included in the process. Productive links have been established with specialist external agencies.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a happy, inclusive community, in which pupils have an equal right to all educational and social provision. A clear emphasis is placed on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity and creating an ethos that fosters care and tolerance.

There is an extensive supply of relevant resources of good quality that have been matched appropriately to the whole age and ability range. The building is of a very good quality and the school uses every space purposefully and for pupils' benefit. The outside area for the Foundation Phase is a valuable and interesting resource that offers pupils a variety of experiences. It promotes their learning and their personal and social development very effectively.

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

The school is led effectively by an active and enthusiastic headteacher, who offers a clear vision to staff, governors and parents. A clear sense of purpose and an agreed direction for the school's work is created and there are high expectations in terms of achievement and provision for learning.

There is a clear focus at the school on raising standards and continuous improvement. Teaching staff and support staff co-operate closely as a team and, under the guidance of the headteacher, have been prepared to try new initiatives and different ways of working. All members of staff fulfil their roles and responsibilities very conscientiously.

Governors have a detailed understanding of the school's performance and the issues that affect it. They have a detailed understanding of their roles and they are well

informed about the school's strengths and development needs. Recently, they have started to support the school by developing their role as critical friends.

The school is very willing to undertake local and national initiatives, for example assessment for learning, developing literacy strategies and promoting key skills across the curriculum. This has led to improving learning and teaching and has raised pupils' standards of achievement considerably.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation is established firmly in the school's improvement culture. The conclusions of the self-evaluation are an accurate assessment of the school's strengths and areas to be developed. The report puts a clear focus on raising standards, is challenging and identifies actions and success indicators within a suitable timeframe. A wide range of direct evidence was used. This includes analysing performance data, observing teaching and scrutinising pupils' work. This led to identifying strengths and weaknesses and to setting ambitious improvement priorities. These have been incorporated into a comprehensive school improvement plan, which maps the school's development appropriately over the next three years.

The opportunities that all members of staff have to contribute to the self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes are an obvious strength, which creates a strong sense of ownership among all the school's members. In addition, the comments of the authority's liaison officers, governors, parents and pupils receive extensive attention.

The school is developing as a strong learning community, which is having a significant effect on standards and provision across the whole school.

Partnership working: Good

The school has successful links with a large number of strategic partnerships that are having a positive effect on pupils' standards of achievement. The school has a very strong relationship with parents and the community, which contributes generously to improving the supply of resources. Information that is shared regularly with parents expands their knowledge of the school's curriculum and activities.

Productive links with many local businesses provide valuable resources and support to staff and pupils. There is very beneficial co-operation with nearby schools and teachers plan learning resources jointly.

The very strong transition links that exist between the cylch meithrin and the school ensure that nursery children settle in quickly to life at school and that there is progression and continuity in their learning. The school co-operates effectively with its cluster of schools to plan jointly, share experiences and exchange good practices. This has led to improvements in pupils' standards of literacy and to the development of mathematical resources. There are robust transfer plans with the secondary schools and good co-operation when moderating teachers' assessments.

Resource management: Good

The school is staffed appropriately in order to teach the curriculum effectively. Teachers and support staff are deployed appropriately to make the best possible use of their time, expertise and experience. Teachers make appropriate use of their planning, preparation and assessment time and the arrangements for this are managed well. Performance management arrangements are used effectively in order to identify and meet teachers' and assistants' further professional development needs. Staff knowledge and skills are updated regularly through training sessions and they benefit considerably from opportunities to observe good practice in other schools.

There are comprehensive resources at the school, especially in the field of information and communication technology, which are examined, maintained and improved regularly.

Staff and financial resources are used effectively in order to support the school's priorities. There are systematic and thorough financial arrangements, which are monitored continuously by the headteacher and governors.

The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

The proportion of pupils in the Foundation Phase who achieved the expected outcome (outcome 5) or higher in 2012 in Welsh language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity was higher than the national averages and the comparative performance levels of most schools in the same family. The proportion who achieved the higher level (outcome 6) was much better than these benchmarks in the three learning areas.

In comparison with that of schools with a similar percentage of pupils who receive free school meals, performance in the Foundation Phase in 2012 in the three areas is among the top 50% in the group. The Foundation Phase Indicator (the percentage of pupils who achieve outcome 5 or higher in the three learning areas) shows that the school's performance is almost the best in the family and much higher than the average national performance.

The proportion of pupils who attained the expected level (level 4) or higher at the end of key stage 2 in 2012 in Welsh and science was higher than the national averages, and compared favourably with the average performance of the schools in the same family. The proportions for English and mathematics were a little lower. The proportion of pupils who achieved level 4 or higher in Welsh or English, mathematics and science (the core subject indicator) was very similar to the national averages and the averages for the schools in the family. The proportion who achieved the higher level (level 5) in Welsh, English and science was much better than the family average, whilst the rate for mathematics was a little lower. In comparison with that of schools with a similar percentage of pupils who receive free school meals, performance for Welsh and science was among the lower 50% of the group and English and mathematics was among the bottom 25%.

In three of the last five years, results in Welsh have placed the school mostly among the top 50% of schools with a similar percentage of pupils who receive free school meals. Results in English, mathematics, science and in the core subject indicator, have placed the school mostly among the lower 50% during the period.

Although boys in the Foundation Phase performed better than girls in 2012, there is no pattern of differences between the sexes from one year to another. The school's internal data, along with the performance at the end of key stage 2, shows that many pupils who have additional learning needs or who receive free school meals are making significant progress in Welsh, English and mathematics during their career at the school.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Every one of the 47 pupil questionnaires that were completed expressed positive attitudes towards the school, which is much higher than national averages. Almost all pupils say that:

- they feel safe at school, there are many opportunities for them to take regular physical exercise and they get help from teachers and adults to learn and make progress;
- homework helps them to make progress and they are satisfied with the school in general;
- they are prepared well for moving on to the secondary school;
- there are enough books, equipment and computers for them to do their work;
- they are doing well and other pupils behave well; and
- they are doing well at school.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Nineteen parents completed the pre-inspection questionnaire, namely about a third of the families at the school. Almost all questionnaires expressed complete satisfaction with the school and this compared very favourably with the national averages.

Nearly all parents say that:

- they are satisfied with the school in general and their child is making good progress;
- their child likes school and had good support to settle in when he/she started at school;
- their children are expected to work hard and staff respect every individual and treat them fairly;
- their child is encouraged to be healthy and is helped to be more mature and to shoulder responsibilities and he/she is safe whilst at school;
- they have regular information about their child's progress; and
- teaching is good and the school is well run.

A small number of parents say that homework does not build well on what their children are learning at school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Wil Williams	Reporting Inspector
Buddug Bates	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Hefin Jones	Peer Inspector
Gethin Thomas	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.